# An investigation into the relationship between individual freedom and central government control within post-2010 free school proposals.

A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

by

David Bray

School of Education

College of Social Sciences

University of Birmingham

December 2023

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

**University of Birmingham Research Archive**

**e-theses repository**

This unpublished thesis/dissertation is copyright of the author and/or third parties. The intellectual property rights of the author or third parties in respect of this work are as defined by The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 or as modified by any successor legislation.

Any use made of information contained in this thesis/dissertation must be in accordance with that legislation and must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the permission of the copyright holder.

**Abstract**

This thesis considers the interface between individual freedom and central government control within the context of free schools created by the 2010 - 2015 Conservative-dominated coalition government. Free schools were positioned as a superior school-type, allowing leaders to utilise innovation for the benefit of parent-consumers. However, free school proposers needed to negotiate rules used by central government to approve suitable applications (application-assessment), and, once open, a regulatory framework applied to all state-funded schools. The tension between freedom and control is seen as one part of what Bourdieu described as a *field*, a bounded social space where key individuals, or groups, use power to control entry. The *field* reflects the dynamics of a relentless competition, defined through its *doxa,* or rules of the 'game'. Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) is used to analyse themes and thematic groups prominent within official-discourse, innovation practice within a random sample of 'established' free schools approved before the end of 2013, and testimony captured from interviews with individuals involved with free school applications. This provides insight into the 'currency-value' of the *field*, its *doxa*, and how individuals may have *misrecognised* the way rules controlling the 'game' could be seen as arbitrary. Analysis shows that successful proposers required existing credentials associated with a 'good' school or a 'good' multi academy trust. This 'exchange-value', defined by Central government, ensured that free schools met its needs, and therefore maintained the official cultural values of 'good' schools, 'good' pupils and 'good' teachers.

## Acknowledgements

The journey towards this thesis was helped and supported by many different people, over many years. I want to start by thanking my supervisors Jane Martin and Claire Crawford. They were a formidable partnership, with complementary skills, and worked together in a very helpful and supportive way. I was lucky enough to receive detailed feedback and brutal honesty, all achieved with a mixture of warmth and humour. I can only apologise for the way I must have posed more than a few frustrations. This reflects a partial transition from the world of schools, teaching and regulation, where I felt I knew a lot, towards the world of academic discipline. This has been a fascinating journey and, whilst I do not feel I have quite crossed to the other side, I have learned an enormous amount from the rich experiences available.

I started on the EdD at the University of Birmingham, with a small band of fellow students. They helped to keep me going through various *WhatsApp* messages and mutual encouragement. I still remember, vividly, our first all day Saturday session on the philosophy of education. A six-hour lecture led to a sense of severe cognitive over-load, but our interactions then and now were tinged with a great deal of mirth and solidarity. I would also like to acknowledge the support and encouragement of Dr Janet Mills, sadly no longer with us. In 1998 I had started out on a different PhD, looking at attitudes to music amongst secondary pupils. Janet provided incredible help locating suitable cases for study and access to training in SPSS data analysis software. Sadly, two years of work disappeared in a catastrophic computer failure. A book contract, a ridiculous work schedule and the birth of our first child led to the conclusion it was time to draw a line under the project. I keep the hard disk as a

reminder of the need to back up work several times, in different places! Janet was a very supportive friend with a wicked sense of humour, and I miss her greatly.

I have been lucky enough to encounter an amazing number of inspiring colleagues during my working career. It seems wrong to highlight some, but I will. Martin Gent gave me great insight into how to run a 'good' school and George Gyte expanded my horizons in every direction, through his inspiring and compassionate leadership. My secondary school experiences were shaped by Dr Colin Hadley, a man with strong values and a vision for schooling. My ideas were influenced by personal contact with Tim Brighouse and Glenys Kinnock, both shining examples of selfless people whose influence will, I hope, endure, despite their loss. Closer to home I would like to thank my immediate family, especially Sharon for the support with proof reads and the many conversations which reflected a burning passion for what learning can be like. I am sure there were many times when I disappeared to do some writing and you might have felt abandoned. If so, you still always encouraged me, and I really do not have enough words to thank you. I would also like thank my children, Ben and Joe. I have gained immense enjoyment from time we have spent together and experiencing school-choice through the eyes of a parent has provided me with a very different perspective. I owe thanks to Craig and Tim for general interest and enthusiasm for this thesis. I went to school with Craig and, purely by chance, decades later, we both chose to focus a PhD around the work of Pierre Bourdieu. I worked with Tim in various ways and every day still try, unsuccessfully, to emulate his kindness, humanity and exemplary values. I am especially grateful to the people who took part in the interviews for this research. They had the great generosity to give up valuable time and, for some I am sure, the courage to overcome reservations

about being part of research into a high-profile policy. I have sought to preserve their anonymity, so will not mention individuals by name.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents Stanley (Stan) and Doris (Dot) Bray and dedicate this work to their memory. Both were of a post-war generation which expected, or wanted, relatively little in the way of worldly goods. They were modest people, with strong values and both understood, in their own ways, the importance of learning. They taught themselves an amazing range of skills, had a great zest for life and kept up with the latest technology, well into their nineties. The conversations we had about their school experiences were always fascinating and gave me insight into another world, some of which seems strangely contemporary. As Stan would have said: ‘Let’s keep our fingers crossed’. I am sorry that although both lived long enough to know I had started this research, neither was here to see it finished. They are, at least, together again now.

## Contents

Abstract ..................................................ii

Acknowledgements ..................................................iii

Table of figures ..................................................xii

List of abbreviations .................................................. xviii

1 Introduction to the research study .................................................. 1

1.1 Introduction .................................................. 1

1.2 Focus for the research project.................................................. 1

1.3 The aims of the study and research questions .................................................. 4

1.4 How the research is conceptualised .................................................. 6

1.5 Methodology and methods .................................................. 8

1.6 Contribution to the research field.................................................. 10

1.7 Rationale for the project .................................................. 12

1.8 Thesis structure.................................................. 18

1.9 Summary .................................................. 21

2. The landscape of post-2010 school supply reform .................................................. 23

2.1 Introduction .................................................. 23

2.2 Neo-liberal markets, school value and codification .................................................. 24

2.3 The ‘grammar’ of schools in England’s school-supply 2010 landscape.............. 33

2.4 Curriculum freedom.................................................. 40

2.5 Pay and conditions freedom .................................................. 50

2.6 Free school codification and status .................... 57

2.7 Grey school-supply and an alternative ‘grammar’ of schooling .................... 64

2.8 Summary .................... 68

3 Research into the impact of neo-liberal freedom and control .................... 70

3.1 Introduction .................... 70

3.2 Neo-liberal control, quasi markets and ‘second best’ markets .................... 70

3.3 Research into the impact of school-choice market reforms .................... 75

3.4 The value assigned to new types of freedom, innovation and choice .................... 86

3.5 Research into school characteristics and ‘grammar’ of schooling .................... 90

3.6 Field theory as a framework to evaluate freedom and control .................... 97

3.7 Summary .................... 106

4 Research design and methods .................... 109

4.1 Introduction .................... 109

4.2 Theoretical position .................... 110

4.3 Research design .................... 115

4.4 Research method .................... 120

4.5 Thinking with theory within research analysis .................... 126

4.6 Data *set* 1 – official discourse freedom and control themes .................... 131

4.7 Data *set* 2 – freedom and innovation within sample schools .................... 135

4.8 Data *set* 3 – the oral testimony of individuals involved with free school application-assessment .................... 143

4.9 Ethics .................... 153

4.10 Summary ... 158

5. Thematic analysis of pre and post-2010 official-discourse ... 159

5.1 Introduction ... 159

5.2 Theme 1: Curriculum innovation and freedom ... 159

5.3 Theme 2: Freedom to change teaching staff conditions, or qualifications ... 168

5.4 Theme 3: Changes to term dates or length of school day ... 178

5.5 Theme 4: The 'Big Society' – free schools opened by parents, charities and other community groups ... 181

5.6 Theme 5: Good schools: strong discipline and 'smart' uniform ... 187

5.7 Theme 6: Good schools: academic curriculum, knowledge, examination rigour and traditional teaching approaches ... 193

5.8 Theme 7 Good schools: social equality and traditional schools ... 200

5.9 Summary ... 205

6. Official-discourse themes and thematic groups reflected within a sample of 'established' free schools ... 207

6.1 Introduction ... 207

6.2 Theme 1: curriculum innovation and freedom in sample schools ... 208

6.3 Theme 2: Freedom to change teaching staff conditions, or qualifications in sample free schools ... 217

6.4 Theme 3: Changes to term dates or length of school day in sample schools ... 223

6.5 Theme 4: The 'Big Society' – free schools opened by parents, charities and other community groups within sample schools ... 225

6.6 Thematic group 2 (themes 5 – 7) within sample school application forms and websites ........ 229

6.7 Summary ........ 243

7 Oral testimonies about freedom and innovation within free schools ........ 245

7.1 Introduction ........ 245

7.2 Positions and relationship to the field's symbolic economy ........ 246

7.3 Agents and actors' views about theme 1: Curriculum innovation and freedom 257

7.4 Agents and actors' views about theme 2: Freedom to change teaching staff conditions, or qualifications ........ 266

7.5 Agents and actors' views about theme 3: Changes to term dates or length of school day ........ 275

7.6 Agents and actors' views about theme 4: The 'Big Society' ........ 280

7.7 Agents and actors' views about theme 5: 'Good' schools: strong discipline (behaviour) and 'smart' uniform ........ 287

7.8 Agents and actors' views about theme 6: academic curriculum, knowledge, examination rigour and traditional teaching approaches ........ 295

7.9 Agents and actors' views about theme 7: social equality and traditional schools ........ 301

7.10 Summary ........ 306

8 The balance between individual freedom and central control within the 2010 free school policy ........ 309

8.1 Introduction ........ 309

8.2 Research question 1 How did official-discourse legitimise free school freedoms, promote ‘good’ school characteristics and de-legitimise alternative approaches to schooling? ..... 310

8.3 Research Question 2a: Did ‘established’ free schools use additional ‘freedoms’ assigned to them (teachers’ conditions of service, pay and freedom from the national curriculum)? ..... 317

8.4 Research question 2b: What did a group of actors involved with free schools believe about how these additional ‘freedoms’ were operationalised? ..... 321

8.5 Research question 3: What effect did a range of government controls have on practice within free schools and what ‘good’ schools could be like? ..... 326

8.6 Potential misrecognition ..... 333

8.7 Conclusion ..... 338

8.8 Limitations of the study ..... 347

8.9 Implications for policy and future research ..... 351

References ..... 354

Appendix 1 Example data set 1 sources ..... 423

Appendix 2 Criteria used for sentiment coding of application forms, websites and job adverts ..... 443

Appendix 3 Brief summary of sample school website and application form curriculum evaluations ..... 446

Appendix 4 Framework used for structured interviews ..... 458

Appendix 5 Ethics information sent to participants ..... 475

Appendix 6 Examples of email contact with interview participants ..... 481

Appendix 7 Example coding extracted from NVivo defining the structuring impact of GPMR and potential misrecognition ........................................................................ 485

**Table of figures**

Figure 1.1 Research questions ........................................................................... 5

Figure 1.2 Outline of data collection methods for research questions ........................ 9

Figure 1.3 Thesis structure ........................................................................... 21

Figure 2.1 Counteshorpe school, a design facilitating team teaching and an integrated curriculum ........................................................................... 37

Figure 2.2 The ‘official’ discourse landscape of 2010 school-supply reform ............. 40

Figure 2.3 The impact of tests and examinations on curriculum-type in state-funded schools ........................................................................... 47

Figure 2.4 Pay and conditions freedom for new ‘independent’ schools .................... 51

Figure 2.5 Elements of pay and conditions of teachers controlled by central government in 2010 ........................................................................... 53

Figure 2.6 Applications and acceptance within waves 1 – 3 (2011 -2013) ............... 60

Figure 2.7 State-funded school ‘value’ status in the 2010 school-supply landscape 64

Figure 4.1 Research design summary ........................................................................... 119

Figure 4.2 The RTA decisions made in this research ............................................ 123

Figure 4.3 Phases of thematic analysis from Braun and Clarke 2006 .................... 125

Figure 4.4 Example initial coding used to develop and refine themes with NVivo .. 133

Figure 4.5 List of randomised and anonymised sample of ‘established’ free schools ........................................................................... 139

Figure 4.6 Summary of individuals participating in semi-structured interviews ....... 149

Figure 5.1 Freedom from government control ...................................................... 163

Figure 5.2 How the national curriculum constrains ‘good’ teachers ....................... 165

Figure 5.3 LAs contribute to weak teaching and bureaucratic control .................... 170

Figure 5.4 Teacher quality linked to high status qualifications ............................... 172

Figure 5.5 Intensive focus on core subjects as innovation ..................................... 174

Figure 5.6 Good schools tackle under-performance of staff robustly ..................... 175

Figure 5.7 Legitimisation of flexibilities in free schools .......................................... 178

Figure 5.8 Conceptual link between free market economics, flexibility and working conditions ............................................................................................................ 180

Figure 5.9 The ‘Big Society’ as an example of improvement through freedom ...... 183

Figure 5.10 How free schools provide greater choice ........................................... 185

Figure 5.11 The cultural value of smart uniform .................................................... 191

Figure 5.12 Traditional curriculum as evidence of ‘good’ school status ................. 194

Figure 5.13 Insufficient focus on basics in weak schools ...................................... 196

Figure 5.14 Examinations need reform to promote higher standards..................... 198

Figure 5.15 Traditional teaching methods are best ............................................... 199

Figure 5.16 the importance of official knowledge for disadvantaged pupils............ 203

Figure 6.1 School H 'innovative' curriculum practice not supported with detail ...... 208

Figure 6.2 ‘Innovative’ learning cited within school F application ........................... 209

Figure 6.3 school G example of ‘innovative’ curriculum in application form ........... 210

Figure 6.4 Extended school day and school week within sample school J proposal ............................................................................................................ 211

Figure 6.5 Flexible approaches to learning within sample school J........................ 212

Figure 6.6 Guidance for parents and pupils on secondary subject choices sample school I............................................................................................................ 214

Figure 6.7 Sample school H special school reference to the national curriculum... 215

Figure 6.8 Sample school A reference to traditionalism as high quality ................. 216

Figure 6.9 sample school G unique nature of extra-curricular provision................. 216

Figure 6.10 Sample school advert for languages teacher (MPS, UPS and TLR .... 218
Figure 6.11 Sample school advert requiring qualified teacher status ..................... 219
Figure 6.12 Sample advert for leadership role with qualified teacher status essential ........................................................................................................................ 219
Figure 6.13 School I Typical school day timings .................................................. 224
Figure 6.14 School F faith-based term dates adjustment...................................... 224
Figure 6.15 Sample school A link to the ‘Big Society’ ........................................... 226
Figure 6.16 School H application reference to a parent-led school ........................ 227
Figure 6.17 ‘Big Society’ reference school J website ............................................ 228
Figure 6.18 School F guidance emphasis on a ‘traffic light’ continuum, designed to promote positive behaviour ........................................................................... 230
Figure 6.19 Emphasis on positive behaviours School F......................................... 231
Figure 6.20 School H (secondary) more formal approach to behaviour and sanctions ........................................................................................................................ 233
Figure 6.21 School D secondary type more formalised uniform expectations........ 234
Figure 6.22 Special school uniform designed to be inexpensive, whilst ‘acceptable’ ........................................................................................................................ 235
Figure 6.23 The continuum of marketing which reflected age range and pupil-type, rather than free school status ........................................................................... 236
Figure 6.24 Choice in secondary subjects controlled by school policy ................... 238
Figure 6.25 School A focus on knowledge ........................................................... 239
Figure 6.26 School C focus on a broader definition of excellence.......................... 239
Figure 6.27 School C website focus on personal development............................. 240
Figure 6.28 School B focus on credentials of Ofsted rating................................... 240
Figure 6.29 School I focus on credentials of Ofsted rating .................................... 241

Figure 6.30 School J focus on credentials of Ofsted rating .................................... 241
Figure 6.31 School F links to Ofsted report and Pikuach report for parent-consumers .......................................................................................................... 241
Figure 6.32 School H Emphasis on Christian values ............................................ 242
Figure 7.1 The position of agents and actors within entry to 2010 school-supply .. 247
Figure 7.2 Roles and responsibilities used as credentials for access to the field ... 248
Figure 7.3 The exchange-value of interview participants within school-supply ...... 249
Figure 7.4 Exchange-value of Oacts within the field's symbolic economy.............. 250
Figure 7.5 Exchange-value of proposer and other agents within the field's symbolic economy.......................................................................................................... 251
Figure 7.6 Exchange-value of Education adviser agents within the field's symbolic economy.......................................................................................................... 252
Figure 7.7 Position of proposer agents, other agents and Oacts in relation to the field's symbolic 'economy' .............................................................................. 256
Figure 7.8 The high currency-value of a traditional curriculum within the 2010 field of school-supply .......................................................................................... 266
Figure 7.9 DfE financial benchmarking 2020 with typical costs of maintained schools and academies' .......................................................................................... 272
Figure 7.10 Shift in practice towards stand pay, conditions, term dates and school day .................................................................................................................. 275
Figure 7.11 Low currency-value attached to longer days, longer terms ................. 280
Figure 7.12 The low exchange-value of 'Big Society' groups within 2010 school-supply............................................................................................................... 286
Figure 7.13 The currency-value of theme 5.......................................................... 295
Figure 7.14 The currency-value of theme 6 and recalibrated GPMR ..................... 301

Figure 7.15 The currency-value of disadvantaged pupils' under-achievement....... 305

Figure 8.1 The sub-field of 2010 school-supply and its doxa ................................ 333

Figure AP 1.1 Example government policy documents related to free schools...... 423

Figure AP 1.2 Example other relevant government policy documents ................... 431

Figure AP 1.3 Example speeches by key government figures ............................... 435

Figure AP 1.4 Example policy documents from other political parties.................... 437

Figure AP 1.5 Example documents produced by other policy advocates............... 438

Figure AP 1.6 Example think tank policy advocates.............................................. 439

Figure AP 1.7 Example press media commenting on free schools ........................ 440

Figure AP 2.1 Criteria framework for NVivo sentiment coding of curriculum innovation and difference ........................................................................... 443

Figure AP 2.2 Criteria framework for NVivo sentiment coding of difference in conditions of service and pay ........................................................................ 444

Figure 3.1 School A summary ............................................................................ 446

Figure 3.2 School B summary ............................................................................ 448

Figure 3.3 School C summary ............................................................................ 449

Figure 3.4 School D summary ............................................................................ 450

Figure 3.5 School E summary ............................................................................ 451

Figure 3.6 School F summary ............................................................................ 452

Figure 3.7 School G summary ............................................................................ 453

Figure 3.8 School H summary ............................................................................ 454

Figure 3.9 School I summary ............................................................................. 455

Figure 3.10 School J summary ........................................................................... 456

Figure AP 4.1 Interview framework for education advisers who have helped to set up free schools. ............................................................................................... 458

Figure AP 4.2 Interview framework for free school proposers and others. ............ 467

Figure AP 5.1 Participant information form............................................................ 475

Figure AP 5.2 Participant consent form.................................................................. 478

Figure AP 6.1 Education Advisers contact ............................................................. 481

Figure AP 6.2 Snowball contact from an EA .......................................................... 482

Figure AP 6.3 Other individual contact for individual known prior to the research.. 483

Figure AP 6.4 Unsuccessful proposer contact not previously known ..................... 484

Figure AP 7.1 Coding example from NVivo with focus on doxa ............................. 485

## List of abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| **AP** | Alternative Provision. A school or setting which caters for pupils who have been excluded from mainstream schools, or are at risk. The free school programme introduced AP fee schools which were either new startups or existing settings which took up school status. In this case AP schools replaced LA run PRUs, or independent provision run by other organisations such as charities. |
| **CTC** | City Technology College. A state-funded independent school set up as part of the 1988 ERA. |
| **DfE** | Department for Education. The government department responsible for education and schools. It had responsibility for England with other areas controlled by devolved government. |
| **CSE** | The Certificate of Secondary Education. A set of qualifications as an alternative to GCE (O-Levels). CSEs were available in both academic and vocational subjects and examination questions were offered in a shorter and more structured form than in O levels. |
| **CEO** | Chief Executive Officer. A role common within private companies and increasingly adopted to describe someone leading a MAT (multi academy trust). Often supported by business support roles such as COO (chief Operating Officer). |
| **EA** | Education Adviser. A contractor employed by the DfE for a variety of roles, including the assessment of free school applications, subsequent monitoring and support at interviews. |
| **EBacc** | English Baccalaureate. A set of approved GCSE qualifications promoted as part of reforms promoted by the 2010 coalition government. |
| **ERA** | Education Reform Act. The 1988 legislation which introduced school markets, the national curriculum and new school-types such as Grant Maintained (GM) and City Technology Colleges (CTC). |
| **EFA** | Education Funding Agency. The government agency responsible for funding schools. Became the Education and Skills Funding Agency. ESFA |
| **FE** | Further Education. Colleges providing education and skills mainly post-16. FE Colleges were run as independent organisations following removal of links with local authorities in 1992. |
| **GERM** | Global Educational Reform Movement, developed by Pasi Sahlberg to describe what he calls in his 2015 book: “the increased international exchange of policies and practices” (p142). |
| **GMS** | Grant Maintained Status. Conservative promoted policy which allowed schools to opt out of local authority control after 1988. |
| **HTB** | Headteacher's Board. Post 2010 group if headteachers appointed to oversee implementation of government policy in a local area. See RSC. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **GPMR** | Government Performance Monitoring and Regulation. A term used in this thesis to describe the central government controls of national tests, examinations, aggregated school performance tables and Ofsted inspections. |
| **GTC** | General Teaching Council. Organisation setup by New Labour to oversee aspects of the teaching profession in England. |
| **ISC** | Independent Schools Council. Group which provides mutual support and oversight of elite independent schools in the UK. |
| **LA** | Local Authority. A form of local government responsible for LA maintained schools |
| **LEA** | Local Education Authority. Local government organisation with responsibility for education. The term was introduced by the Education Act 1902 which transferred education powers from school boards to existing local councils. Education was removed and LEAs became LAs in 2010 |
| **LAMS** | Local authority maintained schools. Funded through local authorities using money received from central government. |
| **LMS** | Local Management of Schools. A system introduced as part of the 1988 ERA to devolve funding from LAs directly to schools. |
| **MAT** | Multi Academy Trust. A group of academies funded directly via central government. This model replaced LAs. |
| **MPS** | Main pay Scale. The salary range defined by government for teaching staff. |
| **NCTL** | National College for Teaching and Leadership. A New Labour organisation designed to provide support and training for school headteachers and other members of a leadership team. |
| **NSE** | New Sociology of Education. Radical educational historians who focused on conflicts over the structure of the educational system, the role of schools and the curriculum. |
| **NPD** | National Pupil Database. Individual pupil level data on tests, examinations and personal characteristics. |
| **NPQH** | National Professional Qualification for Headship. A qualification expected or encouraged for aspiring headteachers head teachers. |
| **Ofsted** | Office for Standards in Education. Responsible for inspecting schools in England and set up in 1992 through the Education (Schools) Act. |
| **PRU** | Pupil Referral Unit Provision set up by local authorities to cater for pupils excluded from school. |
| **PSHE** | Personal, Social and Health Education. A focus on skills and attributes which schools were expected to provide alongside academic qualifications. |
| **RTA** | Reflexive Thematic Analysis. A method used for research mainly in the social sciences. |
| **SSAT** | Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. Set up by New Labour to promote and support the development of specialisms for secondary schools. |

**SEND** Special Educational Needs and Disability. A designation used to categorise pupils with specific needs and define schools which catered for these pupils.

**STPCD** The School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document. A mechanism created by the 1988 ERA to move negotiation about pay to an 'independent' organisation. The School Teachers Review Body (STRB) determined pay scales, conditions of service and pay increases.

**TA** Thematic Analysis – a research method used in this study, see RTA.

**TUPE** Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment). EU legislation which required that employers maintain conditions of service when moving staff from one job to another.

**TDA** Teacher Development Agency. Set up by New Labour to oversee the training and professional development of teachers in England.

**T level** Technical Level. Qualification designed to denote a high-status vocational qualification. This replaced the diplomas introduced by New Labour as part of its 14 - 19 reforms.

**TLR** Teaching, Learning and Recruitment allowance. Extra salary element used to recognise responsibility or help with recruitment of staff.

**UPS** Upper Pay Spine. Access to higher salary scale(s) for those teachers with approved experience and qualifications.

**UTC** University Technical College. A type of school for pupils aged fourteen upwards which focused on vocational and technical qualifications. The UTCs were overseen by the Baker-Dearing Trust and relied on strong advocacy from Lord Baker, the secretary of state responsible for the 1988 ERA.

# 1 Introduction to the research study

## 1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief description of this research project, including its focus, aims, conceptual framework, methodology and research methods. It also provides an overview of the contribution this study makes to the field of research it is located within.

## 1.2 Focus for the research project

The focus for the research in this study is the interface between individual freedom and central government control within the context of applications to open England's post-2010 free schools. These are new state-funded schools, introduced by the Conservative-led coalition government (2010 -2015), and then promoted by subsequent Conservative administrations. Free schools were positioned as a new school-type, with increased freedom from the bureaucratic controls which, according to the coalition government, hampered state-funded schools. They were one part of a series of education policy reforms, shaped by right-wing politicians, around free market economic efficiencies applied to public services, a framework commonly described as neo-liberalism. The freedoms assigned to free schools within the government's official-discourse, the speeches, policy documents and approaches adopted by supportive media, or think-tanks, were defined as increased curriculum

freedom, as well as a flexibility over teachers' pay, conditions of service, or working conditions. These freedoms reflected practice already utilised within the Conservative party's existing City Technology Colleges, set up after the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA), and New Labour's post-1997 academies (originally termed 'City Academies'). These 'state-funded independent schools' reflected similar global reforms, especially USA charter schools and Sweden's free schools (*friskolor*). The post-2010 free school policy was closely associated with Gove, the Shadow Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families (2007–2010) and then Secretary of State for Education in the coalition government (2010–2014). In a series of speeches prior to the 2010 coalition government being formed Gove outlined key policy drivers, including the rationale for free schools. However, although associated with the Conservative party, free schools reflected a general political consensus. Labour, for example, had proposed that the 'range and reach of innovative school providers will increase' (Labour Party, 2010, p. 3:2), whilst the Liberal Democrats had indicated it would 'allow other appropriate providers, such as educational charities and parent groups, to be involved in delivering state-funded education' (Liberal Democratic Party, 2010, p. 37).

Free schools were positioned by the 2010 coalition as a new, distinctive and superior school-type, but the same freedoms were allocated to post-2010 academies, existing schools which opted into a change of legal status and a direct funding relationship with central government. The coalition government also promoted the benefits of the 'Big Society' (Department for Education, 2010i), where parents, charities or teachers would be granted the freedom to take charge of public services, including setting up new schools. This was a significant shift in the way schools were set up, removing

power, and funding, from local authorities (LA). In order to open a free school potential proposers were required to make an application to the Department for Education (DfE), the central government department responsible for schooling, using a template provided. Free school applications were assessed by DfE officials and advisers, a process described in this study as application-assessment, and 'successful' applicants needed to present a case at interview and, where relevant, respond to conditions outlined in a letter of acceptance. The final approval for new free schools relied on the approval of government officials and, ultimately, central government ministers.

However, once open, free schools were subject to the same government regulatory steering controls imposed on all state-funded schools. These included national tests used to check on the progress and attainment of pupils aged 7 and 11 in English and mathematics, coupled with examinations for older pupils. This framework provided a competitive arena used to place pupils in a position of value and filter their access to further education, higher education or employment. These national test and examination measures formed an important part of the government school 'performance tables', used to evaluate schools and their leaders. In addition, a system of Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) inspections, set up in 1992 by the Education (Schools) Act, positioned schools against a range of quality criteria, including pupil outcomes, behaviour and safety, leadership and management, or overall effectiveness. This framework of government regulatory control is described in this study, collectively, as government performance monitoring and regulation (GPMR).

### 1.3 The aims of the study and research questions

The interface between the freedom experienced by free school proposers, the controls applied within application-assessment, and the GPMR used to discipline state-funded schools lie at the heart of this study. They were operationalised within rules used as part of application-assessment and, once open, the values embedded within GPMR, which measured individual worth and 'good' school status. The application-assessment process poses questions about how proposers utilised freedom to create innovation, how this was evaluated rules and what effect this had on the free schools created. This study is therefore rooted in potential tensions between the types of innovation proposers wanted, and the impact of an arena where central government controlled what was possible. This is important because relatively little is known about the experiences of free school proposers, how they utilised freedom, and what effect this had on the way free schools were organised.

The research addresses the first ten years of free school policy (2010 -2020), especially the tension between the way free schools were initially presented by government, how these schools were presented to parent-consumers and the experiences of individuals initially involved. This interface is reflected within three research questions (question two has two strands), set out in figure 1.1.

*Figure 1.1 Research questions*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | How did official-discourse legitimise free school freedoms, promote 'good' school characteristics and de-legitimise alternative approaches to schooling? |
| 2 | (a) Did 'established' free schools use additional 'freedoms' assigned to them (teachers' conditions of service, pay and freedom from the national curriculum)?<br>(b) What did a group of actors involved with free schools believe about how these additional 'freedoms' were operationalised? |
| 3 | What effect did a range of government controls have on practice within successful free school applications, and on what 'good' schools could be like? |

The first question focuses on the way official-discourse may have 'legitimised' freedom, innovation and 'good' school features, whilst 'de-legitimising' alternatives (Chilton, 2002; 2004). Sources for analysis are mainly drawn from the early phase of free school policy (2010 to 2013), but also include political speeches prior to 2010, chosen to provide insight into key political priorities which underpinned the development of free school policy. Evidence of freedom used to develop school innovation is sought within a sample of 'established' free schools. These schools, set up before 2013, were open long enough to have full year groups and complete staffing, with innovation likely to be embedded. Analysis is focused on the specific freedoms of curriculum, or pay and conditions of service flexibility for staff retrieved from application forms, current school websites and job adverts. Analysis of these elements is then used as a framework to consider the beliefs of a small group of individuals who experienced free school application-assessment. The questions provide insight into the relationship between freedom and control within the context of free school application, application-assessment and the impact of GPMR.

### 1.4 How the research is conceptualised

A focus on the impact of government policy on individual free school proposers reflects a form of ‘critical policy analysis’ (Gale, 2001). The study seeks to understand how and why central government enacted certain policies, as well as their effect on individuals. Apple (2019, p. 276), for example, notes how this type of critical policy analysis reflects ‘the complex connections between education and the relations of dominance and subordination in the larger society—and the movements that are trying to interrupt these relations’, suggesting that power controls ‘authority and identity’. This may lead to constraints on the ‘meaning of being educated’, where new school-types may not be driven just by ‘technical considerations’, but also reflect cultural and political aspirations which define ‘ideological visions of what schools should do and whom they should serve’ (Apple, 2019, p. 276). Ball (2017, p. 4) proposed that policy sociology reflects a relationship between education policy and the needs of the state. It highlights the ‘problems of social authority, citizenship and social welfare over and against the role of the state as “midwife” for economic competitiveness’. The 2010 free school policy provides a specific insight into the needs of the state through the type of schools that were approved, as well as the credentials of proposers seen as suitable.

Ozga (1987) suggested that sociological research needs to be ‘historically informed’, aiming to move beyond a detailed description of policy ‘content’. Whilst there is insufficient space to describe how this research is ‘historically informed’ chapter two considers the context of previous school-supply reforms in England, as well as similar approaches in other countries, especially the USA and Sweden. Ball (1993b, p. 10),

building on similar ideas, described the importance of considering ‘structural, macro-level analysis of education systems and education policies and micro level investigation, especially that which takes account of people's perception and experiences’. The research will take account of ‘perceptions and experiences’ (Ball, 1993b), whilst also touching on issues which reflect ‘ethics’ and ‘truth’. It will, for example, consider the experiences and beliefs of free school proposers, but also seek to understand what they may not have recognised.

The study analyses the effect of government policy by considering how individuals had a freedom to innovate, set against central government controls which may have constrained what was possible. It will challenge ‘received wisdom’ and ask ‘fundamental questions about institutions, and social and power relations, in combination with an approach to theory that interrogates its standpoint in space and time’ (Ozga, 2021, p. 295). The relationship between individual freedom and central control is viewed as part of the dynamics of a *field*, what Bourdieu described as a bounded social space, where individuals viewed as suitable game-players act as *agents* to determine the ‘rules of the game’ (Bourdieu, 1990; 1993a; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). The rules of the game, or *doxa*, are unconsciously accepted by the *agents,* who *misrecognise* how they might be seen as arbitrary, one choice from many possibilities which define how schools can be organised.

## 1.5 Methodology and methods

The research is sequenced into three **phases,** with phase two drawing on analysis of phase one, and phase three drawing on analysis of phases one and two. **Phase 1** analyses the way official-discourse legitimised school freedom and innovation, whilst GPMR defined 'good' schools, allowing alternatives to be de-legitimised (Chilton, 2004; Reyes, 2011; John Wilson, 2015; Kramsch, 2020). **Phase 2** analyses the way a sample of 'established' free schools open since 2013 presented innovation within conditions of service, pay and curriculum to stakeholders. **Phase 3** analyses the *field's doxa* by considering information from phases one and two, as well as the beliefs and dispositions that different actors, brought, and took, from the *field*. It also considers how far these individuals may have *misrecognised* rules which formed the *field's doxa.* A key feature of this analysis is consideration of what Thomson (2005) described as the 'codification' of new school-types within a *field's* symbolic economy. Individuals required an understanding of the 'currency-value' operating within the *field*, and needed a type of 'exchange-value', or credentials, to gain access to it,

The study uses Reflexive Thematic Analysis, or RTA (Clarke and Braun, 2017; Braun and Clarke, 2019; 2021) as a method to analyse data and report on the interface between freedom and control as part of the *field's doxa*. Themes are analysed across three different data sets, including official-discourse, a sample of free school websites or application forms, and the experience of sixteen individuals with direct experience of free school application-assessment. RTA is used to analyse the impact of the way free schools were positioned as new, innovative and distinctive school-types, but within a framework where official-discourse emphasised the values of

‘good’ schools through the controls of a re-calibrated GPMR, with its focus on an academic and knowledge-rich curriculum. The themes are then developed further to consider how successful free school proposers presented freedom and innovation to parent-consumers and how those involved with application-assessment experienced it. Figure 1.2 provides an overview of data collection methods and how they relate to the research questions noted.

*Figure 1.2 Outline of data collection methods for research questions*

| Research questions | | Data collection method |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | How did official policy-discourse legitimise free school freedoms, de-legitimise alternative approaches to schooling and promote ‘good’ school characteristics? | Identification of the way official-discourse promoted free schools as a superior, or ‘good’ school-type, whilst de-valuing other school-types. |
| 2 | (a) Did ‘established’ free schools use additional ‘freedoms’ assigned to them (teachers’ conditions of service, pay and freedom from the national curriculum)?<br><br>(b) What did a group of actors involved with free schools believe about how these additional ‘freedoms’ were operationalised? | Retrieval of information about curriculum freedom, and pay or conditions freedom, retrieved from websites, job adverts and free school applications. Information was drawn from a randomly selected group of ‘established’ schools, opened between 2010 and 2013.<br><br>The oral testimonies of individuals involved with application-assessment about freedom and control. This was generated through semi-structured interviews with a sample of |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | actors involved with free school application-assessment. |
| 3 | What effect did a range of government controls have on practice within successful free school applications and on what ‘good’ schools could be like? | Analysis of the interface between freedom defined within official-discourse, innovation promoted by sample free schools and the testimonies of individuals involved with application-assessment. This is used to understand the rules of the game (*doxa*) within the sub-field of school-supply as part of an overall education field, and suggest some of the ways *agents* involved may have *misrecognised* the arbitrary nature of these rules. |

### 1.6 Contribution to the research field

Previous research into free schools has mostly focused on the impact of government policy reforms on what are described in this study as consumer-side outputs of school-choice markets, especially the impact of reform on parent-consumers. This has, for example, posed questions about use of selection within free school admissions criteria (Morris, 2014; 2015; 2016; Green, Allen and Jenkins, 2015; Allen and Higham, 2018), suggesting a potential impact on social stratification. Research has also considered whether free schools may have provided a mechanism for increased privatisation of state-funded schools (Higham, 2014b; Higham and Earley,

2013). Free schools have additionally been viewed as a potential site for a growth in the power of individual 'elites' (Higham, 2017, p 203). This literature provides important insight, but has tended to accept the way official-discourse has positioned free schools as a distinctive school-type. However, although free schools were positioned as new, superior, and distinctive, they had characteristics likely to be familiar to parent-consumers. For example, they reflected familiar designations, such as primary, secondary, all-through, special, alternative provision, 16-19, faith-based, non-faith-based, single sex, or mixed gender school-types. In addition, research carried out by Wiborg et al. (2018), suggested that free schools may not be 'not unlike' other schools. This indicates a need to understand more about what free schools were like, especially their characteristics, what Tyack and Tobin (1994) described as the 'grammar' of schooling, a 'language' school organisation which had become commonly accepted. The actual difference between the 'grammar' of free schools, and other school-types, provides insight into the way proposers used freedom. It also reflects the relationship between the individual freedom emphasised within official-discourse, and the control embedded within social and cultural values applied within application-assessment.

Schools are dynamic sites and, over time, free schools will change, be absorbed, forgotten, or reinterpreted by actors who did not create them. Wiborg *et al.* (2018) noted that free school headteachers might be wary about speaking 'off-message', reflecting the contested nature of free school policy. Almost a decade after they were formed many free schools have become established, now part of the warp and weft of overall school-supply in England. People involved with early projects have moved on, and their unique experience(s) are in danger of being lost. The timing of this

research is important because it captured the views of some key actors whilst memories of the first stage of free school policy were relatively recent, providing a unique insight into their beliefs and experiences. A small, but especially important part of this research includes the previously unheard ‘stories’ of unsuccessful proposals. There are strong links to existing research which, as has been noted, has mostly focused on the impact of education policy on parent-consumers, what is described here as the ‘consumer-side’ of a school-choice market. However, this study provides a new turn, focusing mainly on the ‘supply-side’ of the market, reflecting the unique way that free school policy encouraged individuals and groups to apply to open new schools and, presumably, introduce innovation.

### 1.7 Rationale for the project

The rationale for this project is located within its contribution to what are ongoing and often polarised debates about how England’s schools should be organised, how policy effects might be evaluated and the impact of policy reform on individuals. Free schools formed a high-stakes, flagship policy (Policy Exchange, 2009; 2015), and government ministers consistently positioned freedom and innovation as successful, utilising advocacy drawn from ‘selected’ proposers, or internal policy evaluation (Department for Education, 2011c; 2011f; 2011i; 2014a). However, this type of advocacy does not provide a balanced insight into what free schools were like, or what individuals involved with them believed. This study is therefore significant because free school policy may, in the future, be viewed as a ‘successful’ model; an

example of school-supply innovation which provided freedom for proposers, and added to the school-choice available for parent-consumers. It helps to give a voice to successful and unsuccessful proposers and may redress a potential imbalance within this type of discourse.

My experience within the field of school-supply, its reform and free school-application-assessment is particularly significant within this study. It provides a deep understanding of the policy, with access to the views of actors with similar levels of experience. My professional experience has a direct bearing on this research and how it is constructed. I have a particular engagement with free school policy, school-supply and regulation, which reflects a distinctive employment background, as well as beliefs I have acquired within these contexts. This research is influenced by my 'position' in relation to it, especially a period between 2011 and 2019 when I worked as an external consultant assessing and supporting free school applications for the Department for Education. Whilst this study does not set out to defend, or criticise, free school policy, it will critically review its impact on individuals. This experience, as an 'external adviser' (EA) and then 'external expert' (EE), provided considerable insight, especially the way applications were handled and assessed. I also worked in several leadership roles for several multi academy trusts (MAT), a type of charitable trust favoured by central government to control the funding of more than one academy. Academies were first developed by New Labour after 1997 as a type of state-funded independent school, and then developed further by the 2010 coalition. The research therefore reflects, to some extent, what could be seen as the views of an insider, both in relation to free schools and the wider context of England's system of schooling. It draws on substantial experience as a teacher, leader and regulator.

I have always had a strong belief in the contribution education might make to social justice. My parents, grandparents and great grandparents had limited education opportunities, reflecting the life of 'working class' families which had migrated to London for employment during the nineteenth century industrial revolution. My mother, for example, left school at fourteen to work in a factory and, although my father won a scholarship to secondary school, his education was ended prematurely by the outbreak of the second world war. I was one of four pupils from my large primary school 'selected' to attend a state-funded grammar school in the late 1960s. This new school was small (maximum capacity about 600 pupils) and the 'headmaster' sought to establish a traditional grammar school ethos, with 'smart' uniform, a 'grammar school' curriculum (including Latin) and strict discipline, including corporal punishment. My brother and several close friends went to local secondary modern schools. I was struck, even then, by the way one twin always saw himself as a failure because his sister had attended the same grammar school as me. I was the first person in my family to go into higher education, and then, after a spell as a musician, take a post-graduate certificate in education (PGCE) to become a 'qualified' teacher. The PGCE course introduced me to a wide range of educational theory, including John Dewey, and the child development theories of Jean Piaget. Although I am not able to objectively describe how these experiences influenced me, I found the theory of learning, teaching and school organisation interesting. It suggested that schools were social sites, where pupils were shaped to a large degree through the 'hidden' part of a school curriculum (Ross, 2003).

I had enormous amounts of freedom as a teacher in the early 1980s, especially over curriculum planning and construction. I experimented with different approaches to

teaching, curriculum content and assessment. For example, I developed and taught a 'Mode Three' Certificate in Secondary Education (CSE) qualification, a teacher-designed course and examination planned to meet the interests of a particular cohort of 'low ability' pupils within a challenging London borough. Although these pupils stood little chance of achieving the gold-standard O level benchmark, many did well on a course designed to encourage interest in a range of arts practice. I subsequently worked in more 'traditional' settings, including a highly regarded academic school and a sixth-form college. I have also experienced being a parent-consumer within a local school market and engaged with the information parents are encouraged to use when choosing schools. My two children attended state-funded schools (primary and 'comprehensive'). One took GCSE examinations in 2015 and the other in 2018, just after the 2010 coalition examination reforms began to make content more 'rigorous', with a greater focus on knowledge and terminal examinations, rather than 'coursework' (a form of ongoing assessment). Being a tension. I knew parents who experienced school 'choice' as little more than theoretical, especially within rural areas. Both my children accessed higher-education and I have been struck, somewhat negatively, by what I see as its increased commercialisation, including a student loan system, which appears to impose punitive interest rates, whilst benefitting private equity firms.

A significant period within my experience was a period as teacher and manager during the 1979 to 1990 Thatcher Conservative governments. I held senior roles within three local authorities, several quangos, regulators and private companies during the Major Conservative government, as well as the Blair and Brown New Labour governments which followed. I can recall mixed feelings about the

introduction of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA), which imposed a national curriculum, introduced new school-types (GM and CTC) and changes to funding embedded within local management of schools (LMS). I helped to develop the content of some aspects of the government's national curriculum in 1987 and ran training events for teachers when it was introduced (1990 to 1992). I also worked on a new sixteen-plus (16+) examination, designed to merge O levels and CSE examinations for sixteen-year-olds. This influenced the design of subsequent General Certificate in Secondary Education examinations (GCSE). I became an examiner and then an advisory teacher, which brought me into contact with hundreds of schools around the country. Looking back, I sense it felt difficult at the time to understand the longer-term effects of these changes on teachers, pupils and parents. The freedoms I had enjoyed in the early part of my career were replaced by increased regulation, but I accepted much of the discourse which promoted the value of greater consistency in curriculum content.

My employment choices often reflected the impact of changes within central government policy. I become a school manager, then a local authority (LA) adviser, part of a school-supply system where local government, originally designated as a local education authority (LEA), had controlled school-type and admissions across a geographical area. I found myself within an increasingly privatised service environment. I then worked as an independent consultant providing services for schools and private organisations. The post-1979 Thatcher governments had established a discourse which promoted the private sector as positive, efficient and agile, whilst deriding LAs as inefficient, bureaucratic and incompetent. My own experience, working across many contexts, suggested that private sector, or public

sector organisations are, in themselves, not preferable. Each had strengths and weaknesses, mostly reflecting individuals who led and worked within them. I do not subscribe to the idea that 'pure' markets, on their own, lead to better schools. My route into post-2010 free school policy arose from general project work I was doing with the DfE, utilising skills and experience I had gained in new school start-up projects and through other areas of regulation, such as leading Ofsted school inspections. When free schools were announced I had no understanding of what they were, and no affiliation to them.

I found myself assessing applications for the DfE and much of the policy seemed to be presented in adversarial terms, see for example Gove's comments about the 'blob' (Toby Young, 2014), or 'enemies of promise' (Douglas, 2012). A discourse which promoted freedom over pay and changed conditions of service for teaching staff did not strike me as inherently desirable, but the opportunity for increased curriculum flexibility seemed interesting. My views were moderated by encounters with free school proposers and the large majority struck me as having a strong focus on improving their local context. I was aware of the large number of rejected applications, and tis experience contributed to why I chose to become a part-time university student.

Exploring existing research has allowed me to reflect on my experience and, at the same time, take account of approaches utilised within universities. I have been particularly struck by the way researchers consider policy over a relatively long period of time, and the way this contrasts with actors in schools, who are confronted by a need to respond rapidly to the latest government pronouncement. There is an urgency about policy enactment and the task of maintaining, or improving, position in

relation to other schools is relentless. This does not allow the capacity to consider how current policy might link to the past, or might be seen from a broader perspective. Something about these incongruities and tensions caused me to want to explore this context further. I was especially interested in the interface between freedom and control and how these ideas were utilised within policy to create a reform agenda which often seemed to draw on the past. My position in relation to free schools, coupled with the experience I have described, contributes to the way it is constructed. The next section will outline the structure of this study.

### 1.8 Thesis structure

The thesis is divided into four key sections. The first explores what is described as the landscape of state-funded schooling in 2010, noting important drivers which had shaped it, and existing control features which free school proposers needed to negotiate. These included previous school-supply reforms, especially the way a Conservative central government had introduced controls over what was taught in schools. The 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) is seen as a significant piece of legislation, defining the central control levers of GPMR, including a national curriculum, government school performance tables and a school inspection regime run by Ofsted. GPMR controlled how ‘good’ school status was evaluated and the way ‘good’ teacher value was defined. In 2010 England’s pupils and schools were already positioned into a hierarchy, a competitive arena of value and worth. This reflected the

1988 ERA, as well as the influence of similar ‘globalised’ school-choice networks, shaped by widely accepted economic theories used to reshape public-services.

The second section considers existing literature which has focused on the impact of post-1988 school-choice models on groups of parent-consumers. It considers the way, in this context, new school-types have been ‘codified’ (Thomson, 2005) as distinctive, and positioned as superior. Thomson noted how this type of market-led school recalibration suggests that England’s schools operated within what Bourdieu described as a type of *field* (Bourdieu, 1990b; 1991; 1993a; 1998; 1999; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), a bounded social space where individuals and groups compete for power. The 2010 free school policy might therefore be considered as one part of a broader *field* of education, part of a social ‘game’ where, in Bourdieu’s’ terms, ‘*agents*’ compete for economic and social capital. Opening a free school offered proposers an opportunity to enter this *field* controlled through a type of ‘currency-value’ within its ‘symbolic economy’ (Thomson, 2005). Those with greatest power controlled this economy, and the ‘exchange-value’, or credentials, needed to gain *capital*. Chapter 3 notes some of the ways *field* theory has been used as a conceptual framework to provide insight into the *agents* with most power.

The third section outlines a research design focused on the intersection between the freedom and innovation promoted within official-discourse, compared to practice within established free schools, and the beliefs of individuals with experience of application-assessment. This design uses thematic analysis, or reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) as a method (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2019; 2021). This is a new approach, designed to provide insight into the rules of the game, what Bourdieu (1992; 1993b) described as the *field’s doxa*. Information about these rules is

analysed by considering how official-discourse promoted freedom and ‘legitimised’ ‘good’ schools, how a sample of established free schools promoted innovation, and the beliefs a group of individuals involved with free school applications described within interviews. Section four analyses what this research data reveals about the *field’s doxa*, and how this may have led to what Bourdieu described as a type of ‘*misrecognition*’, an acceptance of the way rules would appear logical and commonsense, but obscuring how they might be considered as essentially arbitrary. The application of this theoretical approach, design and methods make the research unique and ground-breaking. The thesis structure is summarised in figure 1.3.

*Figure 1.3 Thesis structure*

| Section | Content |
|---|---|
| Section 1 | 1. Analysis of the landscape of 2010 school-supply side reform in England and the tensions between freedom and regulation (chapter 2).<br>2. A literature review focused on the features of school-choice markets and its impact on school characteristics and parent-consumers. The review also considers how field theory has been used as a conceptual framework to explore the relationship between power and control within education (chapter 3). |
| Section 2 | 3. Research design and methods using reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) to understand the rules which underpinned the *field* of school-supply (chapter 4). |
| Section 3 | 4. Analysis of the *field's doxa* and potential *misrecognition*:<br>1. Themes used to define freedom, innovation and 'good' school characteristics within policy-discourse (legitimisation), whilst alternative approaches were de-legitimised (chapter 5).<br>2. How 'established' free schools presented information about freedom and innovation within the conditions of service, pay and curriculum promoted as evidence of 'freedom' (chapter 6)<br>3. The perceptions of actors involved with free schools about the interface between freedom, innovation and 'good' school characteristics as part of the field's *doxa* (chapter 7). |
| Section 4 | 5. Discussion of research findings, including the field's doxa and how those involved may have *misrecognised* its arbitrary nature. This leads to the conclusion (chapter 8) |

## 1.9 Summary

This chapter has noted how 2010 official-discourse positioned free schools as an object, a superior school-type, with proposers benefitting from a freedom to innovate. However, free school proposals were assessed by the DfE, with final approval controlled by government ministers. The tensions between individual freedom and central government control lie at the heart of this thesis and the next chapter will analyse key elements of the context which post-2010 free schools operated in; what is described here as the landscape of 2010 school-supply. This provides information

about key drivers which had already influenced England’s school system, especially the shift between professional freedom and central control, with a consequential impact on the characteristics of ‘good’ schools. No attempt will be made to explore policy differences between Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England, or points where national government education policies either diverged, or overlapped. The focus is England, because free schools were only opened in this country.

# 2. The landscape of post-2010 school supply reform

## 2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter noted how the 2010 free school policy appears to reflect an interface between the individual freedom of proposers and central government controls over application-assessment or, for open schools, GPMR. This chapter notes some key drivers which had shaped the existing 2010 school-supply landscape, including previous shifts in the relationship between teacher's individual freedom and central control over a school curriculum. It was noted in 1.7 how the Conservative's 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) represented a significant piece of legislation, introducing a control framework over what is taught in schools and the GPMR used to discipline much of England's state-funded school system. By 2010 GPMR was widely accepted as a framework to define the curriculum taught in schools. It was embedded in tests used to evaluate performance, and school inspections. The impact of GPMR on school characteristics reflected what Tyack and Tobin (1994) described as a 'grammar of schooling', the widely accepted everyday practice which defined the 'language' of schools. GPMR also positioned school value within a market-led 'school-choice' framework, in a similar way to markets accepted within countries such as USA, Australia and New Zealand (Whitty, 1997). This globalised education reform movement, or GERM (Sahlberg, 2012), defined value through the competition of the market. The 2010 school-supply landscape might therefore be viewed as an extension of an existing socio-political framework commonly described as 'neo-liberalism' (Gordon and Whitty, 1997; Bunar, 2008;

Angus, 2015), an arena defined by market freedom, coupled with central steering and control (Steer *et al.*, 2007). This chapter evaluates a potential link between the discipline of GPMR on individuals and schools (Foucault, 1979), especially on a 'grammar' of schooling (Tyack and Tobin, 1994) located within a school curriculum, and how freedom might be mediated by controls over entry to a *field* (Bourdieu, 1990a; 1990b; 1993a), and maintenance of position within it.

### 2.2 Neo-liberal markets, school value and codification

The impact of reform on 'school leaders', a term commonly recognised within schools in 2010 as a collective group consisting of school headteachers, school leadership teams and governors forms an important part of this study. Free school proposals required these individuals to make choices about freedoms promoted within official-discourse, but mediated by an assessment made by the DfE of suitability and quality. These were the 'real world' choices (Robson, 2016) which defined the freedom available for free school proposers operating within a neo-liberal school-choice framework. The origins of the term neo-liberalism are rooted in nineteenth century economics, but the term has been adopted by philosophers, such as Foucault (1979), to explain how state discourse can be used to justify and position capitalist interventions into public service provision. This may have a potentially negative impact on some social groups and some researchers have adopted a critical view of the way public service reforms are presented as liberal, but may contribute to social stratification. For example, GPMR might be presented as logical and necessary,

using a discourse which masks its negative impact on some social groups. Ball (2017, p. 57) identified the way England's schooling system had been shaped by a series of 'shifts' and 'ruptures' within the 'form and modalities of the state', identifying four key phases: i) 'modern' (or interventionist) 1870 – 1944, ii) 'welfare' 1944 -1976, iii) 'neoliberal' 1976 – 1997 and iv) 'managerial or competition' 1997 – 2013. The 1988 ERA was seen by Ball as especially significant, introducing a shift from post-war 'welfarism' towards neo-liberal 'individualism', a political-economic framework which replaced the values embedded within the universal welfarist provision established after the second world war (Ball, 2017). The ERA had shaped a school-supply system defined by the freedom of 'citizen consumers', utilising a type of 'market exchange mediated by the cash-nexus' (Clarke, Newman and Westmarland, 2007) and what Friedman (1962), an adviser to Thatcher, had promoted as the benefits of 'monetarism'. Friedman promoted the value of institutional 'freedom' and, in this context, was a strong advocate of school-choice freedom for parent-consumers. The existing Keynesian economic model, which had unproblematically accommodated public and private sector fields of economic activity, with differing value systems, was replaced by the market, which would provide a value for everything. Ball (2017) also noted how education reform had included elements of 'dissolution', a dismantling of the old ways, whilst also being driven by a type of 'conservation', a replaying of past ideas and beliefs about how schools should be organised.

Gordon and Whitty (1997) suggested that neoliberalism, within the context of education reform, had been positioned by the political right as a type of freedom, underpinned by the value of local autonomy, reduced bureaucracy and increased

parent-consumer choice. Gunter and Thomson (2009, p.473), commenting on New Labour education policy, noted the apparent acceptance of 'neoliberal policy dispositions' manifested within 'all or some of its five key policy planks':

> *(1) standards, and in particular measures that an imaginary "middle England" could understand in the form of examination results, and standardisation through a common curriculum secured through uniform content, timing and lesson structure;*
>
> *(2) responsibility, where those who worked in education would have to be seen to act on issues that previously they had allegedly neglected;*
>
> *(3) accountability, where those with new autonomy for local decisions would have to answer for the quality of outcomes and show that they had made a difference to those outcomes;*
>
> *(4) flexibility, where teachers and headteachers would become a part of a school workforce where demarcation boundaries regarding work would be challenged and redrawn; and*
>
> *(5) respect, where once the above had been achieved, the school workforce could claim respect and thus make a case for being worthy and valued by parents, students and the wider community (see Ball, 2008).*
>
> **(Gunter and Thomson, 2009, p. 473)**

However, Ball suggested that neo liberalism is 'one of those terms that is used so widely and so loosely that it is in danger of becoming meaningless' (Ball, 2012a, p.

3). Drawing on the work of Ong (2006), he proposed that neo-liberalism reflected a set of ‘reconfigured relationships’ between ‘governing and the governed, power and knowledge, and sovereignty and territoriality’ (Ball, 2012b, p. 3). Apple (2005; 2006), drawing on Dale (1989), and commenting on similar reforms in the USA, described a framework of market-led school-choice as a type of ‘conservative modernisation’. Apple identified how schooling reform had been shaped by four under-pinning drivers: i) ‘Neo-liberalism’, defined by schooling, choice, and democracy, ii) ‘Neo-conservatism’: the teaching of ‘real’ knowledge, iii) ‘Authoritarian populism’: legitimacy, or schooling as ‘God wanted it’, and iv) ‘The professional and managerial new middle class’: a group of parents in favour of ‘more testing, more often’, a group able to choose the best schools. Apple also emphasised the way governments had, since the mid-1980s, de-legitimised public services as inefficient, whilst private services were legitimised as economically efficient, high-quality and preferable. Apple suggested that neo-liberalism allowed pupils to be positioned as a form of ‘human capital’, part of a ‘vast supermarket’ where blame for failure could be assigned to lack of effort, deviant behaviour, or poor aspiration. School-choice markets could be promoted as a type of benefit for ‘disadvantaged’ pupils, providing a site where they might compete successfully with others. Apple, in a similar way to Ball (2017), also identified how neo-conservatism drew on a complementary type of discourse, a ‘romantic appraisal of the past’, where ‘real knowledge’ provided a control mechanism, enabling pupils to know their place (Apple, 2005). The values embedded within neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism raise important questions about the social impact of education reform, especially the way it might privilege some individuals, or social groups (Apple, 2006).

The 2010 coalition government education reforms, including the development of free schools, built on an established system where the market already determined the 'value' of pupils, teachers and schools. This value was embedded within the framework of central government GPMR and its hierarchies of performance and worth. The 2010 free schools appear 'codified' (Thomson, 2005), positioned as superior within the coalition's official-discourse, the speeches, documents and websites which defined education policies. A key part of codification was benefits brought by innovation freedom granted to free school proposers. However, as already noted, this was never a free-for-all, and central government controlled entry through application-assessment and, once open, GPMR. There was a potential tension between individual freedom and the central controls required to ensure the policy was successful, and new schools were 'good'. The tensions between individual freedom and central control were not, however, new. They had, for example, been reflected in an uneasy relationship between central government and some professionals prior to the 1988 ERA (Ball, 2017). A series of industrial disputes over pay and conditions of service in the 1980s (Ball, 2017) led to increased central government control over the pay, appraisal and working conditions of teachers, and the 1988 ERA imposed central control over what was taught in state-funded schools. England's national curriculum defined the knowledge to be covered at each stage of learning (key stage), and tests used to measure the performance of pupils, teachers and schools. This curriculum defined 'official' subjects, a hierarchy of knowledge and a government-controlled, age-related curriculum content (Apple, 1993; 2004; 2013). The official curriculum provided the cultural values defined within a competetive arena and the 'apparently objective nature of the capital involved (tests, data and

reports) reflected the official value assigned to particular forms of knowledge and ways of knowing' (Thomson, 2005, p. 744).

The central control which underpinned the 1988 ERA represented a shift away from the professional control of teachers. This shift can be seen to have been facilitated by a speech made by Callaghan, a Labour prime minister, at Ruskin College Oxford in 1976 (Callaghan,1976). Callaghan voiced concerns about poor discipline in schools, low standards in examinations and the negative influence of profession-led 'progressive' teaching. These 'progressive' methods, derived from education 'theory' designed to challenge nineteenth century schooling models, were seen as dangerous (Ball, 2017). Callaghan highlighted a lack of focus on basic subjects (literacy and numeracy), and suggested that schools did not prepare young people well for employment. This speech reflected an emerging political distrust of professional freedom and Ball (1984, p. 8) suggested it marked the start of a period marked by a lack of confidence in teachers. Although Callaghan did not propose that education should be 'opened up' to a type of market pressure defined through parent choice (Ball, 2017), he may have contributed to the development of a parent 'choice' agenda, something already highlighted by Shirley Williams (Secretary of State for Education 1978 to 1979), see Hansard (1978). The 1988 ERA shifted the concept of freedom in schools away from teacher professionalism to a type of market choice freedom available for parent-consumers.

Post-1988 governments consistently emphasised the benefits of a type of economic 'freedom' for school leaders (Levačić, 1995), where local management of schools (LMS) reduced the power of LAs. This economic freedom was balanced by GPMR controls, facilitating a type of surveillance required within a neo-liberal school-choice

model. GPMR was part of the market’s discipline, providing signals for parent-consumers, or ‘purchasers’, who could utilise performance information to make decisions about choice of a ‘good’ school ‘provider’ (Whitty, 2008). Subsequent Conservative party reforms, led by Major, built on similar values of market diversity, introducing a Technology College status ‘specialisation’ for secondary schools and, after 1993, plans for new schools opened in response to ‘parental demand’. These new schools also seemed to allow an entry point to school-supply for under-represented faith groups although, as Walford (2000) noted, few schools opened. However, the concept paved the way for a key element of the 2010 free school policy. The ‘Big Society’ (Cameron, 2011a; Goodwin, 2011; Leeder and Mabbett, 2011; Higham, 2014a) seemed to allow parents, charities and community groups to open new free schools.

It has been noted how a key lever within England’s post-1988 school-supply reform was its positioning of pupils, teachers and schools within a value hierarchy defined through GPMR. This value signalled ‘good’ schools and ‘good’ pupils to parent-consumers and regulators (Apple,2006). The 1988 ERA also introduced new high-value school-types, an example of school-supply side reform and City Technology Colleges (CTC), for example, were positioned as a high-value commodity through legal status and independence. These new state-funded schools, for secondary age pupils, were relatively small in scale, but symbolically important, (Dale, 1989; MacCulloch, 1989; McCulloch, 1989; Gewirtz, Whitty and Edwards, 1992). The CTCs were codified’ as superior, providing a change within the *field’s* ‘currency-value’ (Thomson, 2005). The superior value of CTCs drew on a government-defined freedom, especially their increased flexibility over teachers’ pay and conditions of

service, or a type of curriculum freedom which allowed leaders to work outside the national curriculum. Superior codification was linked to school-type legal status, and a direct funding relationship between these ‘independent’ schools and central government. The Conservative’s 1988 grant maintained (GM) schools were promoted as a superior school type in a similar way. This ‘new’ legal status offered existing schools an economic freedom, allowing leaders to ‘opt out’ of local education authority (LEA) control. GM status was attractive and popular, offering preferential funding, greater opportunities for capital investment or, in a few cases, a way to resist local school reorganisation plans (Halpin and Fitz, 1990; Fitz, Halpin and Power, 1993; Levačić and Hardman, 1999). The market superiority of GM schools was supported by the way many high-status grammar schools, and other popular state-funded schools, took up this option (Halpin, Power and Fitz, 1991; 1993; Fitz, Halpin and Power, 1993; Walford, 2000). However, although the CTCs and GM schools appeared to provide additional freedom for leaders and diversity for parent-consumers (Halpin and Fitz, 1990; Power and Fitz, 1991; Fitz, Halpin and Power, 1993; 1997; Halpin, Power and Fitz, 1993; Halpin, Pettigrew and MacLure, 1997), they were still controlled by the GPMR of official tests and examinations, government school performance tables and Ofsted inspections.

The New Labour governments (1997-2010) built on a similar trajectory of private sector efficiency and freedom through its ‘Third Way’ (Power and Whitty, 1999), leading to what Ball (2017) described as a ‘managerial’, or ‘competition’ state. The ‘welfarism’ of universal state provision was replaced by a ‘modern’ compromise, based on ‘contestability’ (Giddens, 1999; Power and Whitty, 1999). Competing providers would bring energy and innovation, driven by a pressure for increased

quality from parent-consumer choice. New Labour changed some elements of school-supply by phasing out the 'assisted places scheme', which had allowed 'bright' pupils to access funded places at private schools (Chitty, 2013; Heath *et al.*, 2013; Goodwin, 2015). Tensions which had been created through the funding advantages available within GM status (West, 2000) were also addressed. School legal status was redefined into three categories: a) 'Community', local authority schools which employ staff, are responsible for admissions and own the estate, b) 'Aided', a voluntary aided, or VA school, with a foundation or trust, usually a religious organisation c) 'Foundation', funded by central government, via the local authority, where a governing body employs staff and is responsible for admissions. Foundation schools were later supplemented by the development of 'trust' schools, a partnership between schools and another business, or community organisation.

New Labour also introduced new controls over school leaders, introducing a 'school improvement' model (Mortimore, 1993) and an extensive 'National Strategies' programme, run in partnership with the private sector. This outlined 'official' approaches to 'good' teaching pedagogy (Heath et al., 2013), linked to market credentials defined within GPMR performance. It redefined the way leaders should evaluate 'good' teaching and 'good' teachers. New Labour retained, or strengthened, the national curriculum, testing of pupils, performance tables and inspection (Power and Whitty, 1999), intervening in schools seen as under-performing. New Labour also 'codified' the superior value of new independent school-types, introducing post-2000 academies, originally called 'City Academies'. These 'new' schools were positioned as symbolically superior, drawing on the model created through the Conservative's CTCs. The academies had iconic, architect-designed buildings, and

set up in ‘disadvantaged’ communities viewed, by government, as having suffered many years of ‘low aspiration’ (West and Pennell, 2002; Vidler and Clarke, 2005; Whitty, 2008; Goodwin, 2011;  2015; Chitty, 2013; Heath *et al.*, 2013). The characteristics which made academies superior were, however, seen by some critics as lacking innovation, reflecting ‘a conservative and neoliberal restoration project’ (Gunter and McGinity, 2014) which re-emphasised traditional, ‘good school’ characteristics (Halpin, Power and Fitz, 1997). The superior value assigned to academy independent state-funded school legal status was defined by freedom, but did not appear to lead to actual innovation within the characteristics of schools.

### 2.3 The ‘grammar’ of schools in England’s school-supply 2010 landscape

The social and cultural values which underpin how schools are organised are complex and multi-layered. They are shaped by individual freedom and liberty, as well as the controls of GPMR. They have an impact on the way schools are organised and managed, including the type of curriculum adopted, the way teaching is organised and the relationships between adults and pupils. Tyack and Tobin (1994), for example, described how, despite many years of ‘reform’, publicly-funded schools in the USA, reflected what they described as a standard ‘grammar’ of schooling, analogous to the way ‘grammar organizes meaning in language’:

*Neither the grammar of schooling nor the grammar of speech needs to be consciously understood to operate smoothly. Indeed, much of the grammar of schooling has become so well established that it is typically taken for granted as just the way schools are.*

**(Tyack and Tobin, 1994, p. 454)**

This 'grammar' of schooling had, over time, been shaped by the way schools were set up, controlled and regulated by governments. It was evident within tensions between the professional freedom of teachers and control frameworks imposed on them. The trajectory of what was taught in schools, and how it should be taught, reflected the cultural and social 'values' of the individuals and groups who dominated:

*They are the historical product of particular groups with particular interests and values at particular times—hence political in origin. The timing of reforms in the organizational life cycle is important—reforms that got in on the ground floor of organizational development had a good chance of becoming institutionalized.*

**(Tyack and Tobin, 1994, p. 476)**

Tyack and Tobin noted how the 'grammar' of schooling in school-choice markets, such as in USA schools, had remained remarkably consistent over time, despite challenges posed through a period of professional-led innovation in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s:

> *Typically, they regarded the old grammar of schooling as rigid, hierarchical, and based on a negative view of human nature. Students, the old system implicitly announced, were young workers who needed to be compelled to learn by their supervisors—teachers—in classes standardized in size, time, space, and subjects. Instead, the young should be seen as active, intellectually curious, and capable of taking charge of their own learning.*
>
> **(Tyack and Tobin, 1994, p. 477).**

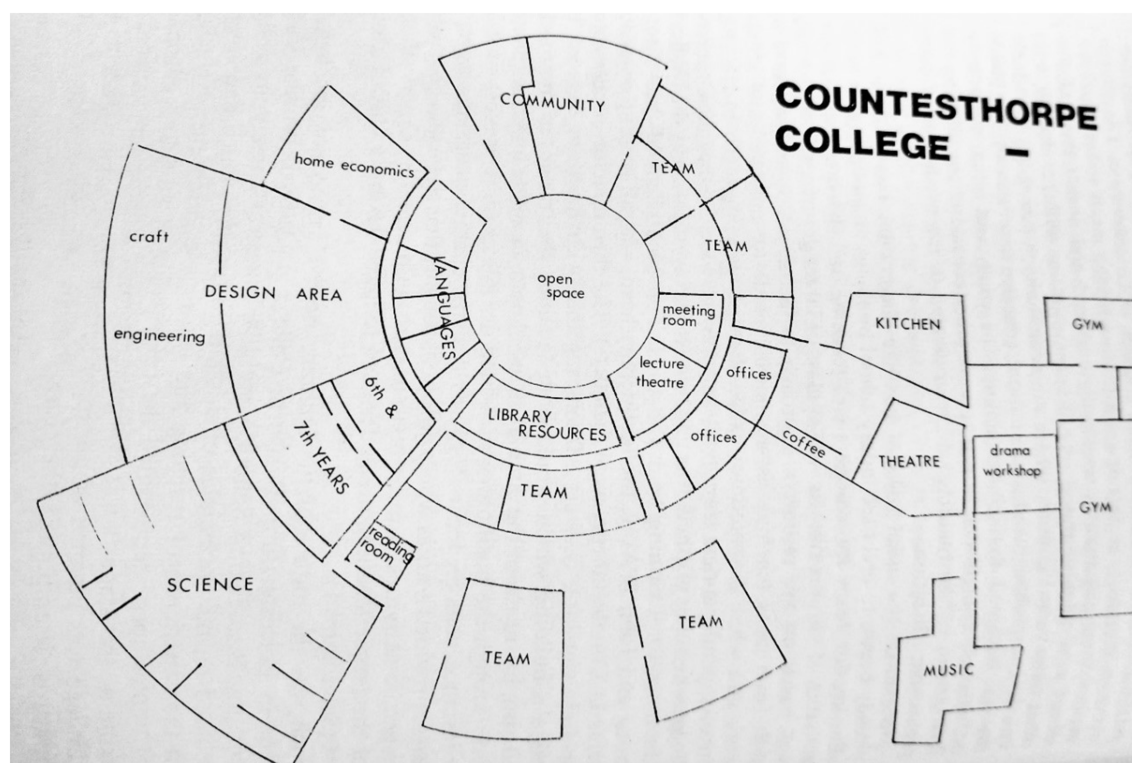
The ’grammar’ of England’s state-funded schools in 2010 had been shaped by key policy drivers. They included the 1988 ERA, and its curriculum controls, or New Labour’s post-1997 National Strategies programme, which defined how ‘good’ teaching should be organised (Heath et al., 2013) are significant. England’s 2010 school-supply also retained elements of a ‘grammar’ which, as Tyack and Tobin had noted, ‘got in on the ground floor’. It had, for example, been influenced by the way universal schooling had initially been designed to support an increasingly industrialised economy in the nineteenth century (Chitty, 1989). School characteristics in England had also been shaped by the priorities promoted by religious groups, charities, employers and local authorities. This had led, by 2010, to a ‘grammar’ which reflected subjects taught, school age-range, length of school day, employment conditions of staff, approaches to teaching faith, and use of assessment. This ‘grammar’ was embedded within the everyday ‘language’ of a school day, its lesson timings, assemblies, pastoral systems and relationships with key stakeholders, especially parents, professionals, politicians, or employers. Anyone who has been lucky enough to visit numerous schools around the country, as I have,

will probably have come to recognise, in an unconscious way, elements of England's standard 'grammar' of schooling. It differs across school-types, so private schools, grammar schools, alternative provision schools or early years settings have their own expectations, routines and rules. The 'grammar' of schools also reflects pupil characteristics, especially in special schools, or alternative provision schools (AP).

A key influence on the development of England's 'grammar' of schooling was a theory of fixed, inherited intelligence, first introduced by Burt (1917; 1948), and used after 1948 to develop a differentiated secondary school system. This had led to the development of a small number of technical schools, a larger group of secondary modern schools, and a high value assigned to selective grammar schools. The selective schools were still viewed by some as part of a 'meritocratic' system in 2010, providing elements of a 'good' independent (private) education, at no cost. They were promoted as allowing social mobility, although Banks (1998) suggested they may have maintained, or even widened, social division. England's selective grammar schools provided a blueprint for a type of high-status, high-quality state-funded 'good' school. Their superior quality was codified by filtering-in 'good' pupils, offering a type of curriculum focused on 'academic' subjects, formal discipline systems and a smart uniform. The concept of selection in England was unpopular with some parents and Tyack and Tobin (1994) noted how professionals had used freedom to challenge the status quo during the 'tumultuous' sixties. In England the introduction of secondary age comprehensive schools, 'recommended' by a Labour government after the 1964 election victory (The Department of Education and Science, 1965a), had the potential to remove the stigma of failure. These schools required teachers with considerable freedom over a school curriculum to develop new ways of organising learning,

supported by the ‘Schools Council’ (1964 – 1984) which developed new forms of assessment (Simon, 1991; 1992a). Some LEAs played a key role in devising and enabling these new school-types, influencing building design, curriculum and learning pedagogy. Leicestershire, for example, built new ‘community’ comprehensive schools, such as Countesthorpe Community College, with ‘open-plan’ buildings, designed to promoted ‘team teaching’, and ‘inter-disciplinary’ subject teaching. A type of professional-led curriculum innovation and freedom was built into the fabric of this new school, see figure 2.1:

*Figure 2.1 Counteshorpe school, a design facilitating team teaching and an integrated curriculum*




There were similar innovations within the design and ‘grammar’ of some other comprehensive schools (Ball, 1981; 1984; Heath, 1984; Chitty, 2002; 2005; Haydn, 2004). The freedom of these schools meant they were not, in terms of the organisation of learning, cohesive (Chitty, 2002; 2017). They were, however, linked

by providing a framework which enabled teachers to innovate (Reese, 2001; Hope, 2018; Wyse et al., 2018). However, the practice developed within comprehensive schools became a focal point for a type of critical neo-conservatism (Apple, 2005). It was noted in 2.2 how Callaghan had raised concerns about the impact of this freedom in 1976, echoing a narrative strongly articulated within the influential right wing *Black Papers* (Cox and Dyson, 1971). There was a call within the political right for a return to schools with high standards of discipline, and an academic curriculum.

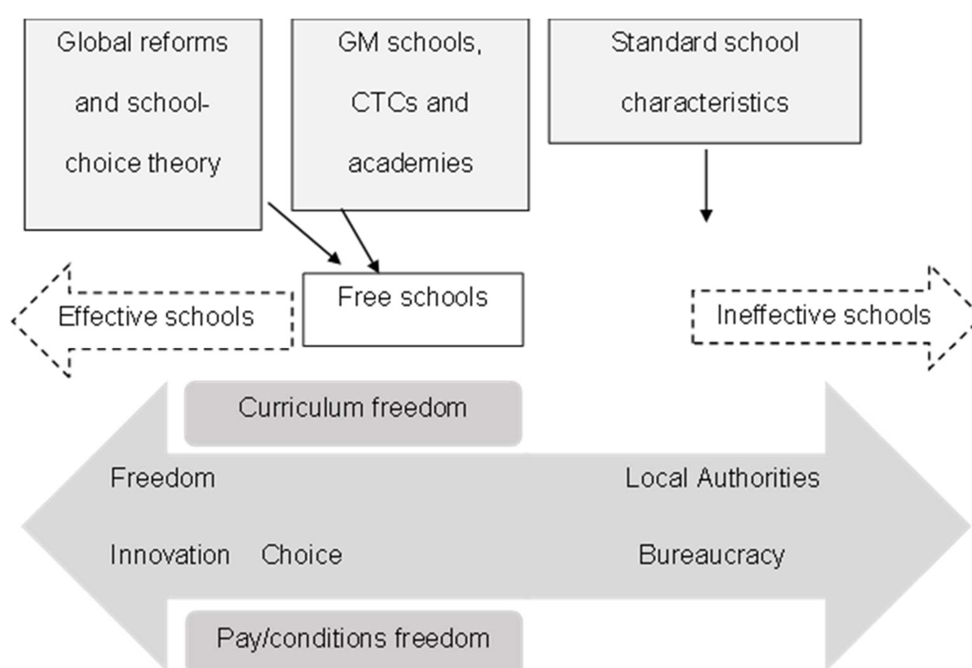
Professional-led innovation which had challenged this orthodoxy was positioned as a downward spiral towards uniformity and a form of mediocrity. Criticism focused on the innovation within comprehensive schools, especially mixed ability teaching, or 'non-academic' subjects, such as sociology. This practice was described as anti-traditional and 'progressive' (Darling, 1986; Brehony, 2001; Reese, 2001; Labaree, 2005; Wyse *et al.*, 2018). In this context some pupils were seen as a particular problem, with 'disruptive and determined minorities', and schools 'where few teachers can keep order', or high staff turnover, which 'effectively interrupts any establishment of tradition'. The William Tyndale primary school, a London primary school, attracted especial criticism in the mid-1970s. A group of teachers had adopted significant elements of 'pupil-centred' freedom, leading to a controversial break down in discipline. The Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) was viewed as complicit and individual teachers were seen to be exercising excessive curriculum control, operating within a 'secret garden' (Lawton, 1975; 1979). There was an increasingly uneasy relationship between local government, central government and government inspectors (HMI), what Chitty described as a 'tension system' (Chitty, 1989; 1998), which paved the way for the Conservative's 1988 ERA.

Established religions had, over time, also played a key role in the development of school characteristics, with around one third of England's 2010 state-funded secondary schools also having a 'faith' designation as either 'voluntary aided' (VA) or 'voluntary controlled' (VC). This reflected previous compromises which had allowed church schools to expand and become assimilated into England's universal state-funding system. The school-supply landscape had not, however, reflected decades of immigration in England after the Second World War. Hindu, Sikh, Muslim or other minority' faith parent-consumers did not have similar access to state-funded faith schools. although might have welcomed greater school diversity. The 2010 free school policy seemed to provide an opportunity for these parent-consumers to enter the school-supply market, whilst also raising additional questions about the impact of faith schools on pupil segregation (Allen and West; 2009; Green, 2018).

By 2010 England's school-supply system had already been reshaped by two decades of neo-liberal reform. Chitty (2005) suggested that parent-consumers had a potentially 'bewildering variety' of secondary school choice. This allowed parent-consumers with strong economic resources and social capital to access 'good' schools (Reay, 2006; 2012). Choice within primary schools was more limited, reflecting how many were small and rural, with perhaps more limited capacity for independence, or innovation. The landscape of choice included, for some parent-consumers, 'high-status' state-funded schools, whilst others could opt for 'good' private schools, such as independent school council schools (ISC), a lobby group which represents seven 'independent school associations'. The private school-supply sector also included non-ISC schools of various types, such as 'Steiner' Schools (Woods and Woods, 2006; Ashley, 2009), or 'Montessori' Schools (Al, Sari and

Kahya, 2012; Marshall, 2017), both based on a type of ‘progressive’ education theory, which valued pupils’ emotional and social development over academic development. The 2010 official-discourse promoted free school superiority within a hierarchy of school value. The high value of effective new ‘independent’ schools drew on global reform and characteristics which had underpinned the previous Conservative CTCs and New Labour’s academies, see figure 2.2:

*Figure 2.2 The ‘official’ discourse landscape of 2010 school-supply reform*




## 2.4 Curriculum freedom

The 2010 free schools were partly codified by the coalition government as superior through their additional curriculum freedom, but within a context where, since 1988, schools had been strongly steered by the cultural values and controls embedded within England’s official national curriculum, national tests, examinations and

government school performance tables. Free school proposers were also confronted by the controls of an existing GPMR framework of national tests and examinations (Department for Education, 2013c; 2013d) which defined the curriculum. In addition to introducing new school-types the 2010 coalition recalibrated the national curriculum to ensure it was more ‘rigorous’, a reform justified by a need for greater international competiveness, and the development of ‘good’ citizens, who understood our ‘nation’s history’ and ‘take pride in our country’s past’ (The Conservative Party, 2007, p. 11). Similar tensions operated within examinations for pupils aged 16 – 19. The recalibrated currency-value of tests, examinations and qualifications after 2010 emphasised the importance of ‘academic’ subjects, the cultural values defined through ‘official knowledge’ and the requirement for ‘good’ pupils to gain officially sanctioned ‘good’ GCSE and A level qualifications. The currency-value of ‘good’ schools and ‘good’ pupils was defined by the government after 2010 as achieving the English Baccalaureate benchmark, a measure used to assess performance in ‘rigorous’ qualifications taken in English Language, English literature, science, foreign languages, and humanities. The 2010 reforms also repositioned many vocational qualifications as poor ‘quality’ and most were removed from government-devised school performance tables (Department for Education, 2011h). The reshaped currency-value (Thomson, 2005) of the recalibrated tests and examinations, underpinned by GPMR central government controls were, however, set against the superior value assigned to free school independence and freedom, meaning that proposers had to make sense of what ‘freedom’ meant.

An ‘official’ curriculum, which defines the subjects and content taught by schools, can be seen as an expression of the power of centralised control, especially where it is

linked to associated tests (Apple, 2006), such as England's GPMR framework. An 'official' curriculum, such as England's national curriculum, imposes a particular type of discipline and control over schools, pupils and parents (Bourdieu, 1990a). It shapes how a school 'grammar' is organised and has an impact on the way learners behave, including their attitudes to school and society (Bowles and Gintis, 1976). As Thomson (2005, p. 744) noted, 'the use of the language of tests and of positivism seems natural' within a context where a narrow curriculum definition is controlled by central government. However, a curriculum can also be defined as more than just a set of official subjects, or specified content to be taught and then tested. Ross (2003), for example, noted how a 1985 HMI curriculum report had proposed that a curriculum actually consisted of everything that happens in a school, including its 'ethos' (The Department of Education and Science, 1985, p. 7):

> *A school's curriculum consists of all those activities designed or encouraged within its organisational framework to promote the intellectual, personal, social and physical development of its pupils. It includes not only the formal programme of lessons, but also the 'informal' programme of so-called extracurricular activities as well as all those features which produce the school's 'ethos', such as the quality of relationships, the concern for equality of opportunity, the values exemplified in the way the schools sets about its task and the way in which it is organised and managed.*

**The Department of Education and Science, 1985**

Ross (2003, p. 27) noted that a curriculum viewed in this way reflects what is 'hidden', as well as 'formal definitions of subject content':

> *The term is often confined to formal definitions of what is to be taught in specific institutions—perhaps even as narrow as the notion of a National Curriculum that confines its coverage to the prescribed content of learning during the years of compulsory education. But even within compulsory education, it is also possible to refer to the 'hidden' curriculum: that which is not overtly stated, and which may be unintentionally passed on through the processes of education.*
>
> ***Ross (2003, p. 27)***

These 'hidden' elements would be translated into the fabric of a school, influencing its 'grammar'. It would mean, for example, that 'uniforms and uniformity, time-keeping, subservience and obedience, the acceptance of orders and of roles imposed by others, social stratification and hierarchies' would all become significant (Ross, 2003, p. 27).

Ross (2003) noted how the 1988 ERA had defined a type of 'classical humanist' curriculum, a 'content-driven' curriculum which determined 'the ground on which the official pedagogic discourse has been largely fought' (Ross, 2003, p. 124). Bernstein, an influential English sociologist, suggested that a strongly 'framed' curriculum, with clear boundaries between subjects, provided a limiting control over the 'selection, organisation, pacing and timing of the knowledge transmitted' (Bernstein, 1971a; 1971b). This was an example of what Apple later described as 'educating the right way' (Apple, 2006), defined by a curriculum controlled by the official cultural values

viewed as most important. These tensions were reflected in a long trajectory of curriculum 'reform' within England. Matthew Arnold (1889) for example, an influential nineteenth century writer and government school inspector, had defined an ideal curriculum as 'liberal', enabling pupils to engage with 'the best that has been thought and said'. This liberal ideal of important knowledge had, as noted by Aldrich (2002), shaped the cultural values embedded in the 1904 code (Board of Education, 1904, p. 4):

> *Instruction in the English language and literature, at least one language other than English, geography, history, mathematics, science and drawing, with due provision for manual work and physical exercises; and, in a girls' school, for housewifery. Not less than 4½ hours per week must be allotted to English, geography and history; not less than 3½ hours to the language where only one is taken or less than 6 hours where two are taken; and not less than 7½ hours to science and mathematics, of which at least 3 must be for science. The instruction in science must be both theoretical and practical. Where two languages other than English are taken, and Latin is not one of them, the Board will require to be satisfied that the omission of Latin is for the advantage of the school.*
>
> **(Board of Education, 1904, p. 4)**

The debate over the importance of a liberal curriculum and what constituted high-value knowledge was still alive in 2010. For example, a pamphlet authored by Conway for Civitas, a right-leaning think-tank, suggested that, for some on the

political right, free schools provided a vehicle to re-emphaise these liberal ideals, and a break from the ‘straightjacket’ defined by the 1988 national curriculum:

> *While there is much wrong with state schooling in England today in consequence of the excessively constraining provisions of the 1988 Education Reform Act, the subjects whose study in schools it mandated do not form part of the problem. Rather, state schools only need freeing from excessive testing, an overly bureaucratised regime of inspection, and excessively pre-scriptive programmes of study, to be able once again to make provision of liberal education their central purpose.*
>
> **Conway (2010, p. XXV)**

The freedom of free schools was an important part of this liberal ideal.

Ross (2013) noted how alternative curriculum models were possible and could be seen as an articulation of broader cultural values. For example, a ‘two tier’ curriculum could provide an ‘objectives-driven’ model, drawing on the flexibility of an alternative examination framework and measurement system. The use of alternative ‘non-academic’ subjects, or qualifications, ‘offered to those pupils judged less able, or less suited to receive the high cultural capital of the elite’ (Ross, 2003, p. 143) might allow all pupils to achieve success. Some academic pupils would, for example, access a traditional, knowledge-rich curriculum, whilst ‘vocational’ subjects, and alternative qualifications would allow others to achieve different, but ‘good’, examination outcomes. England had experimented with this type of dual curriculum approach within post-1944 secondary modern schools (Turner, 1969; McCulloch and Sobell, 1994), and the post-1988 TVEI, or Technical and Vocational Initiative (Jamieson,

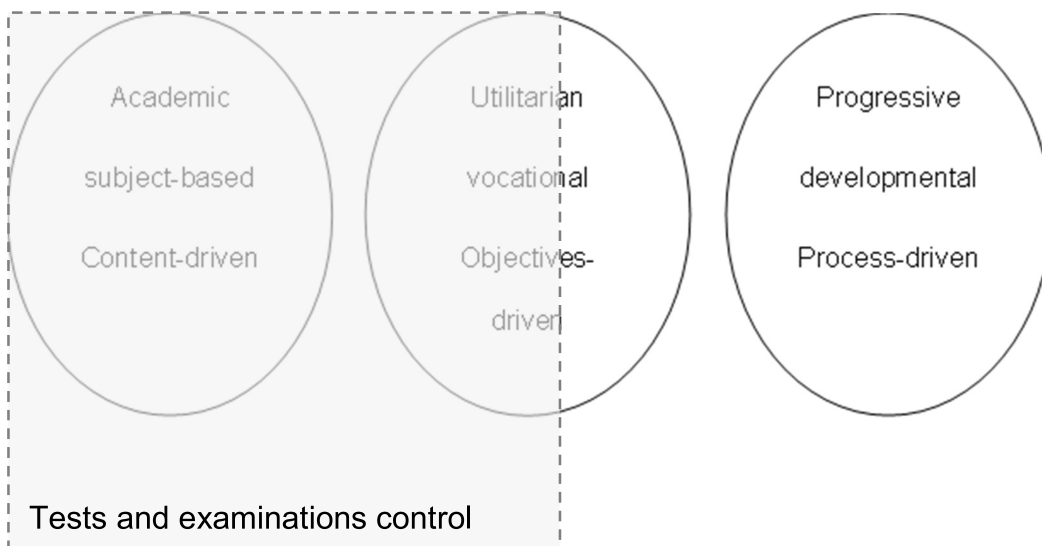
1993). New Labour’s 14-19 curriculum reforms (Pring, 2005) had aimed for a radical recalibration of examinations, bringing schools and FE colleges together within local area partnerships. The 2010 UTCs and studio schools also provided an option for pupils to study vocational qualifications and, as already noted, formed part of the free school programme. However, despite these modest experiments, vocational learning and non-traditional qualifications have never achieved parity of esteem within England’s GPMR control of state-funded schools. The pupils and schools associated with alternative qualifications have mostly been codified as being of lower value.

Ross (2003) described a third framework, a ‘process-driven’ curriculum, which reflected ideas promoted by key ‘progressive’ theorists (Brehony, 2001), such as Rousseau (Walter, 1996), Pestalozzi, Froebel, or Dewey (Dewey, 1923; Dewey and Dewey, 1915; Beckett, 2018). A ‘process-driven’ curriculum emphasises ‘pupil centred’ interests and values the importance of social development. It provides a site where teachers and learners can jointly develop pupil’s interests, and designed to reflect a child’s ‘natural’ learning development. This type of ‘progressive’ curriculum approach had been influential in England during the professional freedom of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. It had also informed key parts of the 1967 Plowden report (Kogan, 1987), an influential document which had shaped practice within England’s primary schools. ‘Progressive’ ideas, including Plowden, had also helped to shape the curriculum taught within primary teacher training courses (Beck, 2009; Whitty, 2014). Progressive theories were widely accepted in many international school-supply models, such as Steiner Schools, or Montessori Schools, and also informed elements of England’s private school-supply, where they were positioned,

unproblematically, as alternative ‘traditions’, (Badley, 1967; Stewart, 1968; James, 1990).

Ross described how a school-supply system defined by a curriculum which reflected official knowledge could be seen as ‘imposed’ and ‘hegemonic’, particularly through ‘the ways in which a curriculum might be assessed’ (Ross, 2003, p. 173). He also suggested that whilst differing curriculum frameworks had potential overlaps, they generally reflected mutually exclusive views about the purpose of schools, and how they should be organised. A school-supply system shaped by a strong framework of test and examinations could accommodate an objectives-driven curriculum, but requires that a wide range of knowledge, learning and examinations are assigned equal value. However, a progressive, developmental and process-driven curriculum cannot be accommodated within a framework where a government controls what schools teach. The tension between the way a curriculum can be imagined within the controls imposed by test and examinations is illustrated in figure 2.3:

*Figure 2.3 The impact of tests and examinations on curriculum-type in state-funded schools*



The recalibration of tests and examinations after 2010, with its focus on examination rigour and links to GPMR controls, can be seen as 'socially determined', a selection from a much greater range of possible content (Whitty, 1985). Bourdieu, an influential sociologist, suggested that schools which operate within a neo-liberal capitalist framework are, however, destined to value a particular form of cultural capital, especially the 'habitus', or habits of thought, assumptions and dispositions of the middle class (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Bourdieu, 1993a). Schools funded by the state need to promote a 'general disposition', or 'domains of thought and action' (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 184), providing a mechanism to filter pupils into particular positions. This provides a convenient way to categorise pupils and schools, an easy way to define 'effectiveness' (Beck, 2012; Young, 2013; 2014; Morgan, 2014). An 'official' curriculum (Apple, 1993; 2014) defined what was taught, and the knowledge expected for pupils within each 'Key Stage', or age range (Apple, 1993; 2006; 2013; 2014). 'Official knowledge' reflected a type of elite cultural capital (Apple, 2006) determined by politicians, and Apple (2019, p. 277) noted the way this had led to hidden effects on communities:

> *Whose knowledge is this? How did it become "official"? What is the relationship between this knowledge and how it is organized and taught and who has cultural, social, and economic capital in this society? Who benefits from these definitions of legitimate knowledge and who does not? What are the overt and hidden effects of educational reforms on real people and real communities?*
>
> **Apple (2019, p. 277)**

Apple (1993; 2004; 2013; 2014) described how official curriculum control contributed to continued social reproduction because schools were destined to teach ‘shared’, ‘common sense’ cultural and economic values; allowing some pupils to be tagged as eligible for higher level qualifications, or suitable employment. In a similar way Bernstein (1971b) suggested the way a society chooses to classify, transmit and evaluate educational knowledge ‘reflects both distribution of power and principles of social control’. Bernstein (1975) noted the strong control of a visible pedagogy, such as a collection of subjects in a ‘traditional’ school setting, defined and taught in a timetabled and regulated format. Learners in this context have little control over what and when they learn, since ‘visible’ pedagogies have a strong classification and strong frame. Bernstein contrasted this approach with a pedagogy where the sequence and pace of learning is fluid and loosely defined. These less visible pedagogies are characterised by their weak classification and weak frames.

An official curriculum control provides an example of what Bourdieu described as a schooling system controlled by the state (Bourdieu, 1989; 1993a; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), where types of cultural *capital* are given high value. This type of value system appeared to contribute to a ‘replication’ of social position (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Reay, 2006; 2012; 2017). High-status *capital* reflects middle-class values, which help to re-enforce an existing social position:

> *Children from this class enter school with key social and cultural cues, while working class and lower class students must acquire the knowledge and skills to negotiate their educational experience after they enter school. Although they can acquire the social, linguistic, and*

*cultural competencies which characterize the upper- middle and middle class, they can never achieve the natural familiarity of those born to these classes and are academically penalized on this basis. Because differences in academic achievement are normally explained by differences in ability rather than by cultural resources transmitted by the family, social transmission of privileges is itself legitimized, for academic standards are not seen as handicapping lower class children.*

**(Lamont and Lareau, 1988, p. 155)**

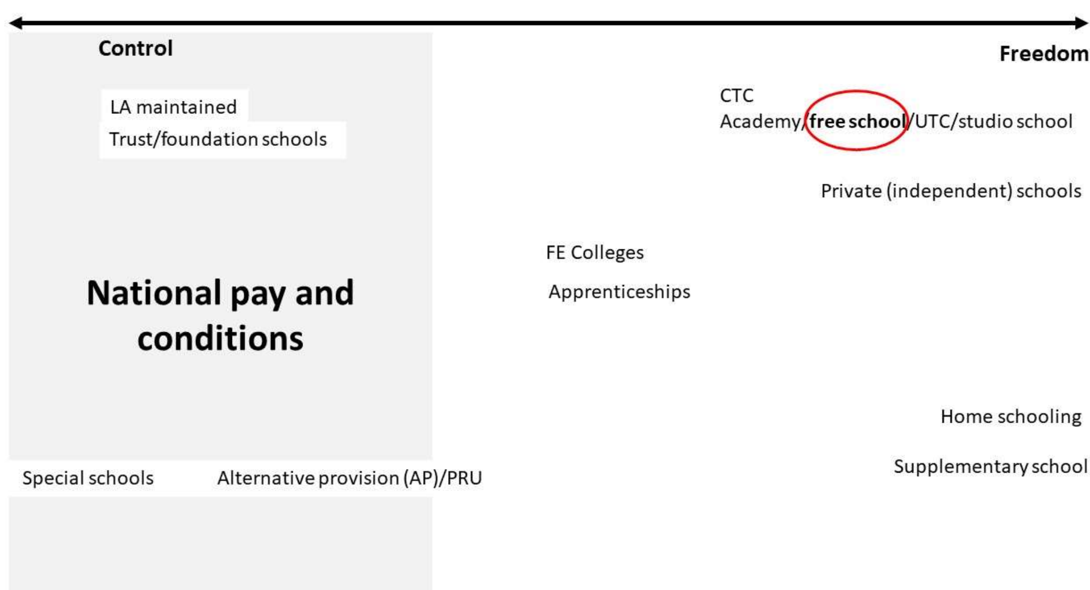
However, free schools appeared to allow proposers to operate within a framework of curriculum freedom, but within the context of the central control of GPMR. There were similar tensions within the relationship between pay and conditions of service freedom and the next section will consider their potential impact on free school proposer decision-making.

### 2.5 Pay and conditions freedom

Free schools were positioned as able to pay more for ‘good’ staff, reduce pay for not ‘good’ staff, or use cheap, but unqualified, teachers. Private sector efficiency was also linked to benefits gained through stronger systems to assess teacher ‘value’, and remove ‘ineffective’ teachers. Free schools had the freedom to opt out of national pay and conditions, allowing teachers to be paid according to their market value (Ball, 2003). This type of private sector ‘efficiency’ had already been utilised within previous Conservative CTCs and New Labour academies. Freedom from

national pay and conditions control was also available to private schools and, to a lesser extent, Further Education Colleges (FE), a type of vocationally-focused provision for post-16 pupils or adults which had been allowed freedom from the 'control' of LAs following incorporation in 1992. Figure 2.4 summaries the relationship between legal status, freedom and control within pay and conditions of service.

*Figure 2.4 Pay and conditions freedom for new 'independent' schools*




However, this freedom was set within a framework which, since the 1988 ERA, had been defined by national agreements and regulation, controlled through a framework of Teacher's Standards (Department for Education, 2011j), a Teachers' Pay and Conditions document (Department for Education, 2010l) or The Education (Teachers) Regulations (Parliament),1993. Although described as 'independent', the School Teachers Review Body (STRB), the body charged with determining teachers' pay and conditions, was centrally controlled. It included, for example, government approved appointees and gave 'the Secretary of State power to issue guidance on pay and conditions matters, to which those concerned must have regard'

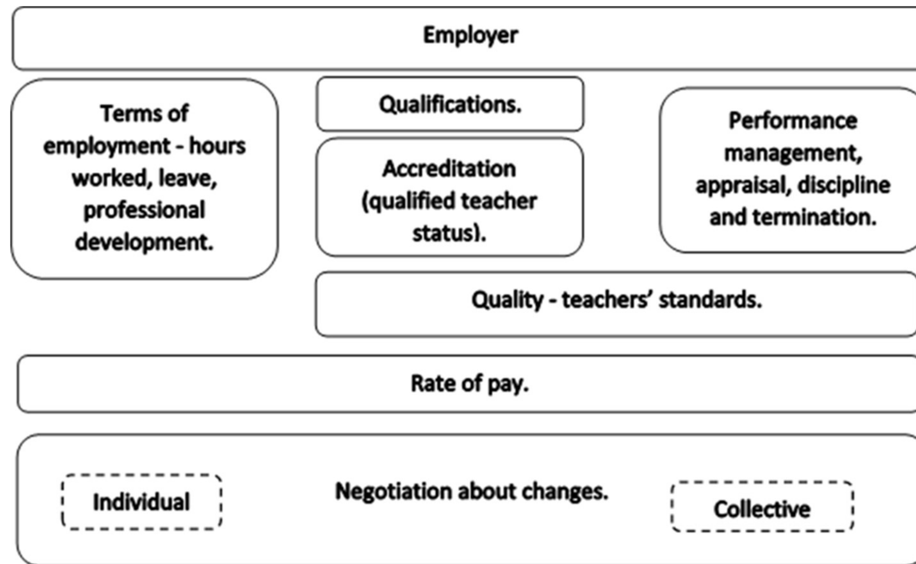
(Department for Education, 2010h, p. 1). The landscape in 2010 reflected the impact of previous reforms, which had seemed designed to create a 'compliant' profession, and remove the power of professional associations (Beck, 2008, p. 138):

> *Part of what is at stake here does seem to be an endeavour to create a compliant profession that nevertheless, at least in some ways, increasingly 'governs itself' in the desired ways, through acceptance of and involvement in the newly created institutional frameworks that have been brought into being.* **Beck (2008)**

The coalition government and subsequent Conservative governments had continued to update this national guidance (Department for Education, 2010h; 2019e; 2020), building on a control framework frst introduced by previous Thatcher Conservative governments. The subsequent Major Conservative governments and New Labour governments had, over time, reformed and controlled teachers' pay and conditions further.

In 2010 England's state-funded schools reflected the impact of two decades where central government had controlled the training, evaluation, pay and working conditions of teachers, see figure 2.5 for a summary of this framework:

*Figure 2.5 Elements of pay and conditions of teachers controlled by central government in 2010*




The controls over teacher 'performance', their qualifications and subjects taught, had increasingly reflected a value contribution they made to market 'currencies' (Ball, 2003). Gunter (2018, p. 32), described how the pay and conditions of teachers in England's education system had shifted towards an 'increase in localised pay and conditions frameworks and contracts, with incentives (performance related pay, bonuses) based on reaching targets'. School leaders already had significant 'flexibility' (Adnett, 2003; Atkinson, 2009; Farrell and Morris, 2009; OECD, 2012) and the existing framework in 2010 reflected the currency-value (Thomson, 2005) assigned to 'good' teachers, linked to 'good' outcomes in national tests and examinations. This has the potential to create perverse effects, such as encouraging teachers to focus on 'target' pupil groups, especially those who contribute most to school or personal performance measures, whilst 'neglecting' others (Atkinson, 2009). There may also be a tendecy to focus on teaching to the test (Stobart and Gipps, 1997) to maximise results. Reforms which control the value of teachers can be seen to have led to a system where professionals have become increasingly de-

skilled and de-moralised (Gunter, 2015). The tension between freedom and control is reflected in the way state-funded teachers have been contracted to work 1265 hours across a year since the 1988 ERA, but most have to work beyond this time to cover the many responsibilities required for their roles. Although teachers are commonly positioned within some right-wing media as ‘lazy’, or ‘incompetent’ (Daily Mail, 2014), workload is consistently viewd as a factor in poor retention of staff, especially soon after qualification as a teacher (Perryman and Calvert, 2020).

There is no evidence to demonstrate that increased pay ‘flexibility’, or use of stronger performance management systems increasingly common since 1988, has had a beneficial impact on schools, or parent-consumers (Wragg *et al.*, 2003; Hanushek and Rivkin, 2007; Farrell and Morris, 2009; OECD, 2012; Yuan *et al.*, 2013). A culture of ‘performativity’ (Ball, 2003) has, however, contributed to stress and caused significant numbers of young teachers to leave the profession soon after qualification (Wragg *et al.*, 2003; Mahony, Menter and Hextall, 2004; Atkinson, 2009; Dolton and Marcenaro-Gutierrez, 2011). By 2010 England’s schools were struggling to recruit teaching staff, and many experienced problems over retention, especially of newly qualified teachers (NQT). Research into the attitudes of NQTs suggests that many became quickly demotivated, with a significant number leaving within the first five years after qualification. The reasons for lack of teacher retention are complex, but staff cite a culture of ‘performance management’, where pay ‘progression’ is matched to pupil ‘performance’ within tests and examinations, or other school priority areas (Chamberlin *et al.*, 2002b; Adnett, 2003; Wragg *et al.*, 2003; Atkinson, 2009; Dolton and Marcenaro-Gutierrez, 2011; OECD, 2012b; Yuan *et al.*, 2013; Roch and Sai, 2017). Research into the impact of performance-; related pay has generally shown

little correlation between 'performance' systems and improved teacher effectiveness (Chamberlin *et al.*, 2002a; Harvey-Beavis, 2002; Adnett, 2003; Hanushek and Rivkin, 2007; Farrell and Morris, 2009; Dolton and Marcenaro-Gutierrez, 2011; OECD, 2012a; Britton and Propper, 2016; Gewirtz *et al.*, 2021).

A school-supply market where teachers are paid according to their value utilises a link between worth and differential pay. There is, however, no evidence to demonstrate a positive impact between performance management and recruitment or retention of staff. Although central government publishes national data on 'average' pay, there is no data about differences in pay between school-type, or trends over time (Department for Education, 2019b). An NFER report (2021, p. 35) which considered this issue noted that 'teachers in free schools tend to be younger and less experienced compared to their peers in other schools, across both phases'. It was suggested this might be partly due to 'NQTs making up a large proportion of the available supply at that time when the school is recruiting' (NFER, 2021, p. 35). This suggests that recruitment difficulties may have played a significant role in decisions made by free school proposers. There is also evidence to suggest that increased pay freedom may provide additional benefits for senior staff, but at the expense of others (Davies, Diamond and Perry, 2021).

Free schools were positioned within official-discourse as having a specific freedom, a type of innovation based on longer days, reduced holidays, and a potential impact on hours worked. However, despite significant research a link between total hours worked and school, or teacher, effectiveness has never been established, (Fox, 2002; Rofes, Stulberg and Gintis, 2004; Briggs, 2009; Cannata, 2011; Gross and DeArmond, 2010; Preston *et al.*, 2012; Renzulli and Evans, 2014; Lefebvre and

Thomas, 2017; Roch and Sai, 2017;). Excessive working hours were already recognised as a significant problem in England's schools (Kelley, 1997; Gray, 2007; Buchanan, 2010; Hughes, 2012; Leigh, 2012; Green, 2021). New Labour had sought to address this through its 'workforce remodelling', whilst post-2010 Conservative governments also noted a need for 'school workload reduction' (Department for Education, 2018), whilst at the same time promoting the benefits of longer days and reduced holidays. A DfE free school launch event (Klein, 2011) promoted the superior features of a curriculum with an increased emphasis on literacy, or numeracy, reflecting the value of teachers' subject knowledge. This was a form of traditionalism 'borrowed' (Halpin and Troyna, 1995) from some USA charter school models (Tracy, 1992; Rofes, Stulberg and Gintis, 2004; Bettinger, 2005; Sass, 2006; Briggs, 2009; Zimmer, 2009; Eyles, Hupkau and Machin, 2016). Free school proposers who attended this event may have assumed this was a model favoured by the DfE.

The 'flexible' employment practice assigned to free schools was also given to 2010 academies, existing schools which opted into a direct funding relationship with central government. These schools were subject to European employment legislation, and the EU Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) regulations (TUPE) applied when a LAMS changed to become an academy. Teaching staff already employed had the right to transfer to a 'new' school on their existing terms and conditions. However, free schools were new and there is some evidence to suggest that some may have adopted employment freedom, including longer school days. Analysis of feedback from a sample of free school leaders by Wiborg, Green and Taylor-Gooby (2018), for example, concluded that teachers in

these schools had ‘longer working hours’ and, consequently, lower than average ‘hourly pay’. The additional efficiency flexibility of free schools seemed to potentially suit the needs of managers, not teachers. Free school superiority was defined by the government as a private sector efficiency, a value embedded within the superior codification of new school-types.

### 2.6 Free school codification and status

Free schools were defined by the Conservative party prior to the 2010 election as part of its plans for a ‘supply-side revolution’:

> *We know - because we've seen it work in other countries like Sweden - that there is a modern and exciting way of raising standards in education. It's the right approach for this new world of freedom and opportunity we're living in - where the belief that politicians and government officials are the only people with good ideas is a belief that belongs in the past, in the bureaucratic age.* **Cameron (2007 N.P.)**

The ’modern and ‘exciting’ proposal for free schools would offer leaders increased freedom and flexibility, bringing new ideas about how to organise and manage schools. The process for creating new schools is complex, requires considerable resources and can take time. Most free schools were new start-ups, opening with one, or two, year groups and growing until fully established. Free school proposers needed sufficient skill and agency to cope with tasks such as finding suitable accommodation, recruiting parent-consumers and creating detailed plans which

defined a school’s operation. They needed to articulate the type of features they wanted, but also had to consider how these new schools might be attractive to the DfE, or parent-consumers. The 2010 school-supply landscape was reshaped by allowing existing schools to become an academy, a type of independent school operating as a charitable trust, which receives funding directly from central government and whose staff are employed by its governing body, or trustees. The coalition introduced University Technical Colleges (UTC) and studio schools, new school-types catering for pupils aged 14 – 19, with a curriculum designed around ‘vocational’ qualifications, and a focus on industry-specific skills. It has been noted how the freedoms which had already defined CTCs and New Labour’s academies provided a blueprint for the 2010 free schools. Thomson (2005, p. 744), drawing on Bourdieu (1990a), noted how these previous new school-types gave ‘the appearance of scientific neutrality’, creating a ‘legal’ and ‘official’ status for a ‘new’ type of state-funded school. The 2010 free schools were assigned a similar type of ‘ontological status’, positioned as distinctive, innovative, radical and superior. They reflected the market values of anti-welfarist individualism and freedom, with new schools set up in response to perception of local ‘demand’. Free schools seemed designed to meet the interests of key stakeholders, such as parents, religious groups, charities, or philanthropists. The superior codification of free schools reflected the implementation of a type of ‘pure’ school-choice theory favoured by the political right, where freedom would allow new schools which parent-consumers wanted (Chubb and Moe, 1988; 1990b).

The free school programme was centrally managed by DfE officials, but driven by the priorities of government ministers. It utilised financial capacity previously devolved to

LAs, which were no longer allowed to open new schools after 2010. Individual freedom and choice were re-emphasised through the coalition's focus on the 'Big Society' (Cameron, 2011b), allowing parents, charities, and local groups to open a new school (*The Guardian*, 2016a; *The Times Educational Supplement*, 2017c; 2018). The introduction of the 2010 free school policy also coincided with a need for new school places, caused by population growth and demographic changes (Department for Education, 2011g). A few individuals and groups favoured by Gove, such as Absolute Return for Kids (ARK), a charitable trust, were initially approached by the DfE to set up new schools (Department for Education, 2011a). An 'open' application process was then created, allowing interested parties to express interest (Department for Education, 2011b). The application process was allocated by the DfE into windows of time, described as 'waves', which defined when applications could be received and assessed.

In wave 1 (2011) 323 applications were made to open a free school. 283 in wave 2 (2012) and 236 in wave 3 (2013). By the end of the first year 23 free schools had opened, 46 by the end of 2012 and 72 by the end of 2013. Eight UTCs and seven Studio Schools also opened by the end of 2013, but these schools were not included in the free school application process. There was a striking difference between the large number of applications made and small number of accepted bids, especially in wave1, see figure 2.6:

*Figure 2.6 Applications and acceptance within waves 1 – 3 (2011 -2013)*

| DfE Wave | For opening during or after | Number of free school applications | Number of accepted free school applications | Percentage of free school applications |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wave 1 | 2011 | 323 | 19 | 6% |
| Wave 2 | 2012 | 281 | 58 | 21% |
| Wave 3 | 2013 | 237 | 100 | 42% |
| Wave 4 | 2014 | 263 | 102 | 39% |
| Wave 5 | 2014 | 50 | 10 | 20% |
| Wave 6 | 2015 | 104 | 38 | 37% |
| Wave 7 | 2015 | 105 | 35 | 33% |
| Wave 8 | 2015 | 148 | 59 | 40% |
| Wave 9 | 2016 | 61 | 18 | 30% |
| Wave 10 | 2016 | 42 | 21 | 50% |
| Wave 11 | 2017 | 205 | 112 | 55% |
| Wave 12 | 2017 | 308 | 111 | 36% |
| Wave 13 | 2018 | 124 | 22 | 18% |
| Wave 14 | 2019 | 89 | Information not published | |
| Wave 15 | 2020 | 64 | Information not published | |

New schools were not a cheap option, and potentially controversial during 2010, a period of financial austerity, a point noted by a parliamentary public accounts committee and picked up in some press media (Parliament, 2012; 2014; The *Guardian*, 2016a). By 2021 about 500 free schools had been created in most areas of England, with another two hundred, or more, ‘planned’ (Department for Education,

2010e; 2010f; 2010j). By 2022 (Department for Education, 2022b) free schools were described as available to all provided proposers had sufficient ‘capacity and capability’ and proposals were financially viable:

> *Anybody can apply to set up a free school if they have the necessary capacity and capability.*
>
> *Applications go through a rigorous assessment and must demonstrate how the proposal will meet key criteria, such as a clear need for the places the school will create, and how the school will be financially viable whilst offering a broad and balanced curriculum.*

The large number of applications made to open a free school and for existing schools to become an academy suggests the government’s school-supply reform policy was articulated strongly and received positively. Free schools required a building, start-up funding to support proposals prior to opening and a subsidy to compensate incomplete year groups as new schools opened. This was a high-profile reform and a low number of applications might suggest that the governments’ policy was unpopular, meaning valuable public resources had been wasted. The quantity of free schools created was an important driver for politicians:

> *Prime Minister David Cameron vowed today (2 September 2015) he will ‘not waver’ in his commitment to open 500 new free schools over the next 5 years - as he announced the first wave to be approved this Parliament and pledged to deliver 2 waves of new schools every year until 2020.* **Cameron, 2015, N.P.**

There was a potential tension between a need for sufficient free school applications to indicate a successful policy and the government’s requirement for free schools to

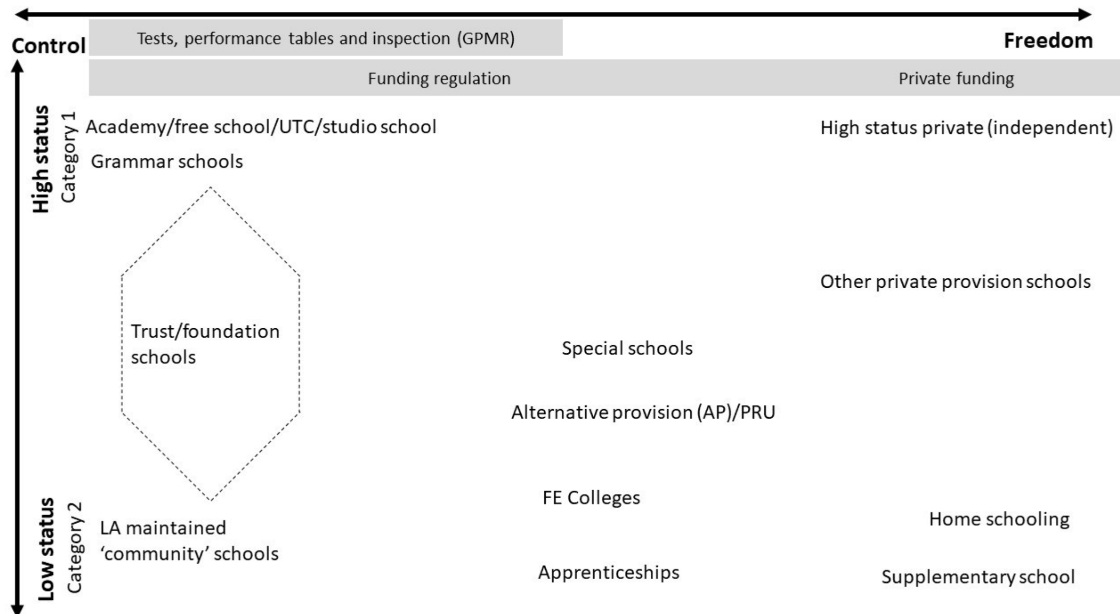
be ‘good’. The DfE lacked the capacity to deal with large numbers of schools and introduced additional forms of bureaucracy. This included the introduction of MATs, and the meso level control of Regional School Commissioners (RSC), existing school, ‘system’ leaders assigned a role in applying government policy. The 2010 free schools, academies and MATs were funded directly by central government and use of brokerage, a hostile takeover of a school by another MAT, or forced closure, meant that England’s school-supply operated within a framework of strong centralised control.

It has been noted already how the 2010 coalition made a direct link between a superior codification of legal status (academy) and ‘good’ school status. High status ‘good’ schools would, in this context, be desirable for ‘good’ parent-consumers (Apple, 2006). Status was derived from ‘independent’ school legal status and linked freedoms over curriculum, pay and conditions of service. In addition, free schools had new buildings and, in some cases, links to an ‘established’ faith (Education Policy Institute, 2019b, NFER, 2021), allowing the creation of new faith schools. LA maintained schools (LAMs), especially ‘community schools’, were positioned as a lower value ‘not good’ school-type, through what Ball (1990) described as a ‘discourse of derision’.

The codification of schooling in England’s education system included a range of other lower value provision, including FE, apprenticeships, alternative provision, special schools, home schooling and supplementary schools. This provision outside mainstream schooling was at the periphery of England’s school-supply, providing options for pupils unable to compete successfully within ‘good’ mainstream schools (Apple, 2006). The value assigned to this provision was ambiguous, since alternative

schooling had some freedom from the GPMR controls used to define ‘good’ mainstream schools. In addition, some parent-consumers, with sufficient resources, were able to opt into England’s private school system, which also provided a very wide range of schooling, including high status ‘public’ schools and more informal provision. The private school system also operated at the periphery of GPMR, with its own definitions of ‘good’ school status. The 2010 reforms emphasised the high value of new free schools and converter academies, but GPMR defined the official value visible to parent-consumers. GPMR was underpinned by a national system of tests and examinations which controlled, in statistical terms, a normal distribution of intelligence across a pupil population. It reflected a series of adjustments made each year to test and examination grade threshold marks, ensuring a limit on the proportion of ‘good’, or better pupils and schools. GPMR supported choice for parent-consumers, providing a useful tool which enabled the ‘professional and managerial new middle class’ to select ‘good’ schools (Apple, 2006). A mainstream school’s legal status provided a proxy designation for school-value. Category 1 ‘good’ schools, such as academies, free schools, CTCs and grammar schools, were superior. They were contrasted with lower value category 2 ‘not good’ schools funded via an LA, including trust and foundation schools. The leaders of LAMs could, in this context, achieve higher status, with access to additional funding, through successfully converting to become an academy. However, both categories were controlled by GPMR and actual freedom from regulation was only located within private schools, home schooling, or volunteer-run provision, such as supplementary schools. Figure 2.7 summarises the interface between legal status, funding, freedom and regulation:

*Figure 2.7 State-funded school 'value' status in the 2010 school-supply landscape*




England's 2010 school-supply landscape accommodated a sub-group of parent-consumers, who occupied a very particular space outside England's mainstream school-supply system. Here choice relied on an individual agency needed to access private schools or, for some parent-consumers, reflected the more limited choice of pupils accommodated in what will be described here as 'grey' school-supply.

## 2.7 Grey school-supply and an alternative 'grammar' of schooling

The term 'grey' school-supply is used in this study to reflect a wide range of alternative schooling models for pupils outside mainstream state-funded schooling, but not within high-status private schools. The breadth and scope of this provision lies beyond this study, but 'grey' school-supply had a strong impact on the choices available for some parent-consumers. It included, for example, 'supplementary

schools' for community-identified minority groups, with additional support provided by volunteers to help pupils struggling within mainstream schools. It accommodated a wide range of private provision sometimes purchased by mainstream schools, such as 'Forest Schools', which offer a type of outdoor and informal learning environment for younger children, which schools cannot accommodate. Home-schooling allowed parents to opt out of the state-funded sector and provide education at home, mainly in response to exclusion for pupils struggling within mainstream schools. LAs were required to provide 'alternative provision' (AP) for pupils excluded from mainstream education, mainly because of behaviour issues. Special schools provided a specifically tailored education, designed to support pupils with an identified special educational need, or disability (SEND). LA-run pupil referral units (PRU) or, where needed, places purchased by LAs from private schools provided an option for pupils outside mainstream schools. Some of these private 'independent' schools were very small in scale, with links to a local community or faith. The 2010 free school policy significantly increased the number of AP schools available within England's school-supply.

An important feature of this 'grey' school-supply was a type of freedom from some of the constraints imposed through GPMR. Special schools, or alternative provision schools and other grey supply have their own type of 'grammar', currency-value and 'good' school status. Black Saturday Schools (BSS) and other 'supplementary schools' aim to articulate an 'alternative view' of excellence (Gerard, 2014). 'Grey' supply accommodated an established Further Education College (FE) sector, which offered qualifications from entry to higher level, including awards, certificates and diplomas, especially for pupils aged fourteen upwards. FE offered an alternative

option for some pupils who struggled in schools and also sat outside the GPMR which controlled schools, although was controlled through a performance regulation and inspection system. ‘Grey’ supply had an alternative set of ‘good’ school definitions, not defined by the currency-value (Thomson, 2005) of mainstream schools. This regulatory freedom allowed flexibility within the grammar’ of schooling, including curriculum planning, pay and conditions. It provided a model for school-supply which might offer a blueprint for new free schools, especially where some parent-consumers might value informal characteristics not found within existing state-funded mainstream schools (Fensham-Smith, 2021). Free school proposers might have also drawn ideas about innovation and freedom from ‘traditions’ within existing private schools which operated outside GPMR. This included ‘progressive’ features within some high-status independent schools, such as Bedales (Badley, 1967; Stewart, 1968), or international schools, such as Steiner schools (Woods and Woods, 2006; Ashley, 2009). These schools valued the development of personal and social development, or character. Although free schools were new and innovative England’s 2010 school-supply landscape already had provision where independence from GPMR control had allowed a ‘progressive’ freedom viewed as valuable.

Free school proposers who planned innovation might have also have considered the alternative school ‘grammar’ models which had been reflected within the ‘progressive’ curriculum practice already noted within some state-funded schools in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s (Issel, 1967; Moore, 2000; Reese, 2001; Labaree, 2005; 2013; Traxler, 2015; Wyse *et al.*, 2018). This type of freedom had been underpinned by professionals rejecting traditional schooling models, especially their impact on categorising pupils into a hierarchy of value. The reforms of this period reflected the

way education had been viewed, optimistically, as a site for increased social equality. High levels of freedom had allowed professionals to challenge the way schools could be organised, drawing on ‘progressive’ theories of learning (Dewey and Dewey, 1915; Dewey, 1923; Biesta, 2014; Beckett, 2018;). Neill’s ideas at Summerhill School in England (1961) were influential for some professionals, especially his promotion of democracy and pupil freedom. Neill (1961) had proposed that pupils should have a role in determining their own learning and that schools should allow pupils to have freedom over organisation and characteristics (Arnot, 1991; Chilcoat and Ligon, 1998). Summerhill challenged traditional ‘good’ school definitions (Diane, 2014) and became well-known for its apparent lack of rules, informal uniform and apparent lack of discipline. The work of Friere (1970) was also influential amongst some professionals in the USA and England during the 1970s. Friere had successfully developed a system of schooling in Brazil which had challenged the way schools helped to maintain a social, political and economic status quo, controlled by those with most power. His ideas on school organisation, drawing on the social theories of Marx, had encouraged local communities to recognise a type of oppression, and achieve liberation. Illich (1971) suggested that schools were part of a system destined to contribute to social reproduction, and proposed a radical schooling model, which would utilise the resources and capacity of local communities.

In the USA Kozol (1967; 1972) drew on the work of both Neill and Friere to propose a need for new ‘free’ schools, allowing pupils to thrive in outside restrictions imposed by state control. These free schools would develop pupils’ interests rather than impose the state’s wishes and, in the process, provide them with access to useful skills. The USA free school ‘movement’ of the late 1960s was uncoordinated, but

innovative. The schools were often small and run by volunteers, including a separate group of radical ‘freedom schools’ (Sturkey, 2010; Cobb, 2011; Hope, 2018), designed to address racial inequality within education. These freedom schools provided additional support for pupils, and a curriculum which challenged institutional racism, providing a model for some later USA charter schools. Although a similar free school movement started in the UK (Potter, 1978), it was weighed down by a similar lack of funding, a need for suitable accommodation and the negative consequences of coping with pupils excluded from mainstream schools (Graubard, 1972; Barr, 1973; Education Special, 1992). However, the radical free school ‘movements’ utilised, in one sense, similar principles to the 2010 ‘Big Society’ model (Cameron, 2011a), allowing parents and community groups to start their own schools. An important difference was the way 2010 free schools would be funded by the state.

**2.8 Summary**

The landscape of England’s 2010 school-supply reflected the way neo-liberal school-choice markets had become generally accepted since the 1988 ERA. The model emphasised the value of parent-consumer freedom and choice, but within a control framework which assigned an official value to individual pupils, schools and teachers. In 2010 concepts of freedom and innovation were used to codify new free schools as superior. Official-discourse promoted a market-led type of freedom as a lever to create new schools of value to parent-consumers. Innovation and freedom were, however, steered in quite specific ways. Curriculum innovation was officially viewed

as longer school days, or shorter holidays, and employment freedom was positioned as requiring teachers to work longer hours, and be paid according to their market value. Official-discourse positioned free schools as contributing to parent-consumer choice, but ignored the types of professional freedom and innovation which had characterised many schools prior to 1988. Some types of freedom did, however, still exist in parts of England's 'grey' school-supply, the schools outside the mainstream sector, including some private schools. Free school proposers had to negotiate contradictions between curriculum freedom and GPMR controls which assigned a 'good' value to some pupils, teachers and schools (Apple, 2013; 2014; 2018; 2019). They needed to consider the advantages of pay and conditions freedom within an existing framework where schools already had significant 'flexibility', but recruitment and retention of 'good' teachers had been a long-standing problem. Free school proposers might have seen freedom as an opportunity to introduce innovation which could not be accommodated within the existing mainstream school-supply sector. The next chapter will consider literature which has reviewed the impact of similar neo-liberal school-supply reforms on parent-consumers and professionals. It will also explore the more limited research into the supply-side impact of reform, especially the 'grammar' of schooling. The power relationship between individual freedom and central control will be considered through reviewing research into Bourdieu's *field* theory (1990a; 1991; 1992; 1993a).

# 3 Research into the impact of neo-liberal freedom and control

## 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined how the landscape of 2010 school-supply reflected shifts between a type of individual professional freedom and central government control. It noted how, after 1988, state-funded schools operated within a framework commonly described as neo-liberalism and this had led to an established 'grammar' of schooling (Tyack and Tobin, 1994), a set of characterisitics shaped by the controls of GPMR. This chapter will consider how existing research has evaluated the impact of neo-liberalism on individuals and social groups. It will also note how research into the 'grammar' of schooling which is an outcome of neo-liberalism has been more limited. Research into the impact of freedom and control on free school characteristics might reflect what Bourdieu (1990b; 1992; 1993a; 1999) described as a '*field*', a bounded social space where those with the greatest capital utilise power to control the 'rules of the game'. Field theory is viewed as a conceptual framework which might be used to examine the interplay between power and freedom.

## 3.2 Neo-liberal control, quasi markets and 'second best' markets

The 2010 free schools were, as Hess had noted (2008, p. 213), designed to 'build on fresh turf' and 'not simply to build capacity within schools or loosen regulation on an established marketplace'. The policy was designed to be new and radical although,

as previously noted, the specific 'innovations' assigned to free schools seemed to be drawn from the Conservative CTCs introduced after the 1988 ERA (Dale, 1989), or New Labour's post-1997 academies (Cole, 1998; Chitty, 2013). It has also been proposed that free school policy can be seen as linked to a type of policy 'network' (Ball, 1998; Ball and Exley, 2010), a global education reform movement, or GERM (Sahlberg, 2012). A similar approach to school-choice reform had, for example, led to a general growth of charter schools, 'independent' schools with freedom from elements of state bureaucracy, especially in the USA. England's free school policy appeared, initially at least, to also 'borrow' (Halpin and Troyna, 1995) from Sweden's free school (*friskolor*) model. A key driver within the development of GERM was the school-choice market introduced after England's 1988 ERA. This market has mostly been defined as a type of 'quasi-market' (Le Grand and Bartlett, 1993) and Henig (1994), reflected that it was not 'pure', since schools did not, for example, aim to 'maximise their profits; nor are they necessarily privately owned' (Le Grand and Bartlett, 1993, p. 10). Analysis of quasi-markets focused mainly on the impact of funding changes within state-funded schools, a (re)positioning away from local education authority (LEA) 'control' (Levačić, 1995; 1998). The development of Local Management of Schools (LMS) seemed to offer increased financial freedom, but Le Grand and Bartlett suggested that although changes had generated 'improvements within the areas of efficiency and responsiveness' (Le Grand and Bartlett, 1993, p. 152), 'formula funding generates inequality'. This evaluation focused on the way formulas had led to schools being funded at different rates, but did not consider their impact on parent-consumers.

Le Grand and Bartlett drew on feedback provided by school leaders, who tended to accept the benefits of funding reform as logical and beneficial. Relatively little account was, however, taken of the effects of these reforms on school characteristics, or school quality. There was no consideration given to how leaders might not understand the longer-term impact of change on the wider school system, the impact on some parent-consumers of private schools, or the role that 'grey' school-supply played within the market. Despite these limitations the quasi-market concept has been widely adopted within much research literature (Whitty, 1997; Whitty and Power, 1997; West and Pennell, 2002; Exley, 2014; Allen and Higham, 2018). However, research into similar publicly-funded schooling reforms in the USA (Lubienski, 2006b) suggests that England's state-funded school-supply might actually reflect a type of 'second-best market' (Lipsey and Lancaster, 1956). The production of 'public goods' will only ever be 'second-best' because they always require state intervention and can never reflect optimum market conditions. Lubienski concluded that public service markets 'resist' standard market mechanisms, leading to conflicting and contradictory incentives located within 'nonmarket forms of accountability, access, regulation, and funding' (Lubienski, 2003b). This had the potential to create 'perverse incentives', and unexpected effects. For example, a second-best market encourages leaders to promote quality through 'emotional themes', using strong advertising of an exclusive nature, including a particular school 'mission'. Schools may have a strong tendency to operate selection of pupils by ability, but does not encourage the innovation proposed by Chubb and Moe (1988).

The limitation of second-best markets appears relevant within the context of England's 2010 school-supply reforms. Although official-discourse codified new

schools as superior (Thomson, 2005), and positioned free schools as innovative, The UK central government relied on 'non market forms of accountability' to assign a value to pupils, teachers and schools in England. Official tests and examinations placed pupils into 'performance' bands, meaning that market position might be best achieved by admitting more 'desirable' pupils, narrowing the school curriculum, or teaching to the test. Lubienski also noted how the identity of 'stakeholders' within second-best markets was rarely clear. Whilst school-choice theory promoted strongly the needs of parent-consumers, other consumer groups, such as employers, universities, or central government, also had a stake in school outcomes. However, these different groups may value quality, or innovation, in many ways. A specific type of curriculum innovation, for example, might only meet with the approval of one of these stakeholder groups (Lubienski, 2003a).

Lubienski (2005, p. 479) noted how the operation of second-best markets reflected the way some types of marketing provided an 'easy' mechanism to attract 'good' customers, offering a lower risk strategy than, for example, innovative curriculum reform:

> *Indeed, economic logic—which is particularly apropos when reforms seek to position schools as businesses—dictates that competitive organizations attempting to improve their relative market position have the basic options of producing better products or better marketing (or adjusting price, which is not possible for most schools). While the former strategy is fraught with difficulties and risks, the latter strategy is particularly attractive for organizations trying to appeal to potential consumers. Marketing is relatively risk free and inexpensive as*

*compared to attempts at comprehensive curricular reform, and it can easily shore up a school's market share by attracting students.* ***Lubienski (2005, p. 479)***

Lubienski (2007a, p. 128) later analysed how schools presented information to stakeholders within marketing materials. This analysis utilised a 'framework' for content analysis which held to 'a fourfold distinction between indications of context, content, target audience, and production values'. It concluded that schools operating in a second-best market tend to market 'credence goods', with qualities that are not fully known, or 'experience goods', which rely on actual consumption for evaluation. Schools may also use 'search goods', a type of information which enables comparison through quality indicators. However, 'search goods' reflect official information and priorities controlled by regulators, such as the state. Lubienski also highlighted how these new school-types, such as USA charter schools, could be discouraged from diversifying 'options for students in terms of innovative instructional offerings', since 'competitive incentives have caused many schools to revert to traditional practices, and instead try to differentiate themselves on the vertical axis of quality– or *perceptions* of quality' (Lubienski, 2006a, p. 4). A potential effect of a second-best market, perhaps not predicted through *a priori* reasoning, was its potential to encourage conformity and, as a result, a monopolistic type of school-supply.

The limitations and effects of second-best markets seems to have relevance for England's 2010 school-supply reforms since, although official-discourse codified (Thomson, 2005) free schools as innovative, this was only of value if it provided market advantage. It has been noted how schools in England operated within a

competition framework defined by GPMR, and this framework may drive them towards increasingly similar characteristics, designed to achieve the ‘good’ school features controlled through official ‘search’ goods. Free school proposers had additional ‘freedom’, but the government’s GPMR central control framework might lead new schools to be caught within a sort of ‘institutional isomorphism’ (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983), reflecting the ‘iron cage’ of bureaucracy noted by Weber (Razzell, 1977). This type of control may therefore constrain innovation (Robson, Randhawa and Keep, 2022). The next section will consider research which has evaluated the impact of existing school-choice markets, especially new school-types, on individuals and groups. This summary reflects the fact that research into free schools is however, to date, somewhat limited.

### 3.3 Research into the impact of school-choice market reforms

Previous research into the impact of school-choice markets has mostly focused on the ‘demand-side’, or ‘consumer-side’ effects of reform, especially on individuals or groups. This reflects the way neo-liberal school-supply changes may have resulted in a negative effect on some parent-consumers, especially marginalised social groups. This type of research is, however, limited by the complexity of establishing a causal link between pupils’ outcomes and school-type. Some research into charter schools, for example, has proposed a positive impact from new school-type innovation, citing improvement in performance of these schools when compared to existing schools (Tracy, 1992; Sass, 2006; Eyles, Kamienski, 2011; Hupkau and Machin, 2016;).

Other researchers have, however, suggested that when charter schools are viewed through the lens of social class, or race, there is strong evidence of a negative impact on individuals (Cobb and Glass, 1999; Malkus, 2016; Giersch, 2019;). Loeb, Valant and Kasman (2011, p. 149), for example, evaluated the performance of pupils within standardised tests in USA charter schools. They noted ‘little difference between charter and traditional public school performance’, suggesting a ‘more nuanced story of failure and successes and failures underneath the surface’. Research into Sweden’s *friskolor*, a ‘new’ type of charter school introduced after 1992, has reached similar conclusions, suggesting that an apparent differential in pupil performance attributed to new school-types merely reflected a type of covert selection, with segregation in admissions (Björklund *et al.*, 2005; Bunar, 2010a; 2010b; West, 2014; Wiborg, 2015).

Research into the effects of England’s post-1988 neo-liberal reforms has reflected similar polarities, suggesting little overall positive impact of new school-types, but potentially negative consequences for some parent-consumers. New school-types have been viewed by some researchers as evidence of a reform designed to overcome the bureaucratic weakness of publicly funded schools, suggesting that increased choice will benefit parent-consumers (Tooley, 1997; 2004; 2005). However, the potentially negative impact of a market-led school choice system on some individuals and groups has been extensively documented (Ball, Bowe and Gewirtz, 1996; Dale, 1997; Fitz, Gorard and Taylor, 2003; Gorard, 2009; 2014). This raises questions about a potentially hegemonic effect of neo-liberal school-choice, where reform is theoretically positioned as promoting greater equality, whilst actually supporting elite race and class interests. These issues are reflected within existing

research, which falls into three main themes: a) the impact of school-supply reform on outcomes, b) the impact of parent's criteria for 'choosing' schools and c), the role that school-choice plays in maintaining social reproduction, allowing advantaged social groups to gain access to elite universities and high-quality jobs. The next three sections will briefly summarise research within these areas.

### The impact of school-supply reform on outcomes

School-supply reform has been consistently positioned by England's post-1988 governments as a mechanism for creating beneficial 'consumer-side' effects, especially within outcomes measured in national tests and examinations. This discourse has encouraged comparison analysis of school-type output data, including outcomes achieved by groups of pupils. Data on performance in tests and examinations is available within aggregated pupil test and examination scores collected by central government and then summarised within 'statistical releases', or 'school performance tables' (Department for Education, 2019a). This data facilitates analysis focused on 'attainment', a measure of pupil performance against other pupils, or 'progress', a measure of the progress made by pupils from a previous starting point, when compared to 'similar' pupils. The data can also be analysed according to other characteristics, such as gender, ethnicity, or proxy indicators for class, such as free school meals (FSM), an entitlement to a lunchtime meal based on family eligibility for defined social benefit payments. Researchers can, with permission, access anonymised pupil-level data, providing a way to investigate how representative free school pupil admissions are when compared to other schools, potentially highlighting any segregation, or choice inequalities, caused by forms of covert selection.

Research into this type of output data has, however, remained inconclusive in a similar way to the research into charter schools and *friskolor* already noted. A comprehensive study by Gorard, Fitz and Taylor (2001), for example, noted that despite 'raw score' improvements between 1985 and 1998 it was not possible to establish a link between the introduction of school-choice markets and an overall positive impact on pupil outcomes. A key reason for uncertainty was the unknown effects of a series of variables, including overlapping policies, changes to regulation and introduction of new school-types during this period. The research concluded that 'there were many policy changes all taking place at the same time' with many 'confounding variables' and a need for some type of 'control group' (Gorard, Fitz and Taylor, 2001, p. 20). The research did, however, suggest that 'choice policies have not broken the well-established link between student background and school outcome' (Gorard, Fitz and Taylor, 2001, p. 21).

The 2010 superior codification of free schools encourages a similar school-type comparison baes on output measures. However, it has been noted how the 2010 school-supply landscape was complex. Free schools were, for example, start-ups and introduced slowly. The policy coincided with a popular option for existing schools to change status and become an academy. Free school designation masked the way some private schools had converted to become state-funded schools, or how the policy included special schools, AP schools, UTCs and studio schools. A data output comparison between officially designated free schools and other school-types would therefore not account for the distinctive nature of these different free school types. In addition, the extensive recalibration of national tests and examinations after 2010 makes data comparison over time problematic. An NFER report into free schools

(2021), for example, concluded that outcomes in the primary phase and sixth-form were ‘mixed’, whilst secondary Key Stage 4 (GCSE) results were ‘better’. However, the report also noted this analysis was not statistically significant and differences ‘may have occurred by chance’ (NFER, 2021, p. V).

Research into previous ‘state-funded independent schools’ in England, such as CTCs, GM schools, or New Labour’s academies, has also failed to show any link between school-type and improvement in outcomes for pupils once pupil-level data is adjusted for social context. Strongly codified new school-types may prove attractive for the type of professional middle-class consumers noted by Apple (2006), meaning that apparent differentials in school-type performance may just indicate how some schools are attractive to parent-consumers with the greatest economic and social capital. New school-type codification may have the potential to contribute to a type of covert selection, social segregation and reproduction of social position (Gillborn, 1997; 2014), or Reay (2006; 2012; 2017). Some parent-consumers seem to have viewed CTCs, for example, as a superior school-type, responding to an official-discourse which promoted them as superior (Gewirtz, Miller and Walford, 1991). There is evidence to suggest that overt or covert selection has been a feature of England’s school-supply system (Fitz, Halpin and Power, 1993; Walford, 1993) and research into admissions, or selection, within free schools has been inconclusive. Morris (2014) examined thirty-two examples of published free school admissions policies from secondary schools drawn from the first two waves of approved free schools. This was seen as providing insight into potential selection of pupils, especially through use of ‘over-subscription’ criteria, where fewer pupil places are available than applications received. The research concluded there was significant

‘variation in the criteria employed by the secondary Free Schools in England’, whilst suggesting that ‘decisions by the schools to include criteria which allow them to design their own catchment areas, choose their feeder schools, give priority to children of founders or use banding systems could significantly affect those who choose to apply and gain admission to the school’ (Morris, 2014, p. 404). However, no pupil level data were collected, and actual segregation, or selection, was not analysed.

In a later article Morris (2015) explored pupil level data to analyse pupil admissions in free schools, focusing on ‘clustering and separation of different groups of children based on their personal characteristics [such as socioeconomic status (SES), ethnicity, religion or prior attainment]’. Data on disadvantaged pupils was retrieved from schools within the first three waves of accepted free school applications and compared with ‘other local schools and within the LAs where they are situated’ (Morris, 2015, p. 535). The comparison schools were chosen according to ‘geographical proximity’, but not according to actual choices made by parent-consumers. These findings were also inconclusive, suggesting there was little discernible pattern, although ‘those that have a faith designation/ethos, offer an ‘alternative’ curriculum or have previously been fee-paying schools seem likely to underrepresent poorer children’ (Morris, 2015, p. 547). The small number of schools within the sample made robust generalisation difficult and although Morris suggested that admissions criteria might have an impact on consumer-side choice in the future, there was no evidence to show it had happened at this stage.

A study by Green, Allen and Jenkins (2015), based on the national pupil database for England, explored similar issues, finding that ‘free schools have been situated in

neighbourhoods that are somewhat above average in terms of the proportions entitled to free school meals', but were also 'socially selective within their neighbourhoods' (Green, Allen and Jenkins, 2015, p. 907). However, these effects were seen by the researchers to 'balance out' resulting in 'no great differences between the social composition of secondary free schools and that of the national average'. The research did suggest that 'at primary school level there is evidence that free schools are enrolling children with above average ability'. However, conclusions were limited, for two key reasons. Firstly, free schools had opened with only a small number of pupils, making data somewhat unreliable. Secondly the two trends when 'taken together', were inconclusive, suggesting that 'opportunities to attend free schools would not appear to be being concentrated among poorer households, but nor is it especially the preserve of better-off households' (Green, Allen and Jenkins, 2015, p. 921).

Allen and Higham (2018) reviewed five years of data from free schools, including 'all 325 free schools established between 2011/12 and 2015/16'. Whilst conclusions were again mixed, they suggested that free schools were in 'areas with above-average deprivation' although, particularly at primary level, 'admit intakes that are more affluent than the average for the neighbourhoods from which they recruit' (Allen and Higham, 2018, p. 191). The research concluded however, that 'in terms of the intakes of the first five annual waves, free schools in England join a growing list of market-based school diversity reforms that reproduce socio-economic inequalities through social selection' (Allen and Higham, 2018, p. 2011). This raises questions about the criteria parent-consumers might use when choosing new school-types.

## The impact of parent's criteria for 'choosing' schools

There has been considerable research into reasons why parent-consumers 'choose' schools in England, although it is not always made clear within reporting which age-range is being studied. School-choice at age five, or secondary school at age eleven, are very different experiences for most parent-consumers. Analysis of parent-consumer choice data has mostly asked parents to choose from pre-defined criteria drawn from existing research. This technique provides quantitative data, but may miss important information about what parents see as desirable school characteristics. Exley (2014) for example, analysed information from a 2010 British Social Attitudes (BSA) Survey, an annual statistical survey conducted by the National Centre for Social Research. This suggested that many parents wanted to support 'local' schools and had little preference for a market since 'most prefer the idea of 'the nearest state school' with even social mixes of pupils and even standards of quality, only valuing choice (indeed perhaps even seeing it as a burden, albeit a necessary one) where this is not the case' (Exley, 2014, p. 39). The value of academic performance was seen as important, a 'choice' which can be mediated by a school's perceived status (socio-economic composition), or proximity to home address (Burgess *et al.*, 2015; Burgess, Greaves and Vignoles, 2019). However, the best schools can choose 'good' parents, those with the greatest capital (Walford, 1992; Bowe, Ball and Gewirtz, 1994; Exley, 2013; 2014; Burgess, Greaves and Vignoles, 2019). It has been noted how choice of parent-consumer, whether overt or covert, provides an efficient way for schools to improve, or maintain, market performance and position.

The strong impact of selection is reflected within research into faith-based secondary schools, showing how these schools accommodate pupils 'from more affluent backgrounds and with higher levels of prior attainment' (Allen and West, 2009, p. 471). These 'elite' schools use their market advantage and codification, 'selecting in' and 'selecting out' pupils, either overtly, or covertly. A 2004 analysis of specialist 'comprehensive' schools under New Labour, which utilised elements of selection based on aptitude/ability in a particular subject area, reached similar conclusions, suggesting that 'voluntary-aided/foundation schools were far more likely to select on this basis than community/voluntary-controlled schools' (West, Hind and Pennell, 2004). 'Good' schools were more likely to use selection to their advantage. Parents who 'chose' free schools seemed to use measures of 'academic quality and school performance', in a similar way to other school-types (Morris and Perry, 2019). However, since free schools were mostly new, with no 'track record' these parents mostly relied on 'proxies', such as 'environment and ethos, curriculum, school size and potential social mix' (Morris and Perry, 2019, p. 548), the type of 'credence goods' noted by Lubienski (2007b). Free schools are required to comply with an officially-defined admissions 'code' and there is no evidence to show that despite being codified as superior, parent-consumers valued innovation, especially within a school's curriculum, pay, or conditions of service. Despite the focus within 2010 official-discourse on innovation parents seemed to value conformity and traditionalism, whilst eschewing innovation (Wiborg *et al.*, 2018). Morris and Perry (2019, p. 548) noted that parents who 'chose' free schools were perhaps 'more centred on issues such as school size, ethos and whether the schools offered more 'traditional' approaches to education'. The capacity for some parents to operate

effectively within a choice market had the potential to lead to social segregation and social reproduction.

The role that school-choice plays in maintaining social reproduction

Research into school-choice has suggested that England's post-1988 market-led school-supply system had led to a school hierarchy, which has contributed to social stratification. Influential studies have noted how schools in a capitalist system tend to contribute to a type of replication, an embedded structure of class and social relations (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Reay, 2006; 2012). This replication reflects the way some parents can use their social, economic and cultural capital to choose 'good' schools, whilst some schools may use their market position to choose 'good' parents, using forms of covert selection. It has already been noted how schools within a second-best market use 'credence goods' or 'search goods' to attract desirable parent-consumers (Lubienski, 2007b). There is consistent evidence to suggest that school-choice works against the interests of parent-consumers with less 'agency' (Ball, 1993a; Ball, Bowe and Gewirtz, 1996; Coldron, Willis and Wolstenholme, 2009; Angus, 2015; Allen and Higham, 2018). The competition arena of school-choice helps to maintain social segregation, social inequality, or racial inequality (Gillborn, 1997; 2014).

Bowe, Ball and Gewirtz (1994, p. 67) analysed how some schools market and present information to parent-consumers, noting how parents may be influenced by concepts linked to being a 'responsible parent', or an 'ideal consumer'. The researchers used data captured through visits to school 'open evenings', noting how schools emphasised a 'language of choice' in which 'rights, duties, responsibilities

and choice are all welded together', encouraging parents to see themselves as active choosers. This data was supported by contemporaneous interviews with parents and teachers, where 'individual freedom for the consumer' was seen as an increased opportunity for 'ideological manipulation', or a type of 'seductive containment'. This process helped parents from middle class families to choose the 'best' school, confirming the way 'choice' was linked to class identity. Bourdieu (1992, p. 77) suggested that high status parents value particular 'dispositions', and utilise existing cultural capital. This enables them to search for social advancement, or increased social mobility (Ball, 1993a). However, failure could be attributed to 'poor playing, rather than the nature of the game itself' (Thomson, 2005, p. 746). Hastings and Matthews (2015) concluded that New Labour may have started to address existing social inequality issues and questioned whether the 2010 school-supply reforms provided a type of framework reset, helping to ensure that existing reproduction was maintained (2015, p. 556):

> *….. a more or less conscious attempt by the dominant classes to re-align the field of public services and to adjust the rules of the game in order to regain advantages they may have perceived themselves to have lost. Bourdieu's social theory applied in policy analysis opens up new ways of understanding, and potential future research, in relation to who benefits from policy changes, to how regressive distributions of the benefits of public services not only come about, but are normalised and sustained.*

**(Hastings and Matthews, 2015, p. 556)**

However, as already noted, although research into selection, segregation and inequality within England's school-supply system are well established there is no strong evidence to show that free schools are more selective than other schools. This may be because the number of free schools examined within earlier studies is relatively small, making conclusions problematic. It may also reflect the way free schools were mostly new, often opened in temporary accommodation and with a lack of 'search goods' (Lubienski, 2007b) valued by parent-consumers with greatest cultural capital. Recent research has also concluded that free schools may be 'not unlike' other schools (Wiborg *et al.*, 2018). This is significant because although free schools were codified (Thomson, 2005) as superior, the characteristics of these new school-types is relatively under-researched. The innovation freedom of free schools might be expected to differentiate superiority for parent-consumers or, within a significant policy shift, allow them to open the type of schools they wanted.

### 3.4 The value assigned to new types of freedom, innovation and choice

The 2010 reforms added an important additional freedom for parent-consumers through the 'Big Society', allowing 'locally-led' school-types opened by parents or other local groups (Department for Education, 2010b; 2010c; 2010i; 2010k). This was a radical shift in the concept of choice and Goodwin (2011, p. 415 ) suggested it might provide a way of, 'equalising the asymmetric power relations that existed in education governance under New Labour and genuinely relinquishing control over implementation of policy at local level'. Walford (2000) noted how a previous

Conservative government's 1993 'sponsored' GM school policy had allowed parents to create new schools, with the potential for more faith schools to be created (Walford, 1993; 1995). The limited impact of this policy reflected the unwillingness of suitable 'sponsors' to provide additional investment in state-schooling. A lack of sponsors had also proved to be a barrier when setting up CTCs and New Labour's academies (Walford, 2014a). However, the 2010 free schools were fully funded by central government and did not require sponsorship. The policy provided an opportunity for new actors, including parents, to enter the *field* of school-supply and gain access to the economic capital on offer.

Although the 'Big Society' was presented as an option for greater choice, it may have contributed to a type of uneven capital distribution which 'arguably affords an expanded space for the agency of middle-class groups' (Hastings and Matthews, 2015, p. 555). Access to school-supply, through a free school proposal, was seen to support an 'alignment or fit between the habitus of the middle class and the competitive struggles which characterise the field of public service provision' (Hastings and Matthews, 2015, p. 556). The outcomes of these struggles were seen as likely to be unjust 'either hidden from view or normalised in policy processes' (2015, p. 556). This was reflected in the way Higham (2017, p. 217) noted how the credentials of proposers required an exchange-value (Thomson, 2005) drawn from 'corporate' models:

> *For these reasons, each elite grouping can be seen to be enabling new processes of corporatisation. Civil society groups are opening independent state schools supported by consultants and corporate sponsors. For-profit companies are contracting directly with the state to*

> *open free schools. Well-positioned state schools are being incentivised to adopt new corporate practices and executive identities. In these ways, a demand-led free school system appears able to prioritise an unequal distribution of corporate expertise while simultaneously concealing processes of corporatisation within a discourse of openness. The consequence is that public resources are diverted towards corporatising elites who are motivated by a complex mix of aims, which clearly include private, self-interest.*
>
> **Higham (2017, p. 217)**

Higham (2014a), commenting on the early phase of policy, suggested these inequalities may also be reflected within the social and cultural characteristics of free school proposers:

> *Government has sought to emphasise how the demand-led character of free school policy will grant a greater role to civil society in the delivery of public services, particularly in disadvantaged areas. The free school application process, however, developed to assure quality and mitigate a fear of high profile free school failure, has prioritised an unequal distribution of capitals and resources.*
>
> **Higham (2014a, p. 137)**

Higham suggested that free school application-assessment was ‘destined to reproduce a range of existing socio-economic inequalities’ (Higham, 2014a, p. 137). Analysis of the ‘motivations’ and ‘demography’ of free school proposers suggested that the application-assessment process had ‘prioritised an unequal distribution of

capitals and resources' (Higham, 2014a, p. 135). The cause of this impact was a process used to 'assure quality and mitigate a fear of high profile free school failure'. A thesis by Warner (2019, p. 2) concluded that the free school application system was essentially racist, since 'in spite of the colourblind discourse surrounding free schools, both overt and covert racism are factors in how free school applications are being assessed by the government'. This suggests a need for further research into the social and economic characteristics of proposers and how subsequent applications were dominated by MATs. It also indicates a need to understand more about reasons why some 'Big Society' proposers were unsuccessful.

Higham was also critical of the 'motivations' of successful proposers, suggesting 'the civil society actors best able to gain access to state resources bring a range of private and self-interested motivations into the public sector' (2014a, p. 137). This suggests that free school proposers may have reflected the way a professional middle-class were able use their agency and capital to gain access to school-supply via this route (Higham, 2014a; 2014b; 2017). Hastings and Matthews (2015, p. 554), using Bourdieu's theoretical framework, noted that 'better off groups tend to possess the requisite skills to participate effectively – indeed that they embody these in their habitus'. They suggested that 'the forms of agency preferred by localism are not evenly distributed and, indeed, can be understood as an aspect of the habitus of dominant social groups'. Higham (2017) linked free school proposers to a growth in 'elites' within England's school-supply system. This reflected a trend towards a type of 'corporatised governance', using private sector efficiency to provide a shift in the way public services were organised and managed.

Hatcher (2006) suggested that New Labour's reforms had shifted the 'economy' of England's school-supply, with greater involvement from the private-sector, and a 're-agenting' of the school system. Hatcher (2011, p. 495) concluded that the 'free schools policy opens up a new market for private companies to project manage the bidding and setting up of free schools, and to run them on behalf of their owners on management contracts, with the possibility in future of a change in legislation to allow companies to set up, own and run state-funded free schools themselves on a for-profit basis.' Higham (2014b) also analysed the intersection between public and private 'ownership' through changes in governance, identifying three groups of free school proposers: a) local civil society groups and organizations, b) third sector and for-profit organizations c) existing state schools. Higham suggested that new types of proposer had gained access to 'public goods', with a potential for 'socio-economic stratification and/or faith and social group segregation' (Higham, 2014a, p. 420). It was not clear, however, what impact the 'Big Society' might have on the 'grammar' of free schools.

### 3.5 Research into school characteristics and 'grammar' of schooling

Although there has been extensive research into the impact of new school-types on parent-consumers, research into the 'grammar' (Tyack and Tobin, 1994) of new school-types, including free schools has, to date, been more limited. West and Bailey (2013b) concluded there was a strong continuity between the Conservative CTCs, New Labour academies and the 2010 coalition's academies, suggesting the policies

had similar goals, although ‘different functions’. Dale (1989, p. 4) suggested that CTCs had provided an example of ‘Conservative modernism a set of policies and programmes given broad coherence by the attempt simultaneously to “free” individuals for economic purposes but to control them for social purposes’. Dale proposed that although CTCs had not introduced significant curriculum innovation, they had distorted the local education market through a type of ‘covert’ selection. He emphasised how the ‘fundamental importance of the CTCs is that they involve radical departures from the educational orthodoxy of the past 45 years in terms of selection, choice and control’.

Gewirtz, Whitty and Edwards (1992, p. 207) concluded that CTCs represented a type of policy ‘elasticity’, a way of ‘meeting different policy imperatives in different contexts’. CTCs were, according to Stuart Sexton, a former Conservative Secretary of State adviser, ‘designed to break the LEA monopoly of educational provision and re-introduce schools directly funded by central government’ (Gewirtz, Whitty and Edwards, 1992, p. 209). Hatcher (2006) also suggested the reforms were designed to open schools outside local authority ‘control’. The codification of CTCs as distinctive was significant and ‘symbolically important’ (Walford, 1997), potentially exerting a strong influence over other schools. However, although free from the national curriculum and national conditions of service the actual ‘innovation’ of CTCs was unclear, (Gewirtz, Whitty and Edwards, 1992; Walford, 1997).

Research into the ‘grammar’ which characterised GM school status (Fitz, Halpin and Power, 1993) or CTCs has been limited. This is not surprising for the case of GM schools, which were existing schools, and not obviously different to predecessors. They tended to retain the same name, the same staff and the same buildings (Halpin,

Power and Fitz, 1991; 1993; Fitz, Halpin and Power, 1997). GM schools included existing grammar schools and ‘high-performing’ schools in more affluent areas. However, although their characteristics seemed mostly unchanged, some GM schools appear to have (re)emphasised a form of superiority through artefacts, such as a ’traditional’ curriculum, ‘smart’ uniform and assertive discipline policies. GM status offered what Thomson (2005) described as a type of codification, an opportunity to re-emphasise an existing superiority. Any changes were designed to provide an advantage in attracting higher ‘value’ parent-consumers (Levačić and Hardman, 1999). GM schools were viewed as promoting a form of ‘educational fundamentalism’, in which a ‘good’ education was ‘unproblematically associated with an old-fashioned one’ (Halpin, Power and Fitz, 1997, p. 3), a type of neo-conservatism noted by Apple (2006). However, despite financial ‘freedom’, GM schools were required to teach the same official-curriculum as other schools (Apple, 1993), take the same national tests and were subject to the same GPMR regulation.

New Labour’s academies provided a ‘new’ good school ‘codification’, but drawn from the Conservative’s CTC model. These were ‘new’ schools, built in urban areas with a previous history of low performance (Whitty, 2008), often replacing a predecessor school on the same site. Research into New Labour’s academies has tended to focus on their consumer-side impact, especially selection or exclusion (Glatter, 2009; Gunter, Woods and Woods, 2008). There is evidence to show they introduced small elements of selection, although described as ‘aptitude’ (Walford, 1996; Penney, 2004). They have also been seen as an example of a type of increased privatisation, with link to business sponsors and private sector efficiencies (Curtis *et al.*, 2008; Ball, 2009; Curtis, 2009; West and Bailey, 2013a; Gunter and McGinity, 2014). Research

into the ‘grammar’ of these academies suggests they may have promoted a formalised and traditional ‘grammar’ as evidence of superiority. Key tools included a type of ‘no excuses’ discipline, and a ‘smart’ uniform, drawn from high status grammar, or independent, schools (West and Pennell, 2002; Heath *et al.*, 2013; Goodwin, 2015). These school characteristics promoted a type of ‘credence good’ (Lubienski, 2007b), designed to appeal to parent-consumers aligned with their cultural values.

A 2009 OECD report (Lubienski, 2009) suggested that innovation in new publicly-funded independent schools tended to be focused within three key areas: ‘product innovation’, ‘process innovation’, or ‘administrative innovation’. ‘Product innovation’ involved some form of change to outputs within areas such as the curriculum, especially examinations and provided opportunities for a particular type of unique market positioning. ‘Process innovation’ focused on ‘production and delivery techniques’, such as on-line learning, ‘team teaching’ or links with industry. Lubienski had already noted how ‘new’ school-types, such as USA charter schools, were often described as centres for ‘research and development’, or seen as developing ‘different and innovative teaching methods’, but in practice rarely deviated from the norm (Lubienski, 2003a). However, use of ‘administrative innovations’, focused on changes to forms of school organisation, marketing and ‘efficiency’, had the potential to lead to ‘changes in the structures or organisational behaviour of schools’.

Wiborg, Green and Taylor-Gooby (2018) utilised these innovation concepts within their research into England’s 2010 free schools. They explored use of management practice, innovation (curriculum and pedagogy), as well as development of networks that enabled these schools to disseminate ‘innovative’ practice to other schools, and

‘learn from others’. Free school school distinctiveness was anysed using ‘in-depth qualitative interviews’, coupled with quantitative data drawn from a ‘survey of a small number of schools’. The survey was then followed up by a questionnaire to ‘provide a check that views expressed in our interviews were not idiosyncratic’ and ‘to explore patterns of variation in the perceptions that would not have emerged in a small number of interviews’ (Wiborg *et al.*, 2018, p. 8). The interviews focused on three key questions:

> *1) What forms of innovation (not found in local-authority-maintained schools) do free school head teachers perceive they are deploying in relation to management (broadly considered)?*
>
> *2) What forms of innovation (not found in local-authority-maintained schools) do free school head teachers perceive they are deploying in relation to curriculum and pedagogical practices?*
>
> *3) What forms of collaborative networks are there for free schools to learn about, absorb and disseminate innovatory practices?*
>
> **Wiborg, Green and Taylor-Gooby (2018, p.8)**

The research concluded that free schools had seemed to mostly differentiate their ‘product’ symbolically, using websites, uniform and use of ‘emblems’. Curriculum innovation in free schools was viewed as ‘relatively rare’. Earlier studies from ‘interested’ parties (Department for Education, 2014a) were seen to have ‘exaggerated’ differences to support an advocacy role. The research noted that free schools had mostly experimented with ‘management practice’, especially governance, finances and employment, with longer school days and, consequently,

lower ‘hourly pay’ for free school staff. Parents were seen as an ‘inherently conservative clientele’, not valuing innovation and free schools were seen to be ‘entrenched in a “structuration” process, which pushes them to adopt similar practices to other schools’ (Wiborg *et al.*, 2018, p. 12).

Wiborg et al. (2018, p.15) noted that, despite an official-discourse which promoted innovation, free schools were ‘not unlike other schools’ and we ‘should not expect dramatic differences over the short to medium term in pupil performance from the introduction of free schools’, although ‘we may expect to see increased use of performance-related pay as a management tool in schools, as well as a lengthening of teachers’ hours to meet the pressure for an extended school day’, whilst ‘substantive innovation in teaching and curriculum matters appears to be relatively limited’. The research suggested ‘a tension, therefore, between the aims of the broader free school project and the principle of public accountability as currently practised’ (Wiborg *et al.*, 2018, p. 14). However, the research did not consider the way other schools had adopted similar types of practice in response to the pressures exerted by government GPMR. It also did not consider what the actors interviewed might have omitted, or seen as logical and unquestionable.

Free school proposers needed to consider the advantages of ‘product’ and ‘process’ innovation within a context where ‘administrative’ innovation was easier and more efficient. This reflects the potentially perverse effects of a second-best market (Lubienski, 2006b), where school ‘grammar’ innovation may actually be more likely within a publicly-funded, centralised school-supply system, rather than a market-led framework. Differential pricing was not available for state-funded schools and new school-types relied on marketing to emphasise their ‘symbolic’ superior status

(Lubienski, 2007b). Although CTCs, GM schools and New Labour's academies were 'codified' (Thomson, 2005) as superior school leaders, regardless of school-type status, needed to market schools in similar ways (West and Pennell, 2002; Harris and Ranson, 2005). Entry to 2010 school-supply required free school proposers to respond to an existing competition framework, with official definitions of 'good' schools. The free school policy reforms were, in this sense, 'new', but layered over an existing 'rock strata' (Courtney, 2015, p. 802):

> *As new political and ideological impetuses produce new forms of schooling, older forms often survive de-privileged and discursively marginalised, resulting in an education 'system' resembling rock strata. Fresh layers overlay without obliterating older ones, whose meaning is nevertheless altered under their discursive pressure.*
>
> **Courtney (2015)**

The competitive arena of school-supply was controlled by central government (Dale, 1989; Halpin and Fitz, 1990; Deem and Davies, 1991; Halpin, Power and Fitz, 1993; Helgøy, Homme and Gewirtz, 2007; Higham and Earley, 2013). This control was reflected within free school application-assessment rules used for entry and the GPMR used to discipline schools. Opening a free school provided access to new forms of economic capital, such as a new building, or a type of cultural capital gained through status as a successful free school proposer, or principal. This suggests that free school application-assessment might reflect what Bourdieu (1990; 1991b; 1992; 1993; 1998; 1999) described as a '*field*', a bounded social space where individuals

compete for capital. The next section will consider research into education which has utilised this type of *field* theory.

### 3.6 Field theory as a framework to evaluate freedom and control

Section 3.2 noted how the 2010 school-supply side reforms appeared to build on a neo-liberal landscape which had been shaped by markets, competition and strong central steering. Free school proposers aimed to gain entry to this space and, once accepted, maintain position, or enhance it. However, central government controlled entry through an application-assessment and defined the GPMR rules used to discipline schools already open. This control framework appears to reflect what Bourdieu (1990a; 1991; 1993a; 1998; 1999) described as a *'field'*. A *field* might be thought of as like a game, or a type of force-field, where individuals, or *agents*, with most power determine the currency-value (Thomson, 2005) required for entry. Chapter two noted some of the complexity of England's 2010 landscape, suggesting the *field* included free schools, but was part of a larger education *field* which accommodated LA maintained schools, academies, 'grey' school-supply and private schools. It was flexed by related sub-fields, such as test and examination reforms, or changes to the regulation of teacher training. Free school application-assessment provides a unique insight into rules used to control entry to this *field*.

Although Bourdieu's concepts of *field* theory have not been previously applied within the context of free schools, they have been utilised across a wide range of research within the social sciences, including education. This type of research has mostly

focused on the impact of power and control on individuals and groups. Hastings and Matthews (2015, p. 545), for example, considered the way the coalition's 'Big Society' might reflect how 'class-based processes can underlie the operation of the mechanisms implicated in middle-class advantage'. They stressed the importance of seeking to understand a field's *doxa,* 'the unquestioned shared beliefs which constitute fields and is an act of symbolic power in which the accumulation and distribution of capitals explains which beliefs and truths, which practices, distributions, hierarchies or sets of social relations are considered 'natural' or appropriate' (Hastings and Matthews, 2015, p. 549).

Most education research which has utilised *field* theory has approached the impact of power on individuals through evaluation of *habitus*, the disposition and beliefs of individuals which allows them to be considered as suitable *agents*. Power (1999, p. 48) suggested that *habitus* reflects 'a set of dispositions, internal to the individual, that both reflects external social structures and shapes how the individual perceives the world and acts in it'. Reay (1995) used *habitus* to explore the way gender, race and class 'work' in everyday interactions within school settings. Reay noted how *habitus* could be explored through posture, 'averted eyes, through turning away, by a failure to hear', or the way pupils treated 'dinner ladies' (Reay, 1995, p. 368). The classroom was seen as a space where the 'habitus of the home meets the habitus of the school' (Reay, 1995, p. 368), allowing some pupils to assert superiority over peers, or even staff. Reay also used *habitus* to explore the way class and gender (Reay, 1997; 2002) contributed to social reproduction (Reay, 2006; 2012; Reay *et al.*, 2008). Reay (2004) proposed that *habitus* could be seen as consisting of four types: a) 'habitus as embodiment', through ways of standing, speaking or thinking, b)

‘habitus and agency’, which allows individual agency but also predisposes individuals towards certain ways of behaving, c) ‘habitus as a compilation of collective and individual trajectories’ where individual history contributes to habitus, but so does the whole collective history of family and class, d) ‘habitus as a complex interplay between past and present’, a product of early childhood experience, and family, but ‘continually re-structured by individuals’ (Reay, 2004, p. 432).

Reay made a distinction between a type of ‘primary habitus’, a set of dispositions moulded in childhood and not susceptible to change, and a type of secondary habitus gained through a ‘profession or trade’. She was, however, critical of the way *habitus* and *capital* had been widely used within education research and ‘sprayed throughout academic texts’, seeming to ‘bestowing gravitas without doing any theoretical work’ (Reay, 2004, p. 432). Evaluation of *habitus* is problematic, especially where a researcher seeks to evaluate *habitus* through characteristics which may not reflect individual dispositions. Dumais (2002), for example, considered pupil outcomes in tests within the USA by comparing access to ‘cultural capital’, socio-economic status (SES) and test scores. However, this relied on a relatively unclear definition of ‘access to cultural activity’ provided by different states, and did not consider the way SES scores had been interpreted in different ways. These tensions illustrate that whilst *habitus*, or *capital*, provide useful conceptual tools, care is needed to define what the *field* is, and what might be hidden to those in it.

*Field* theory has also been relatively widely used to consider relationships between individuals already in an organisation. Emirbayer and Johnson, for example, noted how Bourdieu (1993b, p. 72) defined a *field* as ‘structured spaces of positions (or posts) whose properties depend on their position within these spaces and which can

be analyzed independently of the characteristics of their occupants (which are partly determined by them)'. The power relations, or positions, within a *field* reflect an ongoing struggle to dominate and monopolise the 'specific authority' which is 'characteristic of the field in question' (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 73). Emirbayer and Johnson suggested that key concepts used by Bourdieu: *field, capital* and *habitus*, provided an interlocking framework. This required a researcher to not 'take at face value and in their directly visible immediacy' merely 'the encounters or transactions among these organizations' (Emirbayer and Johnson, 2008, p. 9).

Swartz (2008) proposed that although Bourdieu's work had been increasingly applied within sociology in the USA 'it is rare to find all three of Bourdieu's master concepts—habitus, capital, and field—incorporated into a single study' (Swartz, 2008, p. 45). Drawing on Emirbayer and Johnson (2008), Swartz suggested that research into *fields* should use Bourdieu's thinking tools within a relational perspective, since this was fundamental to Bourdieu's thinking. This means, for example, that whilst *habitus* is an important concept, research should also consider the rules used to control the 'game'*.* Emirbayer and Johnson (2008, p. 32) also noted the 'inseparability of the theoretical and empirical dimensions of research' and the way 'apparently trivial methodological decisions may be of great theoretical import'. This led them to conclude that 'the much larger decision of which social scientific methods to employ must be made not in advance but instead repeatedly in the course of the construction of one's object' (Emirbayer and Johnson, 2008, p. 33). They proposed that research into *fields* required a constant re-evaluation of what new information reveals about the *field's* structure.

Gunter and Forrester (2009) used *field* theory to study the impact of New Labour's education policies, especially the way changes made to concepts of leadership had been utilised as a type of control lever. This research utilised '*field*' and '*habitus*' as a way of 'identifying and examining the types of knowledge, the ways of knowing and the legitimisation of knowers involved in framing, promoting and securing leadership' (Gunter and Forrester, 2009, p. 496). The research was carried out by examining policy documents and interviews with 'ministers, civil servants, advisors, consultants, headteachers and researchers.' The researchers noted how 'identities-in-practice' had been fashioned by an 'interplay of agency' reflected within 'historical, political, social and economic experiences and struggles' (Gunter and Forrester, 2009, p. 500). Entry to this *field* was 'based on dispositions to take up a position through the staking of capital as being knowledgeable about leadership through professional experience and/or as researchers who align with school improvement and school effectiveness' (Gunter and Forrester, 2009, p. 501). The research considered *habitus* as 'revealed through that practice', and located within semi-structured interviews which explored links between background, professional practice and New Labour's education policy. The researchers also evaluated individuals according to 'indicators' of cultural, social and symbolic capital.

Gunter and Forrester (2009) concluded that New Labour had reshaped the *field* through 'the control and dominance functions of government institutions' (Gunter and Forrester, 2009, p. 509), with individuals located within three 'regimes' of practice. Regime 1 relied on importing advisers and consultants from schools, universities, private companies and local government. Access reflected the way these *agents* recombined ideas through 'discussions, papers and ultimately official policy

documents and strategies'. Regime 2 provided a type of 'critical governance', positioned 'at a distance from the domination of economic and political power'. *Agents* in this group 'tend to articulate their work as policy studies, notably policy sociology' and 'emphasise how neo-liberal agendas dominate at the expense of narratives about democratic development and social justice often using 'social theories regarding class and gender, and draw on theories of power such as Foucault and Bourdieu to frame investigations' (Gunter and Forrester, 2009, p. 505).

This research suggested that a third 'regime' may evolve through 'knowledge workers in higher education, together with headteachers 'distanced from Regime 1 between the strategic bigger picture of policy strategy and the realities of local practice in a school and classroom' (Gunter and Forrester, 2009, p. 506). English (2012, p. 169), exploring similar types of leadership reform in the USA, concluded that government policy reforms were doomed to failure because 'standards are lodged and validated in the *doxa* of the times', so agents involved accept the 'rules of the game' as logical and common sense, but fail to see how they are relatively arbitrary and will not 'challenge the social inequalities which are at the root of the achievement gap.'

Although Bourdieu's work on *fields* and *habitus* has mostly been utilised within research into the consumer-side of markets (Grenfell, 1996; Dumais, 2002; Rawolle and Lingard, 2008; Mangez and Hilgers, 2012; Bathmaker, Ingram and Waller, 2013; Ferrare and Apple, 2015; James, 2015; Thomson, 2017). Thomson (2005) applied *field* theory in a broader context. This suggested that the way new CTC and GM school-types had been positioned as superior by the 1988 Conservative government had re-shaped the *field* and its 'symbolic economy'. Reforms had contributed to a

'recodified' symbolic school economy, with a type of 'exchange-value' required to access capital. A school-type therefore provided a potential proxy for school quality, with new school-types positioned within an overall hierarchy of power. The difference between these schools was emphasised through their legal status, freedom and a funding relationship with central government. New 'superior' school-types had the potential to reshape the way power was redistributed within a school hierarchy (Thomson, 2005, p. 743):

> *Before the policy changes were effected, schools and agents working in them were already positioned in a social hierarchy, differentiated by their cultural capital. This was clearest in the secondary sector, although the same kind of differentials existed in the primary sector. Grammar schools and faith schools had more status than comprehensives by virtue of the cultural and social capital that was the inheritance of the bulk of their pupils and they tended to produce more of these capitals for their pupils, marked by their generally better examination results. There were also geographical markers of capital differentials, comprehensives in areas of high poverty being at the bottom of the pecking order in the field.*
>
> **(Thomson, 2005, p. 743)**

Thomson noted how schools positioned as free from regulation, 'independent' and superior, appeared to change the field's 'symbolic economy', providing a re-ordering of value. 'Good' schools could potentially use freedom and innovation characteristics to achieve position and status. However, the 'grammar' of these schools may have

also been controlled by other features which defined ‘good’ schools. Thomson noted ‘there were clear sorting and selecting practices at work (e.g. setting, assessment, subject choice, examinations) which positioned pupils for the next stage of their education, training or work (Thomson, 2005, p. 743). The language and concepts used for sorting reflected ‘particular epistemologies’, especially ‘tests, data and reports’. This framework supported types of knowledge and knowing, contributing to the *field’s* actual ‘currency-value’. Thomson also noted that, despite a shift away from the worst features of a market under New Labour ‘a study of participation rates of students from 1994 to 2000, reveals that the most advantaged 20% of young people are six times more likely to enter higher education than the most disadvantaged 20% (Thomson, 2005, p. 747). However, the blame for ‘poor game playing’ could be allocated to individuals, and provided an example of what Bourdieu termed *misrecognition*.

In a later study Thomson (2010) developed these ideas further, exploring the way a belief or desire for autonomy also seemed to represent a type of *misrecognition*:

> *Secondly, I want to suggest that headteacher desire for autonomy operates as a misrecognition. There is a clear rhetorical correspondence between the doxa of meritocracy and the desire for autonomy; if one believes that one gets on only through hard work and effort, this creates a drive within the person to do well. But the misrecognition is the failure to see not only that the game is historically rigged, but also how the struggle to do better actually reproduces and keeps intact the capital that are being struggled over. The actual contest*

*for the prizes in the field, driven by the desire in individual agents, keeps the field and its competitive and inequitable nature intact.*

**Thomson (2010, p.16)**

Thomson (2014a) noted how critics have suggested that *misrecognition* implies that a *field* can never be researched, since the researcher will also be destined to *misrecognise* the rules of the game (Rancière, 2004). This challenge is seen as making empirical research into this concept difficult (Gorski, 2013). However, as Thomson noted (2014a, p. 101) whilst this lens may not help to 'transform a field' it is 'surely helpful to adopt a reflexive position which asks how our work might constitute a misrecognition, might perpetuate *doxa*, or might be easily taken up to further these ends'. The study of *fields* has also attracted criticism from the political right. A report by Ofsted into effectiveness of education research (Tooley and Darby, 1998, p. 6) concluded that much was of poor quality or irrelevant, noting 'partisanship', poor conduct in qualitative studies, non-empirical research and activity in 'a vacuum, unnoticed and unheeded by anyone else'. Nash (1999), however, suggested that research which utilised Bourdieu's sociological tools made an important contribution to understanding the effect of power structures on individuals and social reproduction, helping to reach an understanding of how to change systems, such as school-supply, for the better.

Entry to the 2010 *sub-field* of school-supply can therefore be seen as a reflection of proposers' awareness of its currency-value, and the school characteristics seen as 'good' by government. It required an 'exchange-value', the existing *capital* which could be exchanged to gain entry to the *field*. Opening a free school provided a way

to acquire additional *capital*, what Bourdieu described as ‘economic’ *capital* (school site, building and resources), ‘cultural’ *capital* (an underpinning epistemology used to define ‘good’ characteristics), ‘social’ *capital* (position in relation to others through acquisition of power) and, potentially, a type of ‘symbolic’ *capital* (with free schools codified as superior through legal status and innovation). Entry to the *field* required individuals and groups to have the necessary dispositions, beliefs and experience required to be seen as a suitable player, what Bourdieu described as *habitus*. Once in the game these players, or *agents*, required a good ‘feel’ for the rules of the game, what Bourdieu described as its *doxa*, an unknowing acceptance of the *field’s* rules. A *field’s doxa* reflects the way ‘claims to legitimacy derive their relative strength, in the last analysis, from the strength of the groups or classes whose material and symbolic interests they directly or indirectly express’ (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, p. 18). The rules used to control entry to the *field,* via a free school application, have the potential to provide insight into these symbolic interests and the *field’s doxa*. A focus on the experiences of free school proposers within this specific context may also offer a way to understand how *agents* might have *misrecognised* the essentially arbitrary nature of the *field’s doxa*.

### 3.7 Summary

The impact of globalised neo-liberal school-choice on consumer-side parent-consumers has attracted extensive research, especially its effect on different social groups. Research has also considered the way these reforms, including the 2010

free schools, may have led to increased privatisation, a type of economic efficiency, or changes in governance. There is no clear evidence to show that neo-liberal reforms, including new school-types codified as superior, had led to overall improved outcomes, or greater equality for pupils. There is, however, strong evidence to suggest that, over time, disadvantaged pupils have consistently done less well than other pupils and that 'good' schools have been appropriated by an 'alert' middle class. England's school-supply is generally viewed as not operating as a 'pure' market, and may operate like a 'second-best' market, where a hierarchy position is achieved most efficiently by emphasising conformity and attracting the 'best' parent-consumers. There has been less research into the supply-side characteristics, or 'grammar' of new school-types. The Conservative's CTCs and New Labour's academies were defined by freedom, but may have relied on traditional schooling models to signal superior status within the market. A recent research study into free schools by Wiborg et al. (2018) suggested that free schools may be 'not unlike' other schools. This raises questions about the innovation choices made by free school proposers, and how much freedom they had. It suggests a need for further research into free school application-assessment, and the impact of central controls on choices made by proposers.

These questions suggest that insight into individual freedom and central control might be reflected within the specific site of entry to school-supply, especially application-assessment. This might be viewed through the lens of what Bourdieu described as a *field*, a social space where individuals seek to gain *capital* and control is imposed by existing *agents*. Successful entry to this part of the education *field*, and maintenance of position within it, will have required proposers to subscribe to the rules of the

game, or, *doxa*. Although *field* theory has been used to explore the experiences and *habitus* of individuals within an organisation, or the impact of power on individuals, relatively little attention has been given to Bourdieu's complementary concepts of *doxa*, or *misrecognition*. A focus on the *doxa* used within entry to school-supply, and the potential *misrecognition* of *agents* involved, provides a way to extend and enhance existing research further. The next chapter will outline a research design which aims to analyse the interface between 2010 official-discourse, how leaders within established free schools promoted school innovation and the views of individuals involved with free schools about rules used to control entry and maintain position within the game.

# 4 Research design and methods

## 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter noted how most existing research into free schools, and similar school-supply reforms, has focused on their impact on groups of parent-consumers. Rather less attention has been given to school characteristics, what Tyack and Tobin (1994) described as the 'grammar of schooling' and, in this context, the freedom choices made by free school proposers, especially over a school curriculum, pay, or conditions of service. It has been noted how this innovation and freedom were, however, significant features of the way free schools were codified by the 2010 coalition government as superior, and designed to create 'good' schools desired by parent-consumers. Reference has been made in chapter 3 to a recent study (Wiborg *et al.*, 2018), which indicated that free schools may be 'not unlike' other schools. This potential lack of innovation and difference raises questions about whether proposers avoided innovation, or whether rules applied within the application process meant they were unable to use it. A focus on the dispositions, beliefs and experiences of free school proposers describes a type of critical policy sociology (Gale, 2001). It provides insight into the social world of these individuals within the context of a policy reform, especially their experience of individual freedom and the controls of GPMR. This chapter will outline a research design which provides insight into the interface between freedom and control within free school application-assessment and, once open, operation as a state-funded school. This interface reflects the way free school proposals either adopted the innovation defined in the 2010 official-discourse which

codified (Thomson, 2005) free school superiority, or avoided it. These focus areas reflect the research questions noted in 1.5. At the heart is the interface between individual freedom and central control, viewed as what Bourdieu described as a *field,* a social space where those with most power control the rules of the game, or *doxa.* Insight into the *doxa* is sought within the rules used to control entry, via a free school application, and then maintain position once open.

**4.2 Theoretical position**

The 2010 official-discourse positioned free schools, ontologically, as an ‘object’, a distinctive and superior school-type. It has been noted how the superior ‘codification’ of free schools seemed to reflect their enhanced freedom and innovation. The apparent tension between this freedom and rules used to control entry to school-supply suggests that free school application-assessment provides an important interface between government power and individual freedom. Successful proposers needed to recognise the *field’s* rules, including the currency-value of a school ‘grammar’ considered desirable within the *field’s* symbolic-economy (Thomson, 2005). This required an understanding of the actual currency-value assigned to innovation and freedom within application-assessment. These rules had an impact on what free schools could be like, but also reflected the credentials, or exchange-value, required by free school proposers. Bourdieu described how this type of social control relationship might be viewed as a type of *field,* a competitive game where *agents* have unequal power, or *capital* (Bourdieu, 1990b; 1991; 1993a; 1993b; Bourdieu and

Wacquant, 1992; Grenfell, 2014). Entry to the *field,* and subsequent position within it, was controlled by central government, through *agents* with large amounts of *capital*, including external Education Advisers, DfE officials, government ministers, or RSCs. This control may have defined the 'grammar' of schooling (Tyack and Tobin, 1994) seen as 'good', and the credentials of those considered suitable to open a free school. Bourdieu (1990b; 1991; 1992; 1993a; 1993b) provided a series of interlinked thinking tools, which might be used to gain insight into the way those with power control entry to a *field.* They include *capital, habitus, doxa and misrecognition*.

These thinking tools have been used within research into education, which has mostly utilised Bourdieu's concepts of *habitus* and *capital*, reflecting the way schools may help to maintain a type of consumer-side social reproduction. *Habitus* and *capital* are reflected in the characteristics of actors who benefit most from rules which control the *field's* symbolic economy. This study approaches entry to the *field* of education from a different, but linked, conceptual framework. It seeks to understand more about whether approved free school characteristics reflected a freedom and innovation desired by proposers, or the controls imposed by central government. This is seen as fundamental, since free schools can only be a superior object if they are distinctive when compared to other school-types. These school characteristics will, in turn, have an impact on parent-consumers, especially their access to the types of school they might desire. At the heart of this analysis are the rules used for entry and maintenance of position, an example of the *field's doxa*, and the way *agents* may have *misrecognised* the arbitrary nature of the rules of the game.

Although *doxa* and *misrecognition* have, to date, been used sparingly within education research, Thomson (2014a, p. 91) noted how they provided important research tools:

> *Bourdieu suggests that misrecognition occurs when agents are not entirely unaware of the truth of their practices, but act as if they must conceal it from themselves. Agents accept doxa and thus 'misrecognise' the material reality and effects of the game which, in the case of education, is not about reward for meritorious performance but rather, the production and reproduction of inequalities.* **Thomson (2014a, p. 91)**

Thomson described *misrecognition* in terms which proposed that schools might contribute to a type of social reproduction experienced by parent-consumers. Although *misrecognition* is not something that can be analysed through empirical data, this study focuses on how it might be implied through what *agents* did not say, or failed to recognise. Insight into *misrecognition* might also be gained through the views of individuals who sought access to the *field*, but were unable to do so. These elements will, in turn, have the potential to contribute additional information about why free schools may have either improved social reproduction, or contributed to its maintenance.

A *field* is a multi-dimensional, dynamic and complex social space. It is therefore important to understand something about its boundaries and some of the strong and weak forces (Martin, 2003) which influence it. Entry to school-supply required proposers to negotiate a relationship with a larger *field* of education and a series of

associated sub-fields (Rawolle and Lingard, 2008) which contributed to its operation, or *logic of practice* (Thomson, 2005). For example, free school proposers were confronted by the superior codification of freedom and innovation, as well as the 'innovation' of global school-choice movements, including USA charter schools, or Sweden's *friskolor*. They had to negotiate the complexities of an innovation defined through the same curriculum and staffing freedoms used in New Labour's academies and Conservative CTCs (Department for Education, 2011d; 2011e; 2011h; 2014b). The 2010 school-supply seemed to have the potential to be flexed by the new role played by local community groups, encouraged to create new schools as part of the 'Big Society'. Once open free schools operated within a part of the *field* controlled by central government's GPMR, including the tests, examinations, performance tables and inspections which provided the currency-value for 'good' schools.

In 2.7 it was noted how school-supply included a wide range of existing private schools, grey school-supply, Further Education Colleges (FE) and work-based learning providers, offering vocational training pathways in specific skills. Additional forces, such as the role played by LAs in shaping schooling, or a series of teacher training reforms might also have exerted a long-term impact on the *field*. Free school application-assessment was mediated, from 2013 onwards, by the DfE's expectation that state-funded independent schools would be part of MATs. Although given a freedom to impose enhanced performance management arrangements on schools, and central curriculum control, MATs were not of equal value within the *field*. They had differing amounts of economic capital, derived from the number of schools they ran. The DfE's RSC meso-level *agents,* were charged with supporting the implementation of government policy priorities, contributing to decisions about an

official value assigned to ‘good’ MATs. RSCs had to comply with the *field’s doxa* in order to maintain their own position within it.

A *field* is dynamic, in a constant state of flux and change, ‘implemented in a field of professional practice with its different logics of practice’ (Rawolle and Lingard, 2008, p. 729). Insight into this logic might be found within some of the ‘rules, narratives and self-held truths’ (Thomson, 2005) of those involved. For example, success within a free school application, and once a school was open, required *agents* to have a good ‘feel’ for the game (Danaher, Schirato and Webb, 2001). It reflected their awareness of its rules (Bourdieu, 1990b; 1993b; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). The beliefs and experiences of *agents* provide important insights, but need to be set within a larger context, including what they failed to see, or *misrecognised*. Bourdieu also stressed that the position of a researcher forms an important part of the evaluation of a *field*.

I have noted my distinctive and, in many ways, unique subject-object relationship with 2010 school-supply, and entry to it via a free school application, see 1.7. This ‘insider’ knowledge (Thomas, Blacksmith and Reno, 2000), offered a type of privileged access to *agents* involved in free schools, but also suggests this research cannot be seen as neutral. However, knowledge and familiarity are important and Reay (2004, p. 438), drawing on Bourdieu (Krais, 1993, p. 252), suggested that a ‘practical knowledge that has its own logic, which cannot be reduced to that of theoretical knowledge’ was helpful, since ‘in a sense, agents know the social world better than the theoreticians.’ The context of having been an *agent* within the *field* can therefore be viewed as a potential advantage, supporting an understanding of its *doxa,* although may not support identification of *misrecognition.* This was mitigated by a decision to withdraw from the EA role once the research had started, and by

seeking the views of some participants who had failed to gain entry. The multi-dimensional layers of the *field* of education and its sub-*fields* outlined are reflected in the research design.

### 4.3 Research design

The design for this research took account of previous studies, including some which had considered the impact of 2010 coalition government education policies on schools and individuals. For example, Salokangas and Chapman (2014) considered individual perceptions about the impact of academisation of existing schools by studying governance in two academy chains, using a 'comparative case study' approach. The researchers collected qualitative data from semi-structured interviews, as well as 'documentary evidence', and a similar combination of different types of data sources informs the research design for this thesis, especially the intersection of official-discourse codification of free school superiority, information presented to parent-consumers by free school leaders, and the perceptions of individuals involved in the policy. A similar approach was also adopted by Boyask (2018, p. 111), who explored the 'moral dimensions of the academies programme' within primary schools through examination of 'publicly available documentary evidence', 'one-to-one interviews with senior managers and service providers from each local authority' and 'a survey distributed to all state funded primary and secondary schools in each of the local authorities'. Higham and Earley (2013, p. 701) used case study data and a survey of almost 2000 school leaders to explore views on autonomy and control,

considering the experiences of those involved about ‘autonomy, accountability, external support and managing change’.

Woods, Woods and Gunter (2007, p. 241) applied Bourdieu’s field theory to examine the ‘stated aims of sponsors’ in New Labour’s academies. They analysed ‘how the entrepreneurial imperative—an important part of the *doxa* that rationalises school educational policy—is being conceptualised and articulated through the pattern of academies that is beginning to emerge’ and the way sponsors are ‘shaping the policy discourse as the programme unfolds’. Gunter and Forrester (2009, p. 496) used Bourdieu’s ‘thinking tools’, especially *habitus* and *capital*, looking at ‘a range of agents who are actively and variously involved in the development and enactment of policy’, drawing on ‘documentary’ evidence, split into ‘primary’ sources (government documents) and ‘secondary’ sources (published articles and books on leadership and policy). This information was used with ‘empirical’ data, including interviews with actors from ‘government, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs)/agencies, local government, unions, universities, schools and private-sector companies’. This research emphasised the importance of ‘situated stories’, especially the ‘experiences’ and ‘meaning given to activity’. The research design outlined by Gunter and Forrester also drew on a mixture of data sources, including primary sources (documentation, information presented by proposers and interviews) and secondary sources (research articles). A similar model for data source identification and data capture has been broadly adopted within this study, although adapted to focus on evaluation of the *field’s doxa,* and how this may have led to potential *misrecognition*.

The research design is sequenced into three **phases** which, although not of equal size, are linked, so phase two draws on anaysis of phase one, and phase three draws on analysis of phases one and two. The phases are as follows:

**Phase 1** analyses the way official-discourse legitimised freedom, innovation and 'good' school definitions, whilst alternatives were de-legitimised (Chilton, 2004; Reyes, 2011; John Wilson, 2015; Kramsch, 2020). **Phase 2** analyses the way a sample of 'established' free schools open since 2013, with a building, full complement of staff and pupils, presented conditions of service, pay and curriculum innovation to stakeholders within applications, websites, job adverts and associated documentation. This analysis provides a context for phase 3.

**Phase 3** analyses the field's *doxa* further by considering the beliefs and dispositions that different actors, brought, and took, from the *field*, especially their views about freedom and control. It considers how far they subscribed to themes within official-discourse, the innovation identified within sample established schools, and some of the ways they may have *misrecognised* the rules which formed the *field's doxa.* Although this *misrecognition* cannot be objectively analysed it is seen as implied by considering what individuals may not have said, or how they did not see the *field's* rules as relatively arbitrary. The landscape of 2010 school-supply noted within chapter 2, and the review of literature in chapter 3 provide an important context for some features that *agents* may have *misrecognised*. They reflect the way Thomson, in Grenfell (2014, p. 65) suggested that, within the context of a *field,* 'analysis of social space meant not only locating the object of investigation in its specific historical and local/national/international, or relational context, but also interrogating the ways in which previous knowledge about the object under investigation had been

generated, by whom, and whose interests were served by those knowledge-generation practices'.

The research is designed to understand the three research questions noted in 1.5, with question 2 split into two parts to reflect different data collection methods: **Research question 1: How did official-discourse legitimise free school freedoms, promote 'good' school characteristics and de-legitimise alternative approaches to schooling?** This question considers the way official-discourse codified free schools as superior, drawing on freedom and innovation, whilst also legitimising 'good' schools and de-legitimising alternatives. **Research question 2(a): Did 'established' free schools use additional 'freedoms' assigned to them (teachers' conditions of service, pay and freedom from the national curriculum)?** This question considers use of conditions of service, pay and curriculum 'freedoms' reflected within websites, application forms and job adverts created by established free school proposers. **Research question 2(b): What did a group of actors involved with free schools believe about how these additional 'freedoms' were operationalised?** This question analyses views about 'freedom' and innovation expressed in oral testimonies by actors with experience of application-assessment. **Research question 3: What effect did a range of government controls have on practice within free schools and on what 'good' schools could be like?** This question considers how government controls over state-funded schools had an impact on freedom and what was possible within free school proposals. The overall research design links research questions, data collection and chapters, see figure 4.1:

*Figure 4.1 Research design summary*

<table>
<tr><th>Research question</th><th>Data collection</th><th>Research phase</th><th>Chapter</th></tr>
<tr><td>How did official policy-discourse legitimise free school freedoms, de-legitimise alternative approaches to schooling and promote ‘good’ school characteristics?</td><td>Freedom and innovation promoted within an extensive range of pre and post-2010 policy-discourse.</td><td>1</td><td>5</td></tr>
<tr><td>Research question 2(a): Did ‘established’ free schools use additional ‘freedoms’ assigned to them (teachers’ conditions of service, pay and freedom from the national curriculum)?</td><td>Freedom and innovation promoted within a random sample of ten ‘established’ free school websites, application forms and associated job adverts.</td><td>2</td><td>6</td></tr>
<tr><td>Research question 2(b): What did a group of actors involved with free schools believe about how these additional ‘freedoms’ were operationalised?</td><td rowspan="2">The oral testimonies of a purposively sampled group individuals involved in free school application-assessment collected through semi-structured interviews.</td><td rowspan="2">3</td><td rowspan="2">7</td></tr>
<tr><td>Research question 3: What effect did a range of government controls have on practice within free schools and on what ‘good’ schools could be like?</td></tr>
</table>

These data are used in chapter eight to draw conclusions about the interface between freedom and control within entry to the *field* through free school application-assessment and maintenance of position through GPMR.

### 4.4 Research method

The method chosen for this study is Thematic Analysis (TA), a well-established approach within psychology (Braun and Clarke, 2006), health care (Braun and Clarke, 2014) sport and exercise (Braun, Clarke and Weate, 2016) and, more recently, education (Xu and Zammit, 2020). Although widely used this method has not, to date, been used to research the specific areas covered by this study, including free schools and entry to school-supply, or in conjunction with Bourdieu's field theory. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 77), note how TA has been a 'poorly demarcated and rarely acknowledged, yet widely used qualitative analytic method'. Building on the work of Boyatzis (1998) they went on to provide additional guidance about TA, as well as defining a more specific method, which they termed 'reflexive thematic analysis', or RTA (Braun and Clarke, 2019; 2021). Within RTA coding requires constant 'bending back on oneself', to question and query assumptions made in 'interpreting and coding the data'. Themes which are identified are the result of analysis developed 'through and from' the 'creative labour' of coding. Themes do not, for example, 'passively emerge from either data or coding they are not 'in' the data, waiting to be identified and retrieved by the researcher' (Braun and Clarke, 2019, p. 594). RTA acknowledges a researcher's 'active' role in knowledge production,

accepting that their context is always non-neutral. There is a similarity here to the way Bourdieu stressed the importance of understanding, as far as possible, a researcher's *habitus*.

RTA is viewed as providing a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns, or themes within identified data sets. This is appropriate for either inductive or theoretical research, and there is no expectation that two researchers might engage with criteria in the same way. RTA utilises coding of 'themes' based on a researcher's interpretations of patterns of meaning across a dataset, providing an intersection between theoretical assumptions, a dataset, and the analytical skills/resources of the researcher (Braun and Clarke, 2019). Codes, or themes, interpreted by one researcher may not be reproduced by another and no attempt is made to provide accounts of 'accurate' or 'reliable' coding, or consensus among multiple coders, for example using Cohen's Kappa values (Cohen, 1960). RTA is concerned with 'the researcher's reflective and thoughtful engagement with their data and their reflexive and thoughtful engagement with the analytic process' (Braun and Clarke, 2019, p. 594).

Braun and Clarke described key elements to be used within RTA, noting how research would be built around a complete data collection (data *corpus*). The approach to generating this *corpus* will vary according to different types of research. Some data may then be taken from the *corpus* for analysis (data *set*) and a *set* may 'include many, or all, individual data items within your data *corpus*' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Analysis may focus on one *se*t, or one topic, using information from across the *corpus,* or these two approaches might also be combined. A data *item* describes an individual piece of data (such as an interview) and a data *extract*

refers to ‘an individual coded chunk of data’, which has been identified within, and extracted from, a data *item*. Not all data *extracts* will feature within a final analysis and the researcher plays an important and active role in identifying what is relevant. RTA is not linked to a particular theoretical framework, but ‘good thematic analysis’ will make its theoretical underpinning clear. Braun and Clarke also noted how a researcher will need to make a ‘number of decisions’, which should be made explicit:

<u>What counts as a theme?</u>

This is a question of size, but also of relevance. More instances of something do not necessarily mean more importance. The context, knowledge and judgement of the researcher are used to determine the balance between size and relevance.

<u>Rich description or detailed account of one aspect?</u>

The research may provide an accurate reflection of the entire data set, but lose complexity and depth in the process, or a more ‘detailed and nuanced’ account of one particular theme, or group of themes. The researcher will make decisions based on knowledge and judgement.

<u>Inductive or theoretical analysis?</u>

Themes or patterns within data can be identified through a ‘bottom-up approach’ (inductive) or through a ‘top down (theoretical approach). Some researchers make use of both processes (Xu and Zammit, 2020).

<u>Semantic or latent themes?</u>

Within semantic analysis a researcher does not look for anything beyond what a participant has said, or within written information. Analysis of latent themes however

aims to identify 'underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations – and ideologies – that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 84).

Epistemology

RTA can be used within realist or constructionist paradigms but the 'outcome and focus will be different for each' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 85). RTA within a constructionist paradigm will not focus on individuals, but consider contexts and structural conditions, which are seen as leading to individual accounts.

Questions

RTA relies on a close relationship between research questions and an overall research focus, with questions needing to be considered before and during analysis.

The RTA 'decisions' noted by Braun and Clarke were defined within this research as follows, see figure 4.2:

*Figure 4.2 The RTA decisions made in this research*

| | |
|---|---|
| *What counts as a theme* | Themes were generated and then refined across data collected from a) official-discourse b) information presented about free school freedoms c) the views of individuals. Themes were categorised according to meaning, with the notion of counting instances of words, phrases or concepts seen as potentially misleading and unhelpful. |

| | |
|---|---|
| *Rich description or detailed account of one aspect* | The data sets included a huge amount of information. Themes were condensed into key areas, but key themes identified were described in rich detail. |
| *Inductive or theoretical analysis* | Although some coding was inductive it was mainly theory-driven, reflecting the operation of a *field*. Whilst the views of individuals are not seen as the 'truth', they are, as far as possible, presented verbatim. |
| *Semantic or latent themes* | The research includes elements of both. Semantic themes are driven by policy-discourse and individuals' views, but the summary aims to pose questions about latent meaning and the effect of government power over the *field* and its operation. |
| *Epistemology* | The research views individuals and the researcher as part of the *field* and its rules. Ideas and understanding are constructed by being part of this context. |
| *Questions* | The research questions provide insight into rules which *controlled* the field of school-supply. |

Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87) described RTA as a process, which allows 'collection', 'coding', 'analysis' 'review' and 'reporting' of themes across six phases, see figure 4.3:

*Figure 4.3 Phases of thematic analysis from Braun and Clarke 2006*

**Table 1** Phases of thematic analysis

| Phase | Description of the process |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Familiarizing yourself with your data: | Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas. |
| 2. Generating initial codes: | Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code. |
| 3. Searching for themes: | Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme. |
| 4. Reviewing themes: | Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis. |
| 5. Defining and naming themes: | Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme. |
| 6. Producing the report: | The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis. |

These 'phases' lead to a final 'report' (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2021a; 2021b; Braun, 2022), but the process used to reach this stage may not always be linear, since it is subject to continual refinement and review. The data *corpus* for this research included three data *sets.* The next sections will describe these data sets, why they were chosen and how information was collected:

- **Data set 1**: The freedom and control defined within 2010 official-discourse (documents, websites and speeches).
- **Data set 2**: Innovation freedoms articulated in a sample of 'established' free school web sites, free school application forms and associated job adverts.
- **Data set 3**: The oral testimonies of actors with experience of free school application and their perceptions of 'freedom' or controls which operated across the *field* of school-supply.

Data set 1 includes a broad range of documentation including speeches by Gove prior to the 2010 coalition taking office, policy documents, websites and some media commentary. This data was identified through my experience within the *field,* see 1.7,

then coded and re-coded to identify and refine themes. Choices over the data were based, initially, by selecting examples of how politicians and central government presented free schools as new, distinctive, innovative and different. However, as themes were coded other policy priorities, such as GPMR, emerged as potentially significant. These seemingly contradictory themes were often located within the same speech or policy document. The data reported in the study represents a fraction of the data collected, see for example appendix 1.

**4.5 Thinking with theory within research analysis**

Bourdieu (1992) suggested that research into *fields* could utilise quantitative data, qualitative data, or both. At the time this of this study hundreds of post-2010 free schools existed, making it easy to identify particular 'cases'. The positioning of free schools as an object, a distinctive school-type within 2010 official-discourse, seems to suggest the need for a type of 'positivist' research design (May, 2011; Silverman, 2015), where free schools might be compared to other school-types. Section 3.2 noted how this type of output comparison had been used to provide insight into the impact of related policies on individuals and groups. However, chapter 3 concluded that although this research appears robust, it may reveal little information about the supply-side of reform, especially school innovation characteristics. In addition, national data 'sets' can be misleading, since data categories are not always consistent, clear, or necessarily comparable.

The broad definitions used in official data can reflect a wide range of variables, some of which are very difficult to account for. This includes size of school, gender, ethnicity, deprivation, local area, faith characteristics, selection, or age range. For example, England's national data treats free schools and academies as distinct and separate school-types. However, they have the same legal status and freedoms. The more meaningful distinction, not highlighted within this data, is the way free schools were mostly new, whilst academies were mostly the same as a predecessor school. Comparison of school-type output data is therefore likely to raise significant questions about the variables created by a shift in school status. It has also been noted how official free school data included UTCs and studio schools, which provided education for pupils from the age of fourteen and were focused on vocational qualifications. These features had an impact on examination outcome data and position of these schools within GPMR, raising difficulties over the validity of comparison. There is, as already noted, also evidence to show that free schools may not be very different from other school-types (Wiborg *et al.*, 2018).

A focus on quantitative data may therefore reveal very little about what free schools were like, the experiences of those involved, or the actual choices proposers faced. This type of information needs to be located within the social world, reflected in the way free schools chose to present information to parent-consumers, or the actual experiences of free school proposers within application-assessment. These features provide important insight into what May (2011, p. 9) described as the 'complications, conditions, decisions and contradictions that are actually part of our social lives'. At the heart is a 'specific form of interest', a 'tacit recognition of the value of the stakes of the game' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 117), especially the rules which

controlled entry to school-supply. The experiences and beliefs of free school proposers have the potential to provide insight into the *field's doxa.* However, potential *misrecognition,* needs to be contextualised. This study therefore focuses on three linked data sources: how official-discourse codified and legitimised free school innovation and superiority, the way 'established' free schools presented innovation to parent-consumers and the impact of central government control on innovation experienced by proposers. This approach will only allow focus on a small number of cases, but provides rich detail. However, it will not be possible to generalise from this information.

The data collected for this study represents a type of 'primary documentation. official-discourse, for example, includes speeches, websites and documents, especially from the period leading into the 2010 coalition and up until 2013. This period has been chosen to reflect the way politicians codified free schools as distinctive, innovative and superior. Website and job application data will be collected from a sample of free schools opened before the end of 2013, capturing the way school leaders promoted innovation to stakeholders, such as parent-consumers. The views of individuals with experience of free school application-assessment will provide insight into freedom and control. Bechhofer and Paterson (2012) noted that all research involves some form of comparison, and although free school consumer-side output data will not be compared to other schools, free school innovation characteristics will be. My experience in the *field*, across a wide range of schools, provides the necessary experience and authority for this task, see 1.7.

A range of approaches was considered in order to generate suitable data, especially in relation to the views of individuals involved with application-assessment. For

example, questionnaires provide a structured and standardised data-set, with the potential for statistical interpretation, or as part of a mixed-methods evaluation. However, they have potential limitations, especially over understanding cognitive processing, interpretation and context within answers, see Bechhofer and Paterson (2012, pp. 76 - 81). Questionnaires might not allow an understanding of the way individuals had 'reconstructed' ideas (Mason, 2002, p. 112), or provide access to the type of flexible discussion and follow-up which would facilitate exploration of beliefs about freedom, or reasons for decision-making. Interviews were chosen for their greater flexibility and 'the freedom to follow up points as necessary' (Thomas, 2013, p. 205). Structured interviews provide an option to create quantitative data, but lack flexibility. Unstructured interviews make it difficult to group, test and refine ideas. Semi-structured interviews were selected as most suitable, a flexible process which can be adapted as part of a 'dialogue' (May, 2011b, p. 125):

> *The interviewer, who can seek both clarification and elaboration on the answers given, can then record qualitative information about the topic. This enables the interviewer to have more latitude to probe beyond the answers and thus enter into a dialogue with the interviewee.*

Semi-structured interviews are a common data collection tool within social science research (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 1993; Fife-Schaw and Hammond, 2000; Breakwell, McLeod, 2001; Thomas, 2009; Arthur, Waring and Coe, 2012; Potter, Wetherell and in Bryman, 2016). However, they can be problematic, potentially providing the researcher with what Bechhofer and Paterson (2012, p. 56) described as an 'entirely unwarranted' assumption that it is easier, or more natural to collect data in this way. Silverman (2015; 2017) cautioned against a 'romantic' idea that

interviews can be treated as a ‘direct expression’ of experience, a ‘window through which we can see inside people’s heads’. Interview data provides potential insight into the way individuals viewed the *field’s doxa*, recorded using codes refined through the RTA process and captured within NVivo, see appendix 7. However, this will be mediated by considering the landscape of England’s school-supply described in chapter 2 and what this may suggest about *misrecognition.* This reflects what was not said, or seemed unquestionable, or just necessary to maintain position within the competition of the game.

Analysis of data within chapters 5 – 7 uses text, as well as diagrams, graphs and pictures. These are used to illustrate key concepts and ideas, for example:

**Chapter 5:** analysis of official-discourse using text commentary, supplemented by tables designed to illustrate key themes and ideas presented within a range of texts supportive of free school superiority, innovation characteristics and distinctiveness. The tables also cover broader themes, which reflect controls imposed on all schools within England’s school-supply, and the impact of GPMR.

**Chapter 6:** visual examples of key information from free school applications, websites and job adverts which focus on the freedom and innovation presented within official-discourse. There are also some picture examples used to illustrate the way uniform depicts a ‘grammar’ of schooling and the type of pupils considered desirable.

**Chapter 7:** graphs and diagrams are used to define the experience and credentials of interview participants and their relationship to the field. Diagrams are then used to

illustrate the interface between themes presented within official-discourse and the experience of those involved in the field. All diagrams and graphs are original.

### 4.6 Data *set* 1 – official discourse freedom and control themes

Data *set* 1 is drawn from a type of ‘language-in-use’, the official-discourse within Conservative party speeches, coalition government websites and policy documents which defined free school freedom, innovation and superiority. It includes information from the lead into the 2010 election, especially speeches by Gove, who became Secretary of State for Education in the 2010 coalition government, Gibb (Minister of State for Schools at the 2010 to 2012, 2014 and Minister for School Standards 2016, 2017 and 2022) and Cameron (Prime Minister 2010 to 2016). These individuals, or in Bourdieu’s terms *agents,* steered the way free schools were presented as new, innovative and superior. The data is supplemented by information collected from the 2010 coalition government. This data *set* includes a comprehensive collection of primary-sources (see appendix 1). Location of data was mainly determined by my experience within the *field*, see 1.7, rather than as the result of structured searches. This experience provided knowledge of where to locate government ‘policy’ documents, ‘think tank’ documents and other policy information. The texts selected were comprehensive, and included a series of speeches made by Gove and Gibb (ministers with significant power in determining policy and the discourse used to position it). Speeches included, for example, all speeches made by Give prior to the 2010 coalition and immediately after the free school policy was announced. These

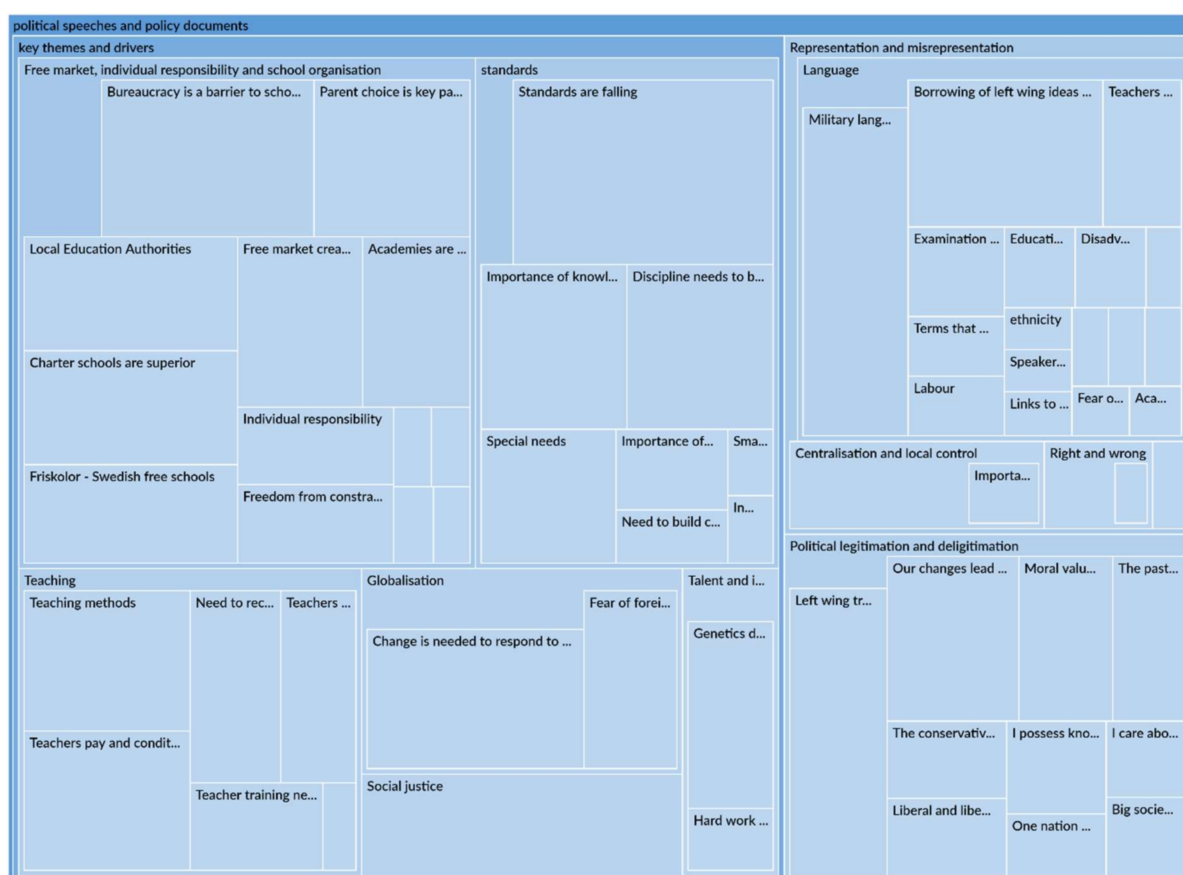
speeches were chosen because they offer insight into the ideological framework which underpinned the development of free schools. Policy documents which descried bed free schools once the coalition was formed provided information about the way they were positioned as new, innovative and distinctive and, in a few cases, press media or think tank documents were identified as evidence of the way these themes were picked up and widely disseminated.

This documentary data was mainly collected over the period September 2019 to December 2019, but then updated and supplemented, if required, as the RTA phases progressed. Documents were retrieved and downloaded from DfE sites, other government sites, political party sites and related thinktanks. Whilst most information focused on free school policy, data also included information which covered other contextual factors noted in chapter two, including examinations, school performance tables, inspection, 'good' school characteristics, reform of teacher training and development of meso-level accountability through MATs and RSCs. The official-discourse which codified free schools was contextualised through secondary sources, especially previous research into school-choice and neo-liberalism identified within chapter three. This discourse was, however, less likely to have influenced decisions made by free school proposers, unless involved with higher education.

The primary source data and secondary research data were imported into NVivo for storage as documents or web-site 'captures'. NVivo is a type of computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) used to store and analyse large quantities of data (Richards, 1999; 2014; Welsh, 2002; Bazeley and Jackson, 2013). It offers features useful within RTA, including powerful tools for coding data, and a mechanism to generate, amalgamate and re-define 'themes'. It has the facility to

highlight text, and other media, to highlight patterns, and includes an extensive range of search facilities. Whilst NVivo also provides various tools to generate themes automatically from text, create charts, diagrams and other displays, these were not used as part of this research. Codes were developed through a staged process, starting with familiarisation, before defining and re-defining codes based on a hierarchy of significance and importance, see figure 4.4 for an example of this stage.

*Figure 4.4 Example initial coding used to develop and refine themes with NVivo*




Gove's speeches prior to the 2010 election formed an especially important part of the first data *set*. In particular, speeches by Conservative politicians before the coalition government was formed outlined the right-wing free market framework which underpinned the subsequent free school policy.

These speeches were often journalistic and colourful, emphasising a type of 'otherness' noted by Apple (2006). New Labour's education policies, for example, were seen as 'a downward path to decline' (Gove, 2007a), providing an opportunity for potential 'enemies' across the globe, especially in 'the east'. Unnamed people were seen as appropriating 'our' systems, where 'two billion people in Asia are developing the institutions that made Britain great' (Gove, 2007a), and 'we' were being outstripped by 'our former colony' (Gove, 2009c). These distinctive features suggest the need for a type of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995; 2013; 2015; Machin and Mayr, 2012), offering insight into the way policy constructed ideas through discourse.

For this study a particular type of discourse analysis was used to understand how freedom was positioned as an advantage, reflecting the way political actors represent a specific time, place, or social group. Chilton (2004) described how analysis of data, such as political speeches, can provide insight into political priorities and an underlying ideological stance used to exert power. He demonstrated, for example, how within this context, themes are 'legitimised' and 'de-legitimised', see for example his analysis of Enoch Powell's 1968 '*Rivers of Blood*' speech (Chilton, 2004, p. 120). This draws on a form of latent analysis where, for example, free schools might be 'legitimised' as new, innovative and distinctive whilst other school-types were 'de-legitimised' (Chilton and Schäffner, 2002). Latent themes reflect use of epistemic and deontic language choices, where the speaker presents a position of authority and power (Chilton and Schäffner, 2002; Chilton, 2004):

**Epistemic**: Speaker has better knowledge and is superior, since they have the 'real' facts, and are more rational, or more objective. Views are backed up by lists, or other information that the listener should accept as authoritative.

**Deontic**: The speaker is right in a moral sense and proposes feelings that should not be challenged. There is an appeal to 'basic' feelings through fear, anger, a sense of security or loyalty. There is an appeal to the individual (self) over 'others'.

An important feature of data *set* 1 is the insight it provides into the way official-discourse 'legitimised' freedom and innovation after 2010, whilst 'de-legitimising' (Chilton and Schäffner, 2002; Chilton, 2004) alternatives available within existing school-types. This provides insight into some of the ideological and political drivers which underpinned the free school policy. This information was used to generate initial themes, and provided the framework for the collection of data *set* 2.

### 4.7 Data *set* 2 – freedom and innovation within sample schools

Data *set* 2 was drawn from a sample of established free school websites, application forms and associated job adverts. The sample was chosen from schools opened before the end of 2013, and likely to now be fully established. It was assumed that distinctive qualities drawn from innovation and freedom should be established and evident within these schools. A random choice was used to select cases, ensuring the innovation and freedom reflected within these schools was not steered by prior knowledge, or purposive sampling. Subsequent analysis focused on a comparison between the way free schools were codified within the official-discourse of data *set* 1,

especially freedom within pay, conditions of service or curriculum, when compared to the practice used within other school-types. This comparison relied on my experience within the field of school-supply and an engagement with free schools as an Education Adviser for the DfE, see 1.7. The focus was primary source data, rather than secondary data. For example, national data is available on state-school 'workforce' characteristics (Department for Education, 2020g) but, contains many additional variables which make comparison difficult and potentially misleading. This quantitative data does not allow detailed examination of individual cases. Although Burgess, Greaves and Murphy (2022) subsequently carried out research on pay 'flexibility', the focus was pay performance reform across all schools, and did not compare free schools to other schools. No national data is available about curriculum freedom or innovation in schools and there was a need to focus on a sample of individual cases.

When this phase of the research was conducted (September to December 2019) over 350 free schools had opened, excluding studio schools and UTCs. They included primary, secondary, all-through, special and alternative provision schools. Different methods for collecting data on freedom were considered. A survey sent to all open free schools risked a low response, with potential difficulties in gaining responses from proposers concerned about the contested nature of free schools (Wiborg, Green and Taylor-Gooby, 2018). Survey data risked missing important elements of a school's context, generating further questions, or problems over potential misinterpretation, due to the complexity and breadth of focus areas covered. A survey would provide no opportunity to ask for clarification, or follow up emerging ideas. A request for interviews with school proposers would require significantly more

time and resources than available, as well as a lack of control over which leaders responded. A focus on a random sample of 'established' free schools, those opened before 2013 and now benefitting from full year groups and established staffing, allowed access to data from free schools where freedom should be established and part of a school's everyday practice.

Data *set* 2 was retrieved by collecting information on specific types of 'freedom' and innovation:

1) Current school websites. All schools have to make specific information available for the public (Department for Education, 2016b; 2018). Pay and conditions data were also retrieved from linked job advertisements on websites provided by *ETeach* and The Times Educational supplement (TES).
2) Free school application forms. Following a freedom of information request redacted free school application forms and some DfE feedback letters were available within the public domain (Department for Education, 2014c; 2016a; 2020d). This data provided insight into the way successful proposers presented information to the DfE. It also allowed a comparison of changes between proposals, and practice within established free schools ten years after opening.

The cases used for analysis were created by retrieving a list of open free schools (Department for Education, 2020c) and filtering-in those opened up to the end of 2013. The list was placed in chronological order of opening. UTCs and studio schools were excluded, for reasons already described, and the list was placed into a random data generator (www.random.org) in order to create a chance sample. Although random lists are more commonly associated with quantitative data sets, free schools

were codified (Thomson, 2005) as new and superior. This approach provided a way to select a small number of cases and focus on the freedom and innovation features which distinguished free schools from other school-types. Although purposive sampling might provide more detail on use of freedom in some free schools, it would offer insufficient insight into how innovative and distinctive free schools were.

No attempt was made to control number of primary and secondary schools, or other features of school-type, Ofsted grades, or geographical location. Official-discourse suggested that free schools were distinctive from other schools and would therefore be ‘innovative’ (Department for Education, 2010c; 2010d; 2010e; 2010f; 2010h; 2010j; 2010m; 2011a; 2011b; 2011c; 2011d; 2011e; 2011h; 2014b). A random selection of established schools would be expected to demonstrate insight into use of freedom when compared to other school-types. The top ten schools within the randomised list were selected and anonymised using an alphabetical coding. Figure 4.5 provides a brief description of the randomly selected cases, which included mainstream, special and AP, a school set up by an FE college and one private school converted to a state-funded free school.

*Figure 4.5 List of randomised and anonymised sample of 'established' free schools*

| School A | An urban one form entry primary school. Originally opened by an MAT that had several schools removed due to poor performance and financial irregularities. Now part of another MAT. |
|---|---|
| School B | An 11 to 16 school opened as part of a small MAT. |
| School C | A special school opened by an existing local school. This provision has now grown into a larger MAT. |
| School D | An 11- 18 school developed from an existing private school for girls (at application an all-through school). |
| School E | A 4 - 11 primary school opened by an education trust and now part of a small group of free schools within this trust. |
| School F | A small (one form of entry) primary, stand-alone Jewish faith-based school, in an urban setting. |
| School G | A 14 -19 school opened by an FE college. Has since become an 11-16 school within another MAT. |
| School H | An 11-19 school with a Church of England faith ethos. |
| School I | A stand-alone 11-18 school in a rural setting. |
| School J | An 11- 16 alternative provision school with elements of a 'Christian' ethos. |

Websites provide a particular form of discourse designed for advocacy, used to attract and reassure parent-consumers. Previous studies of data collected from school websites have mostly focused on their use of discourse, especially language choices and syntax. This information has been used to explore how schools aim to

attract particular consumers, and exclude others. Information is viewed in this context as ‘discursive texts that signal the potential “fit” between particular schools and particular families’ (Wilson and Carlsen, 2016, p. 24). Wilson and Carlsen (2016, p. 24) additionally suggested this discourse draws on different meanings, particularly ‘(a) *discourses of race, culture, and diversity; (b) draw on different meanings of academic achievement, and (c) emphasize different ideologies of individualized learning’*.

Chapter 3 noted how previous research on marketing of schools, within the neo-liberal framework of USA school-supply, had considered the way schools aim to appeal to parent-consumers through types of ‘goods’, especially through an emphasis on ‘emotional’ themes which emphasise quality to attract consumers (Lubienski, 2005; 2007b). This suggests that free schools might be expected to promote the ‘freedoms’ defined within post-2010 official-discourse, especially advantages gained through innovation in conditions of service, pay, or the curriculum.

Data about pay, conditions of service and curriculum were retrieved from the sample school application forms approved by the DfE. Corresponding data was then collected from job advertisements monitored over a twelve-week period (September to December 2020). Advertisements, job descriptions and general information on employment were ‘captured’ using the ‘NCapture’ web browser plugin and added to ‘NVivo’ for analysis. Data was trawled manually, by visiting each website weekly, checking each page and, where possible, using an inbuilt website search facility (checking against key words: ‘pay’, ‘conditions’, ‘job’, ‘teacher’, ‘employment’ ‘recruitment’). Relevant data also included staffing policies on websites, recruitment

adverts and associated information, such as ‘job descriptions’ and ‘candidate’ application packs. A similar process was used for information about a curriculum, since all schools were required by government legislation to publish this information on websites. Some data was promoted in school ‘policies’, or reflected detailed ‘schemes of work’. Information was also collected on any other aspects of school organisation which seemed ‘distinctive’ compared to other schools. The rationale for identifying additional information relied on my experience within the field.

The data from websites and application forms provided a type of ‘documentary data’, and reflected Scott’s framework for data identification (2014):

**Authenticity**: Information was located from school websites and seen as ‘authentic’.

**Credibility**: The information was seen as evidence of actual data about conditions of service, pay or the curriculum.

**Representativeness**: The information provided a complete collection of data about these elements within each school (which was part of a random sample).

**Meaning**: The meaning and significance of the information relied on my experience within the field, moderated through the opinions of three peers.

The analysis of data *set* 2 followed a similar process to data *set* 1. The complete data *set* was viewed to gather an overview, *items* were then coded, looking for evidence of ‘freedom’, especially conditions of service, pay or curriculum, or any other distinctive features promoted by free schools. Evidence of theme codes drawn from data *set* 1 were analysed in NVivo using positive or negative ‘sentiment’ coding, related to practice commonly found in other schools (using my experience) and, if present, overt reference to superiority or innovation promoted within texts. The

sentiment codes chosen were ‘very positive’, ‘positive’, ‘neutral’, ‘negative’, ‘very negative’). A framework of key questions was used to promote a consistent approach to employment practice and curriculum innovation:

- Do websites provide specific information about the types of teachers they currently employ, or intend to, especially qualifications, skills and experience?
- Do free-school applications refer to plans to recruit staff, with reference to qualifications and experience required?
- Do free school applications, websites or job advertisements provide any indication of changes to national pay, working practices, hours worked, or other conditions of service?
- Do free school applications, job descriptions or other information produced by school leaders emphasise the value of curriculum freedom?
- If curriculum freedom is presented as a positive feature what form does this take, and how does it differ from other school-types?

Criteria frameworks were then developed to provide consistency within analysis of curriculum freedom difference and pay/conditions of service difference, see appendix 2. In addition, three individuals with extensive experience of school leadership and regulation were asked to consider the match between data collected and these criteria frameworks. This sentiment coding matched closely, with no areas of conflict. Data set 2 also allowed some analysis of the effects of time, with original application forms compared against current ‘real world’ practice almost ten years later. The refined coding generated provided an indication of how sample schools had used the freedom identified in data *set* 1, how much emphasis they gave to this in website marketing and whether there was a difference between original intentions and current

practice. The analysis of data *set* 2 was used to refine themes further and provide a framework for the collection of data *set* 3.

### 4.8 Data *set* 3 – the oral testimony of individuals involved with free school application-assessment

It has been noted how research carried out by Wiborg, Green and Taylor-Gooby (2018, p. 7) had analysed leaders' perceptions about free school distinctiveness through a 'mixed-methods approach, combining new qualitative and quantitative data'. The 'primary source of information' was data collected from semi-structured 'in-depth interviews conducted with nine free school head teachers in primary (3) and secondary (3) and all-through (3) schools in England'. Interviews reflected how 'one private school was sponsoring a free school, one parent founder and with a free schools support agency' (Wiborg *et al.*, 2018, p. 7). This was then followed up by a questionnaire to 'provide a check that views expressed in our interviews were not idiosyncratic' and 'to explore patterns of variation in the perceptions that would not have emerged in a small number of interviews' (Wiborg *et al.*, 2018, p. 8). However, this study gave relatively little focus to the way proposers experienced freedom and control within application-assessment, a key focus for this study.

Data *set* 3 consisted of oral testimonies collected through semi-structured interviews with sixteen individuals with direct experience of free school application-assessment. The interview framework focused on the way these individuals had responded to official-discourse, their decision-making over use of innovation and, as a result,

beliefs about the *fields' doxa* (see appendix 4). Responses encouraged participants to state their beliefs, experience and dispositions, but were not viewed as a representation of the 'truth'. This provided, in addition, potential insight into what they did not say. The framework for the semi-structured interviews was organised into three broad sections, shaped by themes generated through analysis of data *sets* 1 and 2:

- Use of freedom and innovation, especially within conditions of service, pay and curriculum.
- The impact on application-assessment and open schools of official-discourse 'good' school definitions and GPMR.
- Other features of free schools and application-assessment which seemed important.

The selection of interview participants was purposive and included individuals with differing engagement, experience and power within the process of free school application assessment. The participants fell into four broad categories:

**Education Advisers** (EA) were located through my particular background and experience within free school application-assessment. The EAs had significant experience of many different free school applications, had played a key role in interviewing proposers, and had monitored practice within open free schools. The EAs represented a significant group, with experience of over one hundred and fifty free school application-assessments and more than eighty interviews with proposers. Eight EAs were invited to participate in interviews during March to May 2020 and then sent information about research focus areas. They were offered a further

discussion, if required. Although I had met each EA on several occasions, I had no personal, or social relationship, with them. Five expressed a willingness to participate, but one withdrew a day before a scheduled interview due to a critical health issue with a family member.

**Proposers** had experience across one, or more, free schools, LAMS, academies, and other school-supply settings. They had experience of application-assessment through constructing an application, attending an interview and subsequent monitoring from the DfE. Six successful free school proposers were contacted, and all agreed to participate, although one subsequently became unavailable due to maternity leave. The sample was increased through a very small element of snowballing, with EAs asked to recommend any school proposers who they believed had made use of innovation. This generated two additional cases.

Two individuals had a **support and governance role,** drawn from a close relationship with a free school application-assessment, but in a more peripheral role, such as a governor. I contacted two individuals who had played a key role in supporting free school proposals as a governor, including a role as a MAT trustee. One had additional experience in providing commercial support for free school bids.

To broaden the sample further three individuals were contacted who had unsuccessfully applied to open a free school or, in one case, worked for a trust with three free schools taken over by another MAT. These **unsuccessful proposers** had either been ejected from the *field*, or been unable to enter it in the first place. This group were drawn from the parent and local community groups defined within official-discourse as the 'Big Society'. This group was more difficult to access, and

identification relied on research into press coverage of unsuccessful applications. The individuals were contacted using a social media site, ‘LinkedIn’. All three indicated a willingness to participate, although were cautious, keen to understand how any information would be used. They were reassured by the confidential nature of information collected and the right for participants to withdraw, including after the interview (see section 4.9).

Each participant was sent a copy of an information briefing, figure AP5.1, and a consent form, AP5.2. They were provided with a range of dates for interview and informed that interviews would take approximately one hour. Interview prompt sheets were designed to explore existing themes and ensure a consistent set of questions. Interviews were planned to be conducted in a manner designed to encourage a type of ‘conversation’. Two interview prompt sheets were initially drafted to reflect how the EAs may have had more extensive experience when compared to the other actors interviewed. However, the interviews suggested that this distinction was unnecessary. The timing of the interviews (summer 2020) coincided with a global pandemic caused by a Covid-19 virus. Travel and meetings were banned by the UK government and this made plans for face-to-face interviews impossible. Interviews were therefore scheduled remotely, and carried out between June 12 and June 24 2020, via video. The technology used a software package, ‘zoom’, which became common practice during the pandemic (www.zoom.com).

Remote video conferencing software provided some advantages. For example, there was no need for a separate physical space for meetings and no travel was required, avoiding potential problems caused by delay. Recording of interviews allowed the researcher to focus on the participant and encouraged rapport. Recommendations

described by (Seitz, 2016, p. 233) were applied, such as ‘using a quiet room without distractions, slowing down and clarifying talk, being open to repeating answers and questions, and paying close attention to facial expressions’. The interview process did not lead to potential drawbacks, such as concerns over dealing with sensitive data, or problems created by low bandwidth noted by Sedgwick and Spiers (2009). Archibald et al. (2019) describe zoom as a very suitable approach for carrying out interviews, noting its potential convenience, ease of use and interactivity, as well as access to additional features, such as screen sharing. These additional features were considered unhelpful for this research. There were no technical problems, other than a few minor instances of an unstable connection which caused a ‘sync’ problem between speech and video, a familiar feature within on-line meetings during the pandemic.

Participants were all very familiar with this type of video technology and the ‘microgeographies’ of an interview site, noted by Elwood and Martin (2000), was not reflected within a particular place or site. A priority was to ensure that participants were comfortable with accessing and using the software. The individuals were sent a link to use at a specific time and on a date agreed. All interviews took place at these agreed times and there were no technical issues which might have imposed a negative impact on the quality of the interview experience (Sedgwick and Spiers, 2009; Irani, 2019). Participants had already agreed in advance that an audio recording would be made and these files were later retrieved and processed into ‘text’ files using automatic transcription software (www.otter.ai). Errors were corrected by comparing the automatically generated text files twice against the audio file, and manual correction was used to adjust errors and ensure punctuation reflected the

‘meaning’ of the conversation. The audio files were later archived within a secure system provided by the University of Birmingham. The finished transcripts were anonymised to minimise the possibility of participants being identified.

The interview text files were imported into NVivo and analysed using the same RTA method as data *set* 1 and data *set* 2. Several ‘listenings’ and ‘readings’ were used to provide an overview of the interview data before coding was used to refine and develop the existing themes. The same ‘sentiment’ codes provided a way to record how strongly the actors agreed or disagreed with themes already generated. The codes and themes were revised, where needed, to reflect responses to freedom and control, especially within application-assessment. Analysis aimed to retain the ‘authenticity’ of individual voices, and create a form of ‘verisimilitude’. These types of data allow individuals voices to be revealed to the reader, rather than be subsumed within general analysis. The individuals all understood I was also part of the *field*, with experience as an EA and school leadership or regulation. This made it less likely that some might assume an ‘elite’ position within the interview, leading to limited information, or even lack of co-operation (Elwood and Martin, 2000; van Dijk, 2008; Morris, 2009; Perera, 2021).

Figure 4.6 provides a list of the individual cases participating in interviews. It includes information on role, and a broad description of background experience. Individuals were anonymised by substituting names which reflected a gender adopted by participants in correspondence.

*Figure 4.6 Summary of individuals participating in semi-structured interviews*

| Name | Role | Background |
|---|---|---|
| Alex | Proposer | Alex is currently principal of a new free school that is open in temporary accommodation (on the site of another school within the same trust). He has been through the lead-in phase of setting up the free school (attending interviews at the DfE) and the first year of opening. He has previous experience as a headteacher and deputy headteacher within LA maintained schools and academies. |
| Sam | Proposer | Sam is principal of a free school set up by an FE College. He took over after the school opened, having held roles leading other LA maintained schools and academies. The links with the FE College have proved to be difficult and the school is in the process of severing these links. |
| Max | Proposer | Max is the principal of a free school that has been open for just over a year. He was involved in all the pre-opening activities and had previously worked in local authority-maintained schools, academies and another free school. Max had worked in an early free-school set up in partnership with a private company, but had been unhappy with its culture. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Gerry | Proposer | Gerry is the CEO of a multi academy trust and has set up two free schools. Previously he was the headteacher of an LA maintained school which became an academy. Gerry was inspired by a visit to the USA and has imported ideas about project-based learning, teamwork and strong social support. |
| Dale | Proposer | Dale is the principal of an alternative provision free school. The school was previously run by a charity as an 'independent' school and then applied to become a free school. This has been a challenging transition, especially over links with a charity and the site. |
| Charlie | Proposer | Charlie is the principal of an academy and was a head of subject, deputy headteacher and principal in a free school before gaining rapid promotion as part of the school's turbulent start. |
| Kim | Proposer | Kim leads PRU provision for a local authority. She was principal of an alternative provision free school set up by a charity. Since then, Kim has gone back to work in an LA PRU within hospital and outreach. |
| Lesley | Education Adviser (EA) | Lesley has worked as a headteacher within LA maintained schools and academies. She was the interim principal of a free school which had experienced challenges and has supported the free schools programme for the DfE as an EA within many schools. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Ali | Education Adviser (EA) | Ali was an EA working for the DfE and had supported over fifty schools as part of the project. He has worked for a local authority, in LA maintained schools and for a large multi academy trust. |
| Pat | Education Adviser (EA) | Pat has been involved in local authority-maintained schools, local authority support services and in the leadership and management of school inspections. He had worked for the DfE for several years as an EA and has monitored and supported the development of hundreds of free schools since the policy was first planned. |
| Chris | Education Adviser (EA) | Chris was the principal of a federation of schools before working as an independent education consultant and schools' inspector. Part of her work included being an EA advising the DfE since the early part of the project. She has been involved in assessing applications, interviewing participants and supporting successful bids in many free schools. |
| Steve | Support and governance | Steve is a director of a limited company that has provided support for a range of organisations under the Building Schools for the Future and Free Schools programmes. He has been involved in the setup of hundreds of schools and is also a trustee of a multi academy trust that has only free schools. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Cleo | Support and governance | Cleo works for a local authority within the finance department. She has been a trustee of two free schools, including one high profile early free school. She has also been a governor of local authority-maintained schools and academies. |
| Lea | Unsuccessful proposer | Lea is the CEO of a charitable trust that supported schools with a particular philosophy about teaching pupils (part of an international movement). Previously these schools had been independent, but three were opened under the free school programme and have subsequently been transferred to another multi academy trust following inadequate inspection judgements. |
| Drew | Unsuccessful proposer | Drew was the CEO of a large charity and made two unsuccessful bids to set up a free school associated with the charity. Drew worked as a teacher for several years and developed a great interest in alternative school movements during the 1960s and 1970s. |
| Ash | Unsuccessful proposer | Ash works for a private education company and has a background as a teacher. He worked with a group of local parents on two unsuccessful applications to open a free school. Ash wanted to create a new model of schooling, designed to be inclusive and create strong social support. |

The ‘roles’ assigned to participants are not intended to be either representative or exclusive. For example, an EA might also be a proposer, and some proposers had been involved with more than one free school application, or were part of a MAT. All participants had experience of free school application and application-assessment, but within particular contexts and roles. These raise questions about other ways that participants might be defined, such as through race, gender or ethnicity. Whilst free school application-assessment may have reflected these distinctions, and therefore had an impact on entry, it did not form part of this research. This type of data analysis requires a large data set for comparison and was not considered suitable for in-depth research into individual experience, or beliefs.

### 4.9 Ethics

The research followed guidance provided by the British Educational Research Association (2018) and the University of Birmingham. The high-profile and contested nature of free school policy required that respect for confidentiality would form a key part of the research design. This was especially relevant within the collection of data *set* 2 and data *set* 3, where individuals might be identified. Data sets 2 and 3 were therefore anonymised to minimise reputational risk for sample schools and interview participants. Names were changed in reporting of data set 3 to minimise risk of identification. Participants were contacted about the interviews and then (re)contacted with specific dates and times, allowing sufficient time for reflection on participation. Each participant was given five different dates and flexible times for

interviews (‘any time that is suitable on each of the days offered’), as well as the option to offer an alternative. The interviews were conducted in an unhurried way and participants were encouraged to feel in control of when it happened.

Participants had the opportunity to discuss the research activity, its dissemination and any risks of identification through initial discussion with the researcher. Participants were then sent an information sheet about the research and asked to complete a consent form (see appendix 5). Interviews were not scheduled until the completed consent form had been returned. It was made clear that participation voluntary and it was possible, for any reason and at any time, for participants to withdraw without any fear of coercion. However, the consent form did stress that there was a cut-off point for withdrawing consent: ‘data collected cannot be removed from the study after July 31 2020 because analysis will already have started’. No participants withdrew, or asked to do so.

Data *set* 1 was retrieved from official-discourse within the public domain and reflects a type of information that is self-published and requires no permission to access (Purdam and Elliot, 2015). Data *set* 2 was collected from a random sample of free schools and reflects a similar type of information. Care was taken to avoid identifying individuals, but the collection, and use, of this type of school level data, without the permission of school leaders, raises some ethical questions. The data collection was seen as acceptable given that sample schools were anonymised and leaders had already chosen to place this information within the public domain. The DfE published redacted copies of successful free school application forms (Department for Education, 2019d). This information required no permission to access, and did not identify individuals. Whist it might be possible to identify sample schools from some

information used in this study, this was considered extremely unlikely given how it had been anonymised.

Data *set* 3 required management of particular and additional risks. It has already been noted how interviews can provide a site where 'elites' can exercise control over discourse as 'power flows between the participant and interviewer' (Perera, 2021, p. 230). A potential drawback of interviews with actors with significant elements of power within the *field*, such as the EAs, was the potential for them to provide a type of 'non-interview', with limited content. Morris (2009) suggested that researchers should consider their own position in relation to the interview and understand if there is an 'objective truth' which can be 'uncovered' in conducting interviews, or if the researcher is 'sophisticated' or 'powerless', unable to detect and respond to 'dishonest' respondents. This risk was mitigated by my own experience, see 1.7. the EAs knew about my background and experience, and this was considered a context which supported an opportunity to design, conduct and evaluate 'authentic and dialogical semi-structured interviews' (Brown and Danaher, 2019, p. 76), organised using principles defined by **C**onnectivity, **H**umanness and **E**mpathy. The unsuccessful proposers were viewed as a higher risk group, with the potential to lack confidence when expressing views, since their negative experience of the *field* might make them reticent to express views, suspicious of motives, or have some concerns about data-recording. Care was taken to reassure these participants, check they felt comfortable with the interview, and encourage honest views. They were reminded that anything could be withdrawn until the stated deadline, and care was taken to emphasise the confidentiality of the process.

The interviews offered sufficient flexibility to follow up and explore ideas further, with un-structured sections, which encouraged participant-led views. The focus was a comparison between data *set* 1 official-discourse themes, the innovation evident within data *set* 2 and the *field's* practice, the experiences of individuals involved with free school proposals. The framework for data collection included structured elements, but questions were open-ended, allowing the flexibility for participants to express individual views. At the stage when interviews were conducted the working title of the thesis was 'English free schools: Are they an innovative, homogenous type of school organisation?' This shifted during analysis of interview data, but the interview questions, as well as the description of scope and purpose sent to participants remained relevant. The interviews ended by allowing participants to note other information which had not been covered by the questions.

The participants were made aware that this research had not been sponsored, or commissioned. The researcher's involvement within the field, especially work as an EA, was made clear during initial discussions and before the interview started. It was also made clear that this role had been suspended to support the research process. There was no conflict of interest, plan for self-interest, or intended commercial gain. Participants understood that they would provide information which would contribute to a research thesis on free schools, especially their use of freedom and innovation. No incentives or inducements were offered to participants, at any time, in relation to these interviews.

No harm was likely through participation in the interviews, which were caried out remotely at a time to suit participants and in an environment they had chosen. The consent form made it clear that any extreme views, which were then shared more

widely and linked to this research might pose a reputational risk: ‘There could be a very minor risk of reputational damage for participants if you put forward controversial, or defamatory views and then choose to identify yourself to others as having participated within the research’. No extreme views were expressed and participants had the option to withdraw from the research.

The consent form made it clear that data would be stored and that links to any personal data would be removed. The researcher asked for consent on the understanding that ‘name and any identifying features are removed or changed to guarantee anonymity’. The names of sample schools and interview participants were anonymised and stored without identifying data. The University of Birmingham BEAR data store was used to store audio recordings of interviews and anonymised transcriptions securely. The content of the interview discussions was unlikely to cover any disclosure of illegal behaviour and was not likely to be harmful to the participants, or to others. The researcher has carried out extensive training in safeguarding and was aware of a need, should it arise, to inform participants that disclosure could not remain anonymous. This research complied with the research ethics process administered by the University of Birmingham (2020). An application was made for ethics approval, a request for further information and a minor change to the consent form were complied with. All interviews, data collection, storage and retrieval were carried out according to the accepted and agreed plan for this research.

### 4.10 Summary

This chapter has described a research design intended to understand the way free school application-assessment might provide insight into the rules, or *doxa*, which defined entry and maintenance of position within the sub-*field* of school-supply. The *field* includes statutory education in England, and a free school application provided a specific route into this *field,* allowing individuals and groups to stake a claim for types of *capital* associated with opening a free school. The research design reflects the interface between free school freedom and innovation positioned within official-discourse, how this was utilised within established free schools, as well as the experiences and dispositions of individuals involved with the policy. A research method (RTA), will be used to retrieve three data *sets*, store data, code it and then analyse themes which defined the *field's doxa*. Analysis will provide insight into what proposers accepted as rules used for entry and, through what they did not say, what they might have *misrecognised*. The next chapter will begin the RTA process by analysing freedom and innovation themes presented within 2010 official-discourse.

# 5. Thematic analysis of pre and post-2010 official-discourse

## 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter described how RTA (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2019; 2021; Clarke and Braun, 2017) would be used to analyse data *sets* identified. This chapter will identify key themes within data *set* 1, the official-discourse which defined free school policy before, and after, the 2010 election. It will focus on the way freedom and innovation were codified (Thomson, 2005) as superior features of free schools. It will also note the way politicians 'legitimised' (Chilton, 2004) key features of 'good' schools, 'good' teachers and 'good' pupils. The analysis will consider how the legitimisation of these themes reflected the way alternatives were de-legitimised.

## 5.2 Theme 1: Curriculum innovation and freedom

In a 2008 speech to the think tank, Centre Forum, Gove had legitimised free school freedom, noting the benefits of what he termed a truly 'liberal' education system, emphasising the value for school leaders of a freedom to 'shape' and 'choose' a curriculum:

*But whether or not you call these characteristics conservative - what allows these schools to operate in the way they do are structures which are truly liberal.*

*These academies, and the city technology colleges which came before them and on which they were modelled, were designed to be free.*

*Free to choose and shape their own curriculum.*

*Free to hire and reward their own staff in their own way.*

*Free to co-operate and collaborate with who they wanted, in the private and public sector, in the way they wanted.*

*Free to exclude disruptive pupils and set their own discipline policies.*

*Free, above all, from local authority control.*

**Gove (2008a, N.P.)**

Curriculum freedom was a key theme within official-discourse and Gove noted how this model had already been utilised by the Conservative Party within its post-1988 CTCs, and by New Labour in its post-1997 academies. Free schools were codified as superior through a freedom from the controls of an official curriculum (Apple, 2013; 2018; 2019). This type of freedom reflected the aspirations of free market school-choice theorists (Chubb and Moe, 1988; 1990b), supporting a theory of schools free to develop characteristics wanted by parent-consumers. This type of flexibility and freedom was linked within official-discourse as a lever for higher standards. Chapter 2 noted how the concept of freedom within England's school-supply had been

defined, since 1988, through the framework of neo-liberalism and underpinned by parent-consumer choice. This choice freedom had operated within the discipline controls imposed by a national curriculum, associated tests and inspection. These GPMR controls had challenged the ‘grammar’ of schooling defined by a type of professional freedom over the curriculum.

Policy Exchange, an influential ‘think tank’ associated with the right, emphasised the benefits of a ‘new’ type of freedom within school-supply, enhanced by schools operating within a framework of reduced state control (Policy Exchange, 2009, p. 6):

> *Over the past fifty years the argument for developing a market between state-funded schools has revolved around the ideas of choice and competition. Supporters have insisted that giving parents the freedom to choose provision from a variety of different suppliers, rather than enforcing a state monopoly, would force standards up over time. Opponents have tirelessly fought to maintain state control by raising fears that the creeping privatisation of a school system would detract attention from the core duties of a school, benefit the wealthy and would work to the detriment of the teaching profession.*
>
> **(Policy Exchange, 2009, p. 6)**

Free market theory was applied to removing a type of government regulation, seen as constraining the freedom of New Labour’s post-1997 academies, since ‘the ability to decide what you are going to teach and how you are going to teach it is of course vital to any notion of real independence in the schools sector’ (Policy Exchange, 2010, p. 8). The criticism focused on the way New Labour’s academies had been

required to teach a 'broad and balanced' curriculum' (Policy Exchange, 2010). This breadth was seen as a constraint, with an ideal 'liberal' education viewed, in Arnold's terms, as 'the best that has been taught and said' (see 2.4). Leaders should not, for example, be required to teach personal, social and health education (PSHE), a set of personal and social skills taught in many secondary schools. This was 'a vivid illustration of the Government's desire to use schools to fix all of society's broader problems', leading to 'another encroachment upon the notion of independence in academies' Policy Exchange (2010, p. 47). Freedom had been constrained by a previous government, which required the curriculum to cover superfluous and anti-elitist knowledge or skills.

Similar concerns were raised by Civitas, a right-wing thinktank. In 'Swedish Lessons - how schools with more freedom can deliver better education' Cowen (2008, p. xvii) noted the benefits of schools where individual leaders had the freedom to define a 'good' curriculum. The article was designed to influence the Conservative's emerging proposals for free schools, emphasising the value of independence over the curriculum, pedagogy and personnel, drawing on traditional values:

> *permit independent providers of education (including co-operatives, charities and companies) to open, own and manage free schools and receive funding per-pupil exclusively from local authority budgets*
>
> *require free schools to admit pupils on a first-come-first-served basis, and to comply with all relevant health and safety and child protection regulations*

*make free schools responsible for their curriculum, pedagogy, personnel and premises*

**Cowen (2008, p. xvii)**

Gove had emphasised the importance of curriculum innovation in 2009, proposing that plans for free schools would remove regulation which constrained 'good' teachers. Gove highlighted, for example, the constraints imposed on leaders by existing government performance measures, see figure 5.1:

*Figure 5.1 Freedom from government control*

| *Theme 1 Curriculum innovation and freedom from the national curriculum* | How concepts are **legitimised** or *de-legitimised* |
|---|---|
| *The examinations offered, the targets pursued, the policies implemented, are increasingly driven by the need to satisfy goals set by the Secretary of State. The concerns parents have about teaching to the test, the worries universities and employers have about students pursuing softer courses, the exasperation teachers feel about the simultaneous narrowing of the curriculum and the expansion of bureaucracy, are all consequences of* | **Government (New Labour) provides excessive regulation and control.** **The school-supply system requires less regulation.**<br><br>Regulation leads to **'teaching to the test', 'softer courses', 'narrowing the curriculum'. School leaders need freedom.**<br><br>Accountability to government (New Labour) ministers causes **schools to** |

| *making schools accountable, primarily and overwhelmingly, to ministers.*<br><br>**Gove (2008b, N.P.)** | **be viewed negatively by teachers, universities and employers.** |
|---|---|

Theme 1 curriculum freedom within official-discourse was defined by the flexibility of free market de-regulation, with reduced ‘red tape’ and less ‘bureaucracy’. This freedom was linked to allowing teachers to avoid having to ‘teach to the test’, or being required to focus on an official curriculum (Apple, 1993; 2006). Other stakeholders, such as employers and universities, would also benefit from pupils no longer being allowed to take low value ‘soft’ courses, including vocational qualifications linked to employment sectors for pupils aged fourteen plus.

Free school proposers would have been confronted by theme 1, which suggested an increased freedom and shift in the currency-value of the *field.* Proposers needed to consider the benefits of a curriculum free from the constraints of an existing official curriculum (Apple, 1993; 2004; 2006). Freedom was confirmed in the 2010 coalition’s white paper, where teachers were to be allowed to ‘inspire pupils’ with ‘new approaches’ to learning, see figure 5.2:

*Figure 5.2 How the national curriculum constrains 'good' teachers*

| *Theme 1 Curriculum innovation and freedom from the national curriculum* | How concepts are **legitimised** or **de-legitimised** |
|---|---|
| *The National Curriculum was never meant to be the whole school curriculum – the totality of what goes on in any school. It was explicitly meant to be limited in scope yet in practice has come to dominate. We propose to take a new approach to the curriculum, which affirms the importance of teaching and creates scope for teachers to inspire. We want the National Curriculum to be a benchmark not a straitjacket, a body of knowledge against which achievement can be measured.*<br><br>*We envisage schools and teachers taking greater control over what is taught in schools, innovating in how they teach* | The national curriculum **limits the curriculum and constrains what is taught in schools.**<br><br>**Teachers need more flexibility. New Labour has imposed too much control and this does not inspire pupils.**<br><br>**Tests provide measurement of pupil value.**<br><br>**Teachers will have greater control. Teachers will innovate and develop new ideas.** |

| | |
|---|---|
| *and developing new approaches to learning. We anticipate that in a school system where Academy status is the norm and more and more schools are moving towards greater autonomy, there will be much greater scope for teachers to design courses of work which will inspire young minds.*<br><br>**(Department for Education, 2010d, p. 40)** | **Existing practice does not encourage innovation and government has too much control.**<br><br>Schools will have greater autonomy.<br>**Existing schools are controlled in a negative way.**<br>**Our reforms will inspire pupils.**<br>**Pupils are not inspired by existing schools.** |

Free school flexibility was positioned as freedom from the national curriculum, first introduced by a Conservative government as part of the 1988 ERA. It has been noted how this national curriculum had introduced control over what was taught in schools and removed an existing professional freedom and flexibility from teachers (Ball, 1990; Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992; Apple, 1993; 2017; 2020). Theme 1 curriculum freedom appeared to promote a return to professional freedom, allowing free school proposers to develop new ideas and, in the process, provide what parent-consumers wanted.

However, at the same time Gove (Department for Education, 2010g) signalled how curriculum innovation and freedom might draw on 'the successful charter schools in the US, supported across the political spectrum'. A key feature of these schools was a type of curriculum narrowing, with increased time spent on basic skills and subjects. Although free schools had 'the freedom to innovate and respond directly to parents' needs', central government retained its overall focus on GPMR, and a need for 'superior' test/exam results, or Ofsted grades. Government ministers, especially the coalition's 'schools' minister', Gibb, made a direct link between 'good' schools and a type of 'innovation' defined as an increased focus on official knowledge and the type of cultural capital which represented the 'fundamental purpose' of education. Innovation and freedom meant not having to deal with 'well meaning' curriculum provision designed to 'deal with wider social issues':

> *I believe strongly that the teaching of knowledge - the passing on from one generation to the next - is the fundamental purpose of education. Yet, over the years, too often the teaching of knowledge has been subsumed by an over focus on life skills and well-meaning additions to the curriculum designed to deal with wider social issues and problems. But it is this very drift away from core traditional subjects that is actually widening social division.*
>
> **Gibb (2010a, N.P).**

Free school proposers may have been aware of tensions within a curriculum freedom which emphasised an increased focus on core subjects, official knowledge and positive outcomes expected for 'disadvantaged' pupils, those eligible for a defined set

of benefits. Gibb was an important *agent* within the *field*, using status and power as a minister to support the codification of ‘good’ free schools and academies as superior within government school performance measures, or Ofsted inspections (Gibb, 2010a; 2011a; 2011b; 2011c; 2011d). An emphasis on a ‘good’ curriculum, defined through ‘traditional’ subjects, official knowledge and associated teaching methods, suggested that ‘not good’ schools failed because they tried to ‘deal’ with wider social issues. ‘Good’ schools needed a strong focus on important core subjects (English and mathematics), but also benefitted from formal teaching methods drawn from a utopian past. Curriculum innovation was steered in this way towards an epistemological framework defined by a strongly ‘framed’ (Bernstein, 1971a) official knowledge, a type of traditionalism and a ‘liberal’ education free from dealing with social development. Free school proposers had to consider the actual currency-value of curriculum freedom and a corresponding focus within official-discourse on freedom to change the pay and conditions of staff working in state-funded schools.

### 5.3 Theme 2: Freedom to change teaching staff conditions, or qualifications

Official-discourse theme 2 promoted the economic efficiency of schools with flexible pay for teachers, ‘stronger’ management systems, and an opportunity to employ unqualified teachers in state-funded schools. This theme was, in a similar way to theme 1, drawn from features which had characterised the previous Conservative CTCs and New Labour academies. Theme 2 freedom reflected a link between pay and individual teacher ‘value’ (Ball, 2003), part of an already established framework

which had defined neo-liberal markets, see 2.4. Gove (2009b) had proposed that ‘liberated’ pay systems would help ‘good’ schools to secure the right sort of ‘talent’, noting the example of Sweden’s *friskolor:*

> *Crucial to the success of reform in Sweden has been the freedom of new schools to set their own pay structures. That's why new entrants to state schooling here will be liberated to pay whatever they wish to secure the talent that will make their schools magnets for the aspirational parent.*
>
> **Gove (2009b, N.P.)**

Theme 2 flagged the market value of ‘talented’ teachers, the ‘good’ education professionals desired by ‘good’ aspirational parents. These ‘good’ teachers worked long hours, with the government wanting ‘to go further in supporting great teachers and great teaching’ (Gove, 2010c). A ‘good’ teacher was flexible and compliant, and contrasted to an undesirable ‘expert’, or ‘the blob’ (Toby Young, 2014), individuals seen as ‘enemies of promise’ (Douglas, 2012), who resisted change. ‘Good’ teachers were a valuable commodity, defined as working long hours, teaching important subjects and, as a result, paid according to the market’s currency-value.

Theme 2 freedom allowed free school proposers to consider how this flexibility might be a benefit, allowing them, for example, to ‘pay more for subject specialists’ (Gove, 2009d), or the ‘right’ staff. This type of economic efficiency could be an advantage for leaders, but may have a negative social impact on some teachers, leading to reduced pay, or inferior working conditions. However, in 2.5 it was noted how schools in England already had considerable flexibility over pay, including additional allowances. It was also noted how, as part of a not ‘pure’ market, schools had no

control income, and were constrained by a funding formula based on number of pupils and local area weighting (Le Grand and Bartlett, 1993). These constraints were countered by Gove, who suggested that free schools would be able to innovate and '…hire and reward their own staff in their own way' (Gove, 2008a). This freedom flexibility was contrasted with the negative 'bureaucracy' of LAs, see figure 5.3:

*Figure 5.3 LAs contribute to weak teaching and bureaucratic control*

| *Theme 2 changes to teaching staff pay, appraisal and conditions (including use of unqualified teachers)* | How concepts are **legitimised** or **de-legitimised** |
|---|---|
| *In order to hire good teachers and pay them properly the schools operate outside the local authority rules.*<br><br>**Gove (2009c, N.P.)** | **'Good teachers' should be paid more. Local authorities impose rules on how schools operate.** |
| *Because they're outside local bureaucratic control they have the freedom to pay good teachers more, to tailor teaching to every child and to ignore government red tape.*<br><br>**Gove (2009b, N.P.)** | **LAs impose 'local bureaucratic control'. Good teachers do not get paid sufficiently; poor teachers get paid too much. Teaching is not tailored to pupils. New Labour imposes 'red tape'** |

Free school proposers would, however, have been aware that LAs had played little role in appointing teachers since the introduction of LMS in the late 1980s (Levačić, 1998; Levačić and Hardman, 1999). LAs had little capacity to steer, or even attend staff appointments, other than appointing a headteacher in LA community schools.

The superior free school codification of theme 2 reflected the way teachers within a neo-liberal school-choice market had been increasingly positioned as a flexible commodity. This shift reflected what Ball (2012a) described as a type of 'policy technology', a control mechanism, with suitable rewards and sanctions. 'Good' teachers were positioned as teaching 'valuable' subjects and having high-class qualifications ('good' degrees), They were contrasted with a group of de-legitimised teachers, who taught 'unimportant' subjects, had 'low value' degrees and, consequently, a lack of knowledge. Theme 2 official-discourse proposed that teacher 'quality' would improve by recruiting trainees with higher intelligence and 'good' qualifications, noting how this had worked in 'high performing' countries, such as Finland, see figure 5.4:

*Figure 5.4 Teacher quality linked to high status qualifications*

| *Theme 2 changes to teaching staff pay, appraisal and conditions (including use of unqualified teachers)* | How concepts are **legitimised** or **de-legitimised** |
|---|---|
| *The countries which give their children the best education in the world are those which value their teachers most highly. From Finland to Singapore and South Korea the highest performing education systems are those where teachers enjoy the highest level of prestige. These nations have determinedly shaped policy to ensure that teaching is a high prestige profession, attracting the brightest graduates and offering a level of financial reward and social esteem which ensures teachers are seen as members of the nation's elite.*<br><br>**Gove (2009b, N.P.)** | **Good teachers should be valued.**<br><br>**Other countries are better than us** ('highest performing').<br><br>**Good teachers have high 'prestige'** Teachers with high levels of knowledge are the most effective ('**brightest graduates'**). **Those who do not have 'good' degrees are relatively worthless. Good Teachers are part of an 'elite' and will be given 'financial reward' and 'social esteem'. Those who are not 'bright graduates' will not be welcome.** |

Research into ‘successful’ school systems, such as Finland (Sahlberg, 2011, p. 183), has, however, suggested a more nuanced picture, making a link between success and a system underpinned by equality. The ‘good’ schools developed in Finland did not rely on a competition framework, or a value assigned to pupils, teachers or schools:

> *focusing solely on student test scores and using them to judge the effectiveness of individual teachers or the quality of schools is inappropriate. Similarly, simply ranking countries by using the data from international student assessments is only a part of the picture. However, the media widely reported the recent 2009 PISA results by only referring to the country rankings of measured average student achievements. Narrow use of available data from national or international purposes is fuelling the spread of GERM as a remedy to improved teaching and learning.* **Sahlberg (2011, P 183)**

Sahlberg (2011) concluded that high performing schools in Finland reflected a focus on ‘professionalizing teachers' work’, and ‘enhancing trust in teachers and schools’. The economic efficiencies of private sector pay and rewards had little value within this context.

Theme 2 official-discourse positioned ‘good’ teachers through a value assigned to subjects taught. A type of ‘liberal’ curriculum ‘innovation’ might, for example, allow free schools to allocate a high proportion of curriculum time to ‘basic skills’, especially reading and numeracy. This would require more teachers with skills in important

subjects and support an ‘innovation’ defined by increased traditionalism, see figure 5.5:

*Figure 5.5 Intensive focus on core subjects as innovation*

| *Theme 2 changes to teaching staff pay, appraisal and conditions (including use of unqualified teachers)* | How concepts are **legitimised** or **de-legitimised** |
|---|---|
| *In order to hire good teachers and pay them properly the schools operate outside the local authority rules. In order to shape a curriculum which gives children who arrive unable to read properly the chance to succeed the bureaucratic playbook is ripped up and intensive tuition is the norm.*<br><br>**Gove (2009d, N.P.)** | We need more ‘good’ teachers and **flexibility will allow this**. LAs **impose rules and children arrive unable to read properly.**<br>This will be solved by **intensive tuition**; this **does not happen enough in weak LA schools.** |

Free schools were codified as superior within theme 2 through a private-sector economic efficiency, with ‘strong’ and effective teacher performance systems, or appraisal. It has been noted how this focus on ‘performativity’ had been a recurring feature of school-supply reform over many years (Ball, 2003). Teachers in state-funded schools were already assessed against ‘performance targets’, required to apply for pay progression above the main pay ‘threshold’ and subjected to regular

lesson quality monitoring by managers. However, theme 2 free school flexibility provided a mechanism for 'good' leaders to go further, and use more rigorous systems to tackle problems caused by underperformance of 'weak' teachers, see figure 5.6:

*Figure 5.6 Good schools tackle under-performance of staff robustly*

| *Theme 2 changes to teaching staff pay, appraisal and conditions (including use of unqualified teachers)* | How concepts are **legitimised** or **de-legitimised** |
|---|---|
| *As well as giving schools more flexibility to reward good performance, we want to make it easier for schools to tackle poor performance. No-one is helped when poor performance remains unaddressed. Underperforming teachers place additional pressures on their colleagues and let down the children in their care. We will encourage schools to help underperforming teachers address their professional weaknesses and many will be able to improve, with the right support.*<br><br>**Department for Education (2010c, N.P.)** | Schools need to **reward good performance** and do more to **tackle poor performance** (sack teachers).<br><br>**Weak teachers (poor performance) let children down.**<br><br>Some schools are not addressing **'professional weakness'**<br>**Teachers are not getting the 'right support'** A definition of the right 'support' is not specified. |

Theme 2 suggested that free schools gained benefit through the ‘flexibility’ to recruit unqualified teachers. In 2010 existing state-funded schools already recruited unqualified teachers as a response to teacher recruitment shortages. Recent research by Mathou, Sarazin and Dumay (2022) has, however, noted that over time schools have tended to favour qualified teacher status. There was, for example, no evidence that parent-consumers might value schools with high levels of unqualified staff. Mathou, Sarazin and Dumay (2022, p. 301) also noted changes within school practice since 2010, a ‘flexibilisation and erosion of standard employment arrangements’. Significantly this shift had occurred within ‘schools with varying legal statuses, student intakes and performance levels, and in a variety of LAs’. The codification of free school flexible working conditions innovation was actually reflected within similar changes across all schools, leading to an ‘intensification of work, increased mobility, and insecurity’ across all state-funded schools (Mathou, Sarazin and Dumay, 2022, p. 301).

A series of teacher training reforms had increasingly encouraged new ‘on the job’ training routes designed to attract ‘good’ graduates (Freedman, Lipson and Hargreaves, 2008). Theme 2 official-discourse promoted ‘new’ forms of teacher training, organised by groups such as Teach First, a charity set up to recruit ‘bright’ graduates. Elliott (2018, p. 1) noted strong links between these training routes and the values of corporate organisations recruited to support the programme. Participation offered trainees a ’neoliberal understanding of ways of working into influential positions within the wider network invested in Teach First’. There may also be evidence to suggest that ‘teachers using these routes could be more willing to

accept challenging or deteriorated working conditions' (Mathou, Sarazin and Dumay, 2022, p. 301), including changes to term dates, or length of a school day, noted by Wiborg et al. (2018). These changes had not, however, helped new recruits, or existing teachers, to see teaching as a job with high levels of freedom or satisfaction. It was noted in 2.5 how recruitment and retention of staff was challenging within a working culture with long days, an excessive workload and high levels of pressure from the controls of GPMR.

The official-discourse theme 2 free market flexibility was set within a context where, as noted in chapter 2, large numbers of teachers left the profession soon after qualification (Buchanan, 2010). Ongoing teacher recruitment problems have attracted a significant amount of research (Harvey-Beavis, 2002; Adnett, 2003; Ball, 2003; Wragg et al., 2003; Mahony, Menter and Hextall, 2004; Hanushek and Rivkin, 2007; Beck, 2008; Farrell and Morris, 2008; 2009; Atkinson, 2009; Buchanan, 2010; Dolton and Marcenaro-Gutierrez, 2011; Yuan et al., 2013), but no link has been made between an increase in differentiated pay and improved staff retention, or job satisfaction. Teacher recruitment was a key problem faced by all school leaders in 2010, a situation exacerbated by a lack of graduates applying for teacher training and staff leaving the profession soon after qualification. Recruitment was a key challenge for free school proposers and, despite the freedom of theme 2 flexibility, staff shortages were still a problem ten years after the 2010 policy, with staff describing the negative effects of a target driven culture, repeated central government 'initiatives' and pressure from managers (Perryman and Calvert, 2020). Key pressures on teaching staff included long hours linked to work-load.

## 5.4 Theme 3: Changes to term dates or length of school day

Official-discourse theme 3 promoted the freedom benefits of schools with extended school days, or longer school terms, and reflected strong links to themes 1 and 2. In an early review of the free school policy, the DfE suggested that free schools were using this type of 'innovation' effectively, see figure 5.7:

*Figure 5.7 Legitimisation of flexibilities in free schools*

| *Theme 3 Changes to term dates or length of school day* | How concepts are **legitimised** or **de-legitimised** |
|---|---|
| *Firstly, that free schools are bringing new ideas and approaches to our school system: two thirds offer an alternative to the national curriculum in some or all subjects; around half have an extended school day; and a similar proportion operate different term dates and lengths to other schools in the area. The majority of head teachers interviewed said they believe that using such opportunities to* | **Free schools are bringing new ideas.** **Existing LAMS are stuck with old ideas.**<br>Free schools are superior (they **provide an alternative to the national curriculum**). **Other schools use the old ways.**<br>**Free schools are superior** (they use an extended day, or 'different' terms and conditions).<br>**Other schools are inferior**.<br><br>Use of freedoms is **innovative and visionary**. LAMS are **traditional and** |

| *innovate is important for them in delivering the vision they have for their school.*<br><br>**Department for Education (2014b, P.5)** | **their leaders are stuck in the old ways (not visionary).** |
|---|---|

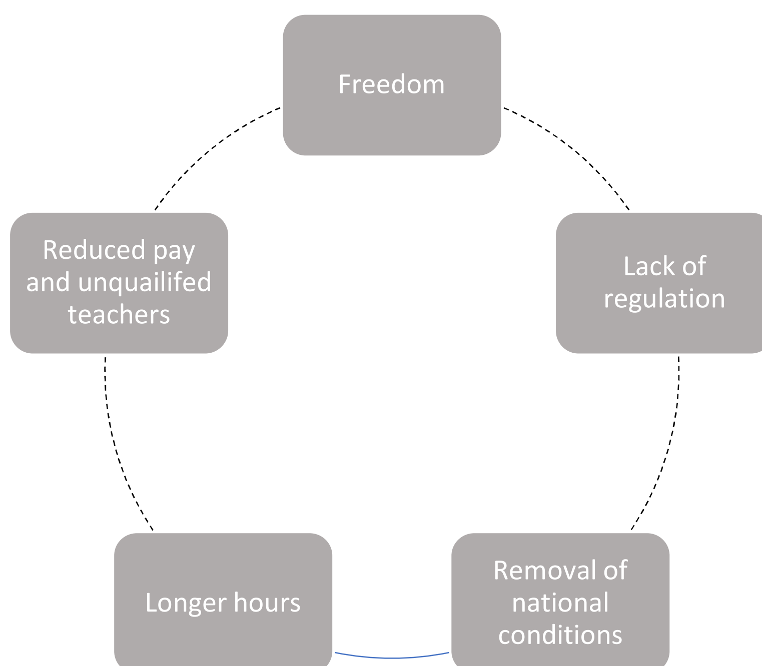
Theme 3 linked 'good' schools to the value of 'good' teachers, who worked longer hours, since 'evidence shows that the schools which have the greatest impact in poorer areas often do so by extending school hours into the evening and weekends so they can offer extra classes for struggling children' (Gove, 2010c).

The use of extended school days as a type of innovation reflected practice 'borrowed' (Halpin and Troyna, 1995) from some USA charter schools. This 'innovation' model, linked to a specific type of theme 1 curriculum freedom, had been promoted by Klein, a representative from the USA Knowledge is Power Progam (KIPP) charter schools, at an early free school launch event (Department for Education, 2011b; Department for Education, 2011d). Klein suggested that 'we need to be visionary and bold and transformative in our thinking' Klein (2011). Longer school days and fewer holidays led to 'good' schools. This freedom would allow leaders to tackle an existing deficit in performance between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils, see 3.3. Gove noted how 'The Knowledge is Power Programme charter schools in America, which President Obama supports, insist on a longer school day to ensure children achieve more' (Gove, 2009a). It was noted in Chapter 2 how research into teacher job satisfaction had consistently highlighted workload as a concern (Perryman and

Calvert, 2020), although England's right-wing media had consistently promoted a popularised view of teachers as 'lazy', with long holidays and short working days (Daily Mail, 2014). The benefits of extended days would mean that 'schools must be able to organise their timetables to be able to offer more children from disadvantaged backgrounds these opportunities and therefore they need the flexibility to reward teachers appropriately' (Gove, 2009a, N.P.)

Themes one, two and three linked free school freedom and innovation to a type of increased private sector efficiency, drawing on some USA charter schools and the development of some schools within Sweden's *friskolor*. Improved standards and efficiency would reflect reduced government regulation and bureaucracy. It would also reduce the undesirable influence of unions, see figure 5.8:

*Figure 5.8 Conceptual link between free market economics, flexibility and working conditions*



In 2.5 it was noted how, since 1988, successive Conservative and New Labour governments had already revised and adjusted national agreements for staff employed in state-funded schools. There was a tension between a strong central control framework used to discipline teachers, linking pupil outcomes to individual teacher merit (Gunter 2008; 2011; 2015; 2018), and a system which had also aimed to increase management flexibility. 'Good' teachers would create the 'good' outcomes achieved by 'good' pupils (Apple, 2006), but free school proposers needed to consider the potential benefits of further working conditions flexibility within a context of teacher recruitment shortages and retention problems. The option for parents and charities and other groups to open free schools may have suggested that new pay and reward systems could be developed.

### 5.5 Theme 4: The 'Big Society' – free schools opened by parents, charities and other community groups

Theme 4 linked free school freedom to the benefits of the 'Big Society' (The Conservative Party, 2010), allowing local groups to 'step up' and take responsibility for public services. This development can be seen, in part, as reflecting a period of austerity, caused by a global financial crash and drastic cuts to government spending after 2010. A context of public service cost-cutting supported Conservative policy priorities which, since the 1979 post-Thatcher governments, had focused on 'shrinking the state', and promoting individual liberty, or responsibility. The political right valued reductions in government spending and a libertarian, or liberal, freedom.

The ‘Big Society’ contributed to a move away from the collectivism, or welfarism, of state-run public services noted in 3.3. The concept of choice and freedom was enhanced by new free schools opened by parents and other groups, creating pressure on the supply-side of a school market. New ‘Big Society’ free school proposers might draw ideas about innovation from USA charter schools or Sweden’s *friskolor*. They may also have brought other types of economic efficiency from outside education (Hatcher, 2001; 2006; 2011).

Theme 4 official-discourse emphasised the innovation value of the ‘Big Society’, which would help to improve ‘wasted lives’, contribute to a ‘stronger’ society and ‘modernise’ public services, see figure 5.9:

*Figure 5.9 The 'Big Society' as an example of improvement through freedom*

| *Theme 4 The 'Big Society' - agency of parents, charity or other citizens and removal of state from service delivery* | How concepts are **legitimised** or **de-legitimised** |
|---|---|
| *We must build that bigger, stronger society because we can't keep tolerating the wasted lives and wasted potential that comes when talent is held back by circumstance.* | **Society** (not defined) **is currently weak leading to wasted lives and wasted potential** **Freedom** means 'we' can **make it bigger and stronger.** 'We' are all in this together and believe the same things. **Circumstance holds some back – leading to wasted talent.** |
| *The public services that we all rely on - schools, hospitals, policing, parks and public spaces, these are vital building blocks of the bigger, stronger society I want to see.*<br>*And that's why it's so important to me that we don't just cut public spending, but we modernise public services. And it is also important how we do it.*<br><br>*We're not introducing free schools and expanding Academies because it's a* | **Changes to public services will lead to positive improvements** (a bigger, stronger society.<br><br>Funding will be cut but **services will be modernised. The school-supply system will be better and more efficient.** **It is currently inefficient.** |

| *way of saving money from the schools' budget.* | |
|---|---|
| *We're doing it because it's the best way to improve education.* *More choice for parents.* *More freedom for professionals to innovate.* **Cameron (2011b, N.P.)** | **Changes will lead to more choice.** **There is not enough choice.** **Professionals will have more freedom; they do not have freedom now. Schools are not innovative.** |

The 'Big Society' model would offer an opportunity for new proposers to bring energy and new ideas to England's school-supply. However, starting a school requires significantly high levels of commitment and time. The application-assessment process was likely to favour parent-consumers and other groups with access to existing economic and social capital, whilst offering a challenge to those with more limited resources (Hatcher, 2006; 2011; Higham, 2014a; 2014b; 2017). Official-discourse suggested that new schools would be developed in response to 'need', 'open to all' and 'open everywhere' (Gove, 2007b). Free schools would provide 'real control' and 'real choice', enhancing an existing system which designed to support parent-consumer choice, see figure 5.10:

*Figure 5.10 How free schools provide greater choice*

| *Theme 4 The 'Big Society' - agency of parents, charity or other citizens and removal of state from service delivery* | How concepts are **legitimised** or **de-legitimised** |
|---|---|
| *We will tear down the bureaucratic barriers which prevent new schools being built, and remove the administrative obstacles which currently prevent charities, churches, voluntary groups and others from providing the new schools parents want and children need.*<br>*From Sweden to New York, it's conservative politicians have ushered in an age of real school choice with hundreds of new schools coming in to the state sector to provide parents with real control over their children's future. We will make sure these schools are open to all, and can open anywhere.*<br>**(Gove, 2007b, N.P.)** | School-supply is currently **constrained by 'bureaucracy' and 'administrative obstacles'. Schools do not provide what parents and children want.**<br>School-supply in Sweden (friskolor) and USA (charter schools) **provides greater 'choice' for consumers. This allows local groups to have 'control'. Parents do not have enough control over schools.**<br>**Free schools are open to all.** |

It has been noted how the choice available to parent-consumers within neo-liberal markets is contested, see 3.3, with evidence to suggest that choice reflects an

individual agency defined through existing economic capital and social class. This ‘choice’ allows those with the greatest capital to opt into high status private schooling, or seek high status state-funded schooling. Choice also allows ‘good’ schools to choose ‘good’ parent-consumers and ‘good’ pupils. The second best markets described in chapter 3 encourage schools to signal status to attract ‘good’ parent-consumers. The impact of neo-liberal controls leads to a context where improvement can be achieved most efficiently by teaching to the test, or focusing on pupils viewed as most important within GPMR. New entrants to school-supply required an understanding of the relationship between ‘good’ schools and the controls of GPMR. This made entry to the school-supply *field,* and maintenance of position within it, potentially challenging.

Collectively official-discourse themes 1 to 4 formed a linked thematic group, which promoted the value of free market freedom valued by right wing politicians and the benefits of innovation for free school proposers. These themes are described in this study as thematic group 1, freedom themes which codified a superior currency-value (Thomson, 2005) for free schools, defined by their freedom and innovation. Free school proposers needed to understand the specific currency-value of themes 1 – 3 within application-assessment and once schools had opened. However, this required an understanding of the links between GPMR and ‘good’ school status. Theme 4 may have encouraged parents, charities, or other groups, to plan new innovations or additional efficiency within new schools. However, Big Society proposers were subject to the discipline of GPMR, and a tension reflected in the way other themes within official-discourse provided potentially contradictory themes which defined ‘good’ schools.

### 5.6 Theme 5: Good schools: strong discipline and 'smart' uniform

Theme 5 emphasised the currency-value of 'traditional' approaches to school uniform and the value of systems used to 'control' behaviour in schools. Gove (2008a), for example, had highlighted the way 'good' schools utilised an approach to discipline and uniform 'run along principles which most of us would recognise as conservative or traditional'. These 'good' schools 'have strict uniform and behaviour policies with respect for authority embedded in their culture'. The coalition government signalled the value of strong discipline systems and smart uniform within The Importance of Teaching white paper (Department for Education, 2010d, p. 32), emphasising 'authority' and 'respect':

> *For all these reasons, we need to act to restore the authority of teachers and head teachers, so that they can establish a culture of respect and safety, with zero tolerance of bullying, clear boundaries, good pastoral care and early intervention to address problems. As a last resort, head teachers need the ability to exclude disruptive children and to be confident that their authority in taking these difficult decisions will not be undermined.* **(Department for Education, 2010d, p. 32)**

The support for exclusion of pupils provided a clear message about the sort of school-supply system viewed as 'good'. Ofsted's inspection framework also included a focus on pupil behaviour and attitudes within its inspection framework, defined as 'the behaviour and safety of pupils at the school' (Ofsted, 2012, p. 38).

Theme 5 official-discourse promoted schools, pupils and teachers compliant with the controls and disciplines of ‘good’ school status. This was reflected in a type of legal terminology with, for example, an ‘increase in the authority of teachers to discipline pupils by strengthening their powers to search pupils, issue detentions and use force where necessary (Ofsted, 2012, p. 38). Friedrich and Shanks (2023, p. 26), reviewing the impact of similar approaches in Scotland, suggested a link to underlying power structures within society:

> *While the dress codes themselves, with few exceptions, take the form of strict, detailed regulations that homogenise and hierarchise the student body in disciplinary fashion, they are largely justified in terms of how they supposedly shape pupils’ perceptions of themselves as members of the school community and future employees. While our study does not incorporate a historical perspective, we can speculate that this is the result of marketisation of the public sector, which forces educational institutions to justify their practices in terms of value added to the ‘enterprise society’. This in turn tells us something about what happens when local practices of control, such as the imposition of school uniforms, interact with larger-scale shifts in how power operates in society.* **Friedrich and Shanks (2023, p. 26)**

The types of discipline and control features promoted within post-2010 ‘good’ schools were, in this sense, written onto the bodies and dispositions of the pupils in schools and, in some cases, could be viewed as radical, or innovative. For example, Michaela School, a free school in Brent, achieved a national reputation for its ‘no excuses’ approach to managing pupils:

*The school's 484 pupils study in an atmosphere of rigid austerity. 'Demerits' are given out for the slightest errors: forgetting a pen, slouching, turning to look out of a window during a lesson. Two demerits in one class equals a detention. "That's another demerit… you're too disorganized," an English teacher tells one girl who's struggled to find her textbook in the allocated ten seconds.*

*The school day is run with military precision. Everything, from lessons to lunch, is timed to the second, with the aid of large digital clocks placed in each room. Teachers often give their classes a timeframe in which to accomplish a task —"Ten seconds to take out your books and open them to page 32"— before counting down backwards.*

**Time Magazine (2018, N.P.)**

The currency-value of strong discipline and smart uniform provided a potential mechanism for leaders to signal superior values (Daily Mail, 2021) within the *field's* symbolic economy. Free school proposers needed to consider how their approach to behaviour, discipline and uniform within applications matched the type of steering promoted within theme 5.

Walmsley (2011, p. 63) noted that uniform is an accepted feature within England's schools, providing a way for leaders to generate corporate identity and remove a focus on branding values. Uniform is therefore seen as a way to de-value a type of 'economic status' reflected within informal approaches in many USA states.

*Teachers appreciate the fact that the presence of school uniforms brings a sense of duty to the students and respect for the school and teachers. U.K.*

*teachers told me they believe school uniforms help students focus on school and not each other's clothes. Because everyone looks basically the same, differences in economic status are not as blatant. Because students dress in uniforms, they're reminded that their "job" is to be a student.*

**(Walmsley, 2011, p. 63)**

In 2010 uniform was an established feature of England's school system, part of the 'grammar' expected within the large majority of private schools and state-funded schools. Although uniform can be viewed as a mechanism to reduce focus on individual economic status, it can also provide a way to signal school value to parent-consumers. It is linked to a school hierarchy value, and expectations for compliance to authority which underpin neo-liberalism. A 'smart' uniform in 2010 was mostly defined by traditional models used within existing high-status state-funded schools, such as England's grammar schools, or some private schools. The cultural values embedded within theme 5 drew on a type of neo-liberal conservatism noted by Ball (2017), or Apple (2005; 2006). *S*mart uniform was defined as a blazer, tie and regulation trousers/skirt/shirt/blouse, or for some older pupils 'business' dress, such as a suit, tie, or suitable alternatives. Thi*s* dress code provided the potential for a visible signal to parent-consumers of a school's superior cultural and social status. Compliance with these codes can also be seen as a denial of cultural or racial identity (Deakin, Taylor and Kupchik, 2018; Friedrich and Shanks, 2023). Bodine (2003, p. 60) noted that uniform acts as a 'screen on which are projected all kinds of beliefs, anxieties and aspirations about children'. What pupils are asked to wear provides an insight into the views of adults about control and discipline. It can demonstrate whether 'childhood' is seen as a separate and 'protected space', or

whether adults seek to impose cultural and social values onto the way pupils dress and behave.

Free school proposers could use uniform and discipline codes as part of their marketing (Lubienski, 2003a; 2007b), emphasising how these schools were superior to others and how ‘good’ parent-consumers would be welcome. Gove, had promoted the value of a ‘proper’ approach, noting how it would counter an existing ‘violent gang culture’. Well-known headteachers, such as Michael Wilshaw at Mossbourne Academy, who became Chief Inspector at Ofsted and leader of the ARK MAT, were singled out for praise. These ‘good’ leaders had adopted a ‘correct’ approach, and were given the ‘legal backing’ to deal with ‘troublemakers’, see figure 5.11:

*Figure 5.11 The cultural value of smart uniform*

| *Theme 5 Good schools: Strong discipline (behaviour) and ‘smart’ uniform* | How concepts are **legitimised** or **de-legitimised** |
|---|---|
| *We will ensure schools have the resources and legal backing to enforce proper uniform policies, enabling them to ban trainers, buzzcuts and gang colours, ensuring that the culture of the street stops at the school gate.*<br><br>**Gove (2009d, N.P.)** | ‘Traditional’ uniform is **‘proper’** and **wearing it should be enforceable** (‘legal backing’). **Alternative approaches are improper**.<br>The ‘culture of the street’ and ‘gang colours’ represents a **breakdown in authority across schools. Pupils who do comply with our codes are deviant.** Compliant pupils wear a |

| *He insists on a proper uniform - with blazer and tie - respect for authority, clear sanctions for troublemakers and no excuses for bad behaviour.*<br><br>**Gove (2009c, N.P.)** | 'proper' blazer and tie, show 'respect for authority' and there are 'no excuses', so **non-compliance is a feature of trouble makers.** |
|---|---|

Gove's focus on the cultural values embedded within dress and hairstyle reflect the type of hidden curriculum noted by Ross (2003). For example, a school can provide a type of control framework, which defines how pupils should speak, what clothes they must wear, and how their bodies should move, see the description of Michaela school above. Theme 5 defines how 'good' pupils are positioned within an idealised race, class, or gender position. Theme 5 provides a way for schools to indicate 'taken for granted' rules which define the cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1990a; 1993a; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Dumais, 2002) and values of a dominant class. These elements of a school's hidden curriculum provide a 'sorting mechanism' (Wilson and Carlsen, 2016), indicating the type of 'ideal' pupil welcome at a 'good' school. Those unable, or not wanting to comply, can be punished or excluded. The cultural values defined through these behaviour and dress codes were linked to a type of high status curriculum, defined by a type of official knowledge (Apple,2006).

## 5.7 Theme 6: Good schools: academic curriculum, knowledge, examination rigour and traditional teaching approaches

Theme 6 reflected the way the 2010 Conservative-led coalition promoted the high currency-value of an academic, 'content-driven' curriculum (Ross, 2003). This curriculum reflected the cultural values of a re-calibrated official knowledge (Apple, 1993, 2013, 2014, 2019) defined within GPMR. It has been noted how this type of curriculum, emphasised by government ministers such as Gibb (2010b; 2011d;), can be seen as underpinned by a 'visible pedagogy' (Bernstein,1975) which reflects 'distribution of power and principles of social control' (Bernstein, 1971b). A 'visible' curriculum defined through official-knowledge and a hidden curriculum which reflects the cultural values of theme 5 are reflected within a school's 'grammar' and aspirations for 'good' school status. 'Good' schools are defined by a focus on academic subjects, and the high-value of 'rigour' as a key part of the *field's* currency-value (Thomson, 2005).

Reforms associated with theme 6 were seen as essential, since 'the curriculum should embody rigour and high standards and outline a core of knowledge in the traditional subject disciplines' (Department for Education, 2010d, p. 42). Changes included reduction in coursework within examinations, where pupils could complete work over time, and an increased emphasis on a terminal examination, taken at the end of a course. The currency-value of school performance measures was re-calibrated at secondary level, with value assigned to the 'English Baccalaureate', a set of five academic subjects given greatest importance in government-defined school performance measures. The national curriculum was revised, so tests for

primary-age pupils were made harder, with a stronger focus on specific types of grammar, punctuation and spelling. The strengthened post-2010 'content-driven' curriculum (Ross, 2003) emphasised the cultural capital of an elite. It was likely to favour some pupils and schools over others, with outcomes likely to be mediated by a school's 'composition in terms of academic attainment, socioeconomic background, and gender mix', so 'individuals in schools with more advantaged intakes are more likely to study more academically selective subjects' (Anders et al., 2018, p. 89). The emphasis on theme 6 traditionalism (Apple, 2014) was, however, positioned as a type of 'innovation', a break with a recent past, where New Labour had diluted curriculum quality through valuing social skills. Gove noted how these reforms would be essential for international competiveness, but also a moral choice, part of a 'common endeavour', see figure 5.12:

*Figure 5.12 Traditional curriculum as evidence of 'good' school status*

| *Theme 6 Good schools: 'Traditional' academic curriculum, importance of knowledge and examination rigour* | How concepts are **legitimised** or **de-legitimised** |
|---|---|
| *In the past some on the Right have argued that in education more means worse. More children following an academic curriculum can only be achieved at the cost of diluting the quality of the curriculum and so the* | **The speaker is distanced from the past and previous right-wing ideology.**<br>**Too many pupils taking academic subjects reduces quality.**<br>**But a non-academic curriculum is 'diluted' and is not 'quality'** |

| *whole enterprise is inherently damaging to the idea of excellence.*<br><br>*I completely reject that idea. I believe that the more children we educate rigorously, to enable them to follow a stretching academic curriculum, the more our society benefits. And not just incrementally, individual by individual, but exponentially as the space for common endeavour widens.*<br><br>**Gove (2009d, N.P.)** | An academic curriculum is superior (**'rigorously'**) and of **benefit to 'society'**<br>**A curriculum that is not academic does not benefit society.**<br><br>We are all together as a society rather than individuals. **Common endeavour.**<br>**Burt individuals are responsible for themselves.** |
|---|---|

A 'good' traditional curriculum was seen as an intrinsic benefit, part of a 'pre-eminent social good' (Gove, 2008a). Elite headteachers, like Wilshaw, were praised for an unswerving focus on 'traditional' values, since 'he teaches traditional subjects in a rigorous way and when the bureaucrats try to insert the latest fashionable nonsense into the curriculum he tells them where to get off' (Gove, 2009d).

The focus on a traditional academic curriculum supported the way some existing schools were delegitimised because existing tests and examinations were too easy,

and allowed too many pupils to succeed. The 2009 Key Stage 2 Maths test. For example, had ‘very little geometry and zero algebra’, whilst a ‘good’ curriculum reflected ‘proper’ learning, (Gove, 2010c):

> *So when we reconstruct the National Curriculum we will ensure that it is built around a basic entitlement to study each of these scientific disciplines in a proper, rigorous fashion. We will ensure that each of the three basic sciences takes its place within the curriculum in significantly greater depth and greater detail than now.*
>
> **Gove (2010c, N.P.)**

Low standards in state-funded schools, especially LAMS, were positioned as an outcome of the way previous governments had encouraged qualifications which allowed too many pupils to do well, with a lack of focus on the essential cultural *capital* of traditional grammar, punctuation and spelling, see figure 5.13:

*Figure 5.13 Insufficient focus on basics in weak schools*

| *Theme 6 Good schools: ‘Traditional’ academic curriculum, importance of knowledge and examination rigour* | How concepts are **legitimised** or **de-legitimised** |
|---|---|
| *Thousands of children - including some of our very brightest - leave school unable to compose a proper sentence, ignorant of basic grammar, incapable of writing a clear and accurate letter.* | **Standards in schools are low** (**incapable of writing a clear and accurate letter**). This is caused by non-traditional teaching methods, with **insufficient focus on grammar**. **Brightest children suffer most.** |

| | |
|---|---|
| *And it's not surprising when the last Government explicitly removed the requirement to award a set number of marks for correct spelling, punctuation and grammar in examinations.* | This is the **fault of the 'last government'** New Labour. They **lowered standards and did not focus on 'traditional' knowledge by** 'removing the requirement to award a set number of marks for correct spelling, punctuation and grammar in examinations'. |
| *The basic building blocks of English were demolished by those who should have been giving our children a solid foundation in learning.* | **Particular individuals or groups are at fault** ('those who should have been giving' a firm foundation). **They did not insist on promoting knowledge.** |
| *Well - let me be clear. Under this Government we will insist that our exams, once more, take proper account of the need to spell, punctuate and write a grammatical sentence.* | We will restore traditional approaches, which are the correct ones ('proper account'). **Knowledge is the most important role for education** ('need to spell, punctuate and write a grammatical sentence'). |
| *We urgently need to ensure our children study rigorous disciplines instead of* | Some subjects are of lower value (**pseudo-subjects**). This leads to **lower standards. Competitors will take over** ('we will be left behind'). |

| *pseudo-subjects. Otherwise we will be left behind.*<br><br>**Gove (2010a, N.P.)** | |
|---|---|

Gove criticised the low value of 'pseudo-subjects', final, 'terminal' GCSE examinations with units that were 'too small', and an examination system that allowed pupils to pass modules in 'small chunks'. A-level subject content needed to be more challenging, designed to meet the needs of high-status universities and ensuring success in the framework of a globalised economic competition, see figure 5.14:

*Figure 5.14 Examinations need reform to promote higher standards*

| *Theme 6 Good schools: 'Traditional' academic curriculum, importance of knowledge and examination rigour* | How concepts are **legitimised** or **de-legitimised** |
|---|---|
| *We believe that it was a mistake to allow GCSEs to be fully modularised, because GCSEs are too small as qualifications to be taken sensibly in small chunks across two years. We also believe that it is creating too much examination entry in secondary schools – with many schools entering pupils for* | **Examinations have been devalued by introduction of coursework elements** (modularised).<br><br>Pupils have been **taking lots of examinations,** and **too many of them succeed.** |

| *units in years 9 and 10 as well as years 11, 12 and 13. We will therefore ask Ofqual to consider how best to reform GCSEs so that exams are typically taken only at the end of the course.*<br><br>**Department for Education (2012a, N.P.)** | Examinations will be reformed so pupils **memorise facts** and **examinations will be harder**. The cultural values of ‘official’ knowledge are superior. |
|---|---|

Examination and test recalibration would build on what Gove (2007b) had described as ‘good’ ‘traditional methods’, the ‘very best’, including specific approaches to learning, such as setting by ability, see figure 5.15:

*Figure 5.15 Traditional teaching methods are best*

| *Theme 6 Good schools: ‘Traditional’ academic curriculum, importance of knowledge and examination rigour* | How concepts are **legitimised** or **de-legitimised** |
|---|---|
| *We will never forget however, that it is what happens in the classroom which marks out the best schools and that's why we're campaigning now for the adoption of the teaching methods which mark out the very best.* | **Traditional approaches to teaching are superior** (‘marks out the best’). **Other approaches are inferior.** |

| *Setting by ability so that the strongest can be stretched and the weakest given extra help.*<br>**Gove (2007b, N.P.)** | **Setting by ability is good.**<br>**Mixed ability teaching is bad practice.** |
|---|---|

Theme 6 built on similar concepts to those promoted by the new right during the lead into the 1979 Thatcher government (Cox and Dyson, 1971; Scruton, 1980). The need for reform was justified by a lack of academic rigour, low standards and linked to international measures of performance (OECD, 2007). Theme 6 was reflected in the disciplines of GPMR and the way pupils, teachers and schools were placed into a category of value. A key part of theme 6 was a link between lack of rigour and lower than average standards of 'disadvantaged' pupils. As previously noted, this gap in pupil outcomes has been a consistent feature of schools within capitalist systems (Reay, 2006; 2012) and has been viewed as contributing to social reproduction (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). Theme 7 suggested a link between improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and the type of cultural capital embedded within theme 6.

### 5.8 Theme 7 Good schools: social equality and traditional schools

Theme 7 positioned previous New Labour education policies as contributing to lower than average performance in national tests and examinations by 'disadvantaged' pupils, those eligible for a defined group of social benefits. The gap between these

pupils and others had been a consistent feature of England's school-supply system over many years, but the 2010 official-discourse linked this disparity to freedom themes 1 - 3. The problems were seen as weak schools and poor leadership, with a need for stronger performance management systems proposed within theme 2. This required the type of longer school days and shorter holidays proposed within theme 3. The root of the problem was seen as a lack of test and examination rigour within theme 6, and a lack of discipline defined within theme 5. These deficiencies had allowed ineffective families, with deviant behaviour, to go unchallenged. Gove proposed that single parents were a key problem, noting that 'I also think the Right was wrong in its rhetoric about single mothers. We need to recognise that it's those fathers who've abandoned their responsibilities, not mothers left holding the baby, who should be challenged about their behaviour' (Gove 2010a). Although low value parent-consumers were a key problem, schools contributed, by giving insufficient focus to theme 6 academic rigour.

The 2010 coalition government introduced additional 'pupil premium' funding for schools, using a formula linked to the number of disadvantaged pupils enrolled at a school and the value assigned to a type of disadvantage (Department for Education, 2013a). Leaders in all state-funded schools were given freedom over how this funding was used, but free schools were legitimised as a specific lever, with theme 3 innovation over increased school days or reduced holidays providing a way to 'respond directly to parent's needs':

> *Just like the successful charter schools in the US, supported across the political spectrum, these schools will have the freedom to innovate and respond directly to parents' needs. The new Free Schools will also be*

*incentivised to concentrate on the poorest children by the introduction of this Government's Pupil Premium which will see schools receiving extra funds for educating children from disadvantaged backgrounds.*

*In this country, too often the poorest children are left with the worst education while richer families can buy their way to quality education via private schools or expensive houses. By allowing new schools we will give all children access to the kind of education only the rich can afford – small schools with small class sizes, great teaching and strong discipline.*

**(The Department for Education, 2010a, N.P.)**

Free schools might, for example, introduce a type of innovation drawn from 'good' schools, including a 'traditional' curriculum. Proposers might reject previous 'progressive' approaches to learning (Michael Young, 2013; 2014; Morgan, 2014; 2015), since lack of rigour caused disadvantaged pupils to perform badly. Some headteachers 'lacked ambition', and did not ensure that 'talented pupils' were encouraged to 'work hard enough'. This stopped pupils from lifting themselves out of their circumstances and Gove noted how 'this radical, reforming, coalition Government has declared war on educational inequality and we won't stop until every child is taught in a school driven by a culture of ambition, aspiration and achievement' (Gove, 2010a, N.P.).

Gove often legitimised a form of 'doublespeak' within themes six and seven, linking curriculum innovation and traditionalism, or pay and conditions 'freedom' defined through longer school days. Terms commonly associated with the left (Gove, 2008a; 2008b; 2009a), such as 'equality', 'progressive' or 'comprehensive' were used to

legitimise a type of traditionalism innovation. In a similar way, Gibb emphasised how the superior codification of free schools, or academies, was 'radical', with traditionalism providing a benefit for disadvantaged pupils in particular, see figure 5.16:

*Figure 5.16 the importance of official knowledge for disadvantaged pupils*

| *Theme 7 Good schools: social justice through a return to traditional schooling and development of 'independent' free schools* | How concepts are legitimised or de-legitimised |
|---|---|
| *This Government has a radical agenda to raise standards right across the education sector, to improve outcomes for the most disadvantaged, to restore confidence in our qualifications and exams system, and to ensure that children leave school with the knowledge and the important skills they need to succeed in further and higher education and the world of work.*<br><br>*I believe strongly that the teaching of knowledge - the passing on from one generation to the next - is the fundamental purpose of education. Yet,* | **The government's policy is radical. (compared to the weak, New Labour approach).**<br><br>**We will restore confidence in high value qualifications. Our current qualifications have no value. This was the fault of a previous government.** Schools let down employers and universities.<br><br>**Knowledge provides a form of cultural capital** (passing from one generation to another). **The school** |

| | |
|---|---|
| *over the years, too often the teaching of knowledge has been subsumed by an over focus on life skills and well-meaning additions to the curriculum designed to deal with wider social issues and problems. But it is this very drift away from core traditional subjects that is actually widening social division.*<br><br>**Gibb (2010a, N.P.)** | **system does not do this at the moment.**<br>**This capital narrows social division.**<br>**Life skills have no value.**<br><br>**Failure to focus on basics is the cause of low standards and social division.** |

Gibb focused on the benefits of a liberal education for disadvantaged pupils, promoting traditional values defined as the 'best that has been thought and said', see 2.4.

The actual impact of pupil premium funding on disadvantaged pupils has been difficult to evaluate (Gorard, Siddiqui and See, 2021). Extensive research has shown little evidence to suggest that school-type, defined by legal status, had any positive impact on the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. There is, however, evidence to show that, over time, England's school-supply system has reflected the impact of covert selection, allowing middle-class parent-consumers to access 'good' schools, see 3.3. Schools tend to reflect a local context and leaders' understanding of socio-economic inequality reflects how 'individuals at schools with a higher number of pupil premium children recognised a wider conception of socio-economic inequality than individuals at school with low numbers' (Barrett, 2018, p. 72). Free school proposers

had to be aware of the currency-value of disadvantaged pupils and make decisions about how innovation might be used as part of a free school application. They would be asked about these pupils as part of an interview and choices might be drawn from a type of traditionalism viewed as innovation. It might, for example, include theme 2 longer school days and shorter holidays. It might also be steered by the cultural values of ‘good’ schools, ‘good’ pupils and ‘official’ knowledge defined within themes five to seven, a collection on themes described here as thematic group 2. Proposers had to recognise the value of disadvantaged pupils within the field’s symbolic economy (Thomson, 2005) and decide how freedom and innovation might provide benefits.

### 5.9 Summary

This chapter has used the first three stages of RTA (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Braun, Clarke and Weate, 2016; Clarke and Braun, 2017) to define themes located within official-discourse ‘policy-texts’ (Ball, Maguire and Braun, 2012). These texts promoted a type of ‘policy discourse’ (Ball,1993a), a ‘shared’ and ‘collective’ understanding. Official-discourse ‘legitimised’ the value of freedom and innovation (thematic group one), but within an overall control framework which also ‘legitimised’ the cultural values of ‘good’ schools. Thematic group 2 emphasised the currency-value of an academic curriculum, ‘traditional’ uniform and strong discipline systems, a framework which masked social class distinctions (Crockett and Wallendorf, 1998) and shaped pupils’ ‘human capital and employability’ (Friedrich and Shanks, 2023).

Proposers had to mediate apparent tensions between these thematic groups to negotiate the official controls (Reyes, 2011) used to filter-in suitable applications and applicants. Proposers needed to mediate the actual currency-value of innovation within the cultural values of neo-conservativism (Apple, 2006) used to define ‘good’ schools. The next chapter will evaluate the impact of official-discourse themes and thematic groups on a sample of established free schools, noting how leaders chose to emphasise freedom, innovation, traditionalism, or ‘good’ school status within forms of marketing. This information will provide initial insight into the *field’s doxa*.

# 6. Official-discourse themes and thematic groups reflected within a sample of ‘established’ free schools

## 6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter identified two distinct, but contradictory thematic groups within central government’s official-discourse. Thematic group 1 promoted the superior features of free market economic efficiency, freedom, innovation, and a type of parent-choice extended to setting up new schools. Thematic group 2 emphasised the cultural values of ‘good’ schools, ‘good’ pupils and ‘good’ teachers, underpinned by the ‘official’ knowledge (Apple, 1993; 2014; 2018; 2019) reflected within recalibrated national tests and examinations. This chapter builds on stages 5 and 6 of RTA, exploring the currency-value (Thomson, 2005) of application-assessment by analysing the way established free schools presented themes and thematic groups to stakeholders. This provides initial insight into the *field’s doxa*, the rules used to control entry to the *field*, and then maintain position within it. Analysis is focused on ‘established’ free schools, open long enough for practice to no longer reflect being new. It is drawn from data *set* 2, a random sample of ‘established’ free school applications, current school websites and, where relevant, associated job advertisements. Analysis will start with the currency-value of theme 1 curriculum innovation and freedom within sample free schools.

### 6.2 Theme 1: curriculum innovation and freedom in sample schools

The sample free school application forms and websites presented little difference in curriculum provision, organisation, or practice, when compared to existing school-types. In the small number of cases where innovation or freedom were mentioned there was a shift towards conformity between the application form and practice defined within the websites of established schools. Actual references to curriculum innovation were absent or, in a few cases, described in vague terms, which promoted quality, but with little detail. The School H application form, for example, described a commitment to 'the whole child' as a type of 'innovation', noting an aim to maximise 'partnership with stakeholders'. These characteristics were promoted as a 'distinctive' feature of this special school, see figure 6.1:

*Figure 6.1 School H 'innovative' curriculum practice not supported with detail*

> *What will make the school distinctive in its vision and ethos? We believe that outstanding schools are founded on a set of strong values,*
>
> *including a commitment to nurture pupils' curiosity and creativity, inculcate a love of learning and prepare them to make a positive contribution to their community. The xxxxxxx Trust is committed to the development of the whole child, as an individual, as a pupil and as a member of the community. To this end we envisage an innovative model that provides for the needs of individuals and maximises the partnership with other stakeholders*

However, 'partnership' was a feature expected across all special schools in England and reflects a general focus on individual provision designed to meet specific needs, and work with parent-consumers. Free school status was not required for this type of 'innovation'. The School H website emphasised a vague 'quality' difficult to for parent-consumers to assess objectively. The school marketed a type of 'emotional theme' (Lubienski, 2007a), designed to create confidence, but it was not clear how

these general aims would be translated into a type of innovative curriculum practice. This school reflected the way free school applications either ignored innovation, or positioned a type of common practice as an example of something new, or different.

School F promoted a type of 'credence' good (Lubienski, 2007b), which parent-consumers could not evaluate without actual consumption. In this case it was suggested that 'proven' innovative learning would lead to a 'high quality' curriculum, with 'outstanding teaching' and learning, see figure 6.2:

*Figure 6.2 'Innovative' learning cited within school F application*

> *Proven innovative learning and teaching strategies and resources to ensure high quality curriculum delivery and outstanding teaching and learning throughout the school.*

The emphasis on features described as 'high quality', or 'outstanding teaching', made the school's priorities and values clear for parent-consumers. Websites provided no information about what these strategies were, why they were 'proven', or might be innovative. Parent-consumers had to subscribe to a set of cultural values marketed by the school, seeking information from other sources, such as open days, or other parents, which aligned with their aspirations.

The school G application form described how status as a free school would offer a 'freedom to innovate', enabling an 'enquiry-based approach', based around the International Baccalaureate (IB) primary years programme, see figure 6.3:

*Figure 6.3 school G example of 'innovative' curriculum in application form*

The freedom to innovate and excite through learning is at the heart of this drive for xxxxxxx Academy. An enquiry based approach to learning will be at the centre of our development and a fundamental focus for our curriculum, ensuring that children have a relevant and focused education that enables them to develop their skills and understanding to move into the world beyond school. The framework for our 'real' learning will be through the implementation of the IB Primary Years Programme.

School G promoted this freedom to 'innovate' as a similar type of 'credence good' (Lubienski, 2007b), requiring parent-consumers to trust that an 'enquiry based' curriculum might be beneficial. However, this curriculum practice did not require a new school-type, or a change in legal status. Any existing school could have chosen to use the IB curriculum, a commercial model which requires payment of a fee to access additional resources and gain accreditation. There was no evidence within the application form, or website, to explain why this would result in 'real' learning when compared to the many other well-planned curriculum approaches already available within state funded-schools. The sample mainstream schools emphasised similar types of 'credence goods' concepts within websites, requiring parent-consumers to opt in to unproven but high value cultural qualities. However, this information, and the practice which underpinned it, were presented in a similar way to existing school-types and free school status, freedom, or innovation were very rarely positioned as a strong advantage.

The school J application, an AP school, outlined a curriculum that was 'unique', with an ambitious 'seven day a week' provision and 'extended hours', see figure 6.4:

*Figure 6.4 Extended school day and school week within sample school J proposal*

**Curriculum and organisation of learning**

**What our school day will look like**

In line with one of our main principles, we will operate a 7-day week curriculum across three standard academic terms. All our groups will normally operate the hours shown below:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Key Stage 3 | Flexible yrs 8 & 9 mixed groups | Monday to Friday<br>Obligatory<br>Saturday Optional | 9am to 3pm<br><br>12noon – 5pm |
| Key stage 4 | Full time yrs 10 & 11 groups | Monday to Friday<br>Obligatory<br>Saturday<br>Flexible, based on activities, projects<br>Sunday<br>Flexible, personal learning time | 9am to 3pm<br><br>12noon – 5pm<br><br><br>3pm – 7pm |
| Post 16 | Full time group | Monday to Friday<br>Flexible | 5 days per week |
| All students | | Friday evening<br>Optional, highly recommended | 6pm – 10pm |

This very extensive provision appears distinctive and innovative, but also likely to be prohibitively expensive in a ‘second best’ market where income was fixed. The current school J website described a type of curriculum practice which had shifted since this application, and now reflected with a standard ‘school day’. The current website reflected the type of flexibilities common within other AP school-types. The school J application form also described what appeared to be very ‘innovative’ and ‘flexible’ approaches to teaching and learning, see figure 6.5:

*Figure 6.5 Flexible approaches to learning within sample school J*

*Learning Methods We operate a whole range of learning methods which will include:*

- *Conventional classroom learning with tutors*
- *Creative workshops lead by contracted facilitators from industry, business, community*
- *Inspirational small group sessions lead by inspirational people from various sectors*
- *Rehearsal workshops to further develop skills*
- *Performances, shows*
- *One-to-one sessions – i.e. Personal Learning Guides sessions*
- *Performing arts workshops led by contracted facilitators for the arts & entertainment industry*
- *Recreation and sports sessions*
- *Outdoor environmental, equestrian, farming activities*
- *Project work which could vary from simple single person project to larger group projects*
- *Work placements or shadowing, volunteering*
- *Role play sessions*
- *Trips to inspire, engage new opportunities, develop new skills*
- *Personal study sessions where facilities are made available to students who shape what they which to do during that period*
- *Enrichment activities, a host of exciting programmes designed to bring fun into learning, increase functional skills and to broaden the horizon and interests of our students*

However, a similar type of curriculum flexibility is relatively common in all AP settings, which aim to re-engage pupils already excluded from mainstream schools. These schools utilise benefits gained from a higher-than-average staff to pupil ratio and an existing freedom from government school performance measures. Although pupils in AP schools, or special schools, can take tests and examinations, school leaders have considerable flexibility, and are not categorised in national performance tables in the same way as mainstream schools. They are inspected by Ofsted, using the same criteria as mainstream schools, but inspectors are encouraged to use discretion and flexibility when applying this framework. The curriculum practice described on the current website was similar to other AP schools. The small number of application forms which mentioned curriculum innovation within application forms used vague terms which could not be objectively evaluated and references to types of actual innovation, which distinguished free schools, were not evident within current

websites. The current school J website, for example, demonstrated a significant shift in practice between the original application proposal, and the type of practice described on its website. It reflected a type of curriculum common within AP settings, and this change between innovation promoted within an application form, and current practice within websites, was a feature across several sample schools.

The sample schools mostly defined a curriculum within application forms and websites in terms which reflected what Ross (2003) described as a type of 'content driven' curriculum, see 2.4. A curriculum was therefore framed as the national curriculum, or a set of examinations measured in school performance tables. Innovation was restricted, in this context, to minor adjustments within proportions of time allocated to subjects, a type of freedom already available to existing schools. Application forms mostly emphasised the value of a traditional curriculum (Apple, 2005; 2006) and current school websites, especially for mainstream schools, promoted an underpinning epistemology which valued the importance of 'official' knowledge and individual pupil worth measured by tests and examinations. The sample schools reflected the structuring impact of GPMR audit and verification, where central government 'good' school status defined what was taught (Power, 1997). The schools emphasised the importance of key subjects measured in school performance tables, associated types of formal learning and the currency-value of national tests and examinations. The School I website was typical, providing 'guidance for parents' on a 'suggested' approach to examination subject 'choice', see figure 6.6:

*Figure 6.6 Guidance for parents and pupils on secondary subject choices sample school I*

> *Although not a qualification in itself, the EBacc recognises those students that have secured a 4 grade (or equivalent), or better across a core of academic subjects – English, mathematics, computing, history or geography, the sciences and a language.*
>
> *It would be very sensible for students potentially wishing to take an academic KS5 pathway (A Levels) which in turn might lead to study in Higher Education to consider following EBacc subjects at KS4. Not doing so could potentially close some options to them in the future if universities change their admissions arrangements.*

However, this language of 'choice' obscured the way leaders in School I steered pupils towards subjects defined within the 2010 government's EBacc measure, a specific group of key official subjects including English language and literature, maths, sciences, geography or history and a language. This school, along with other sample schools, emphasised the strong currency-value of 'traditional' curriculum content and GPMR (Department for Education, 2019b). The sample schols were, however, no different to existing school-types, which also emphasised similar 'search' goods (Lubienski, 2007b) defined by GPMR.

The sample special and AP free schools reflected a greater freedom from GPMR already assigned to 'grey' school-supply, but still promoted a 'full range' of the national curriculum as evidence of 'good' school status or, for older pupils, specific GCSE subjects, see figure 6.7:

*Figure 6.7 Sample school H special school reference to the national curriculum*

> *Key Stage 2*
>
> *Pupils follow a thematic curriculum with a strong emphasis on language. Planning takes account of the specific needs of each pupil.*
>
> *Key Stage 3*
>
> *Pupils will access the full range of National Curriculum subjects. The curriculum will, however, be taught in a flexible way in order to meet the needs, interest and passion of each pupil. There are also opportunities to integrate in some lessons within xxxxxxx.*
>
> *Key Stage 4*
>
> *By accessing facilities at xxxxxx Academy there are a range of options available. Pupils will be able to follow courses from entry level up to GCSE. Pupils not integrating into the Academy will be taught seven GCSE's by visiting specialists from the Academy while their class teachers remains with them in a supportive role.*
>
> *Key Stage 5*
>
> *The post-16 curriculum provides students with a good foundation for life outside school. The range of qualifications and courses are tailored to the needs of the students. Academic courses are supported by xxxxxxxx, but there are also opportunities for students to be supported to access more work related programmes or vocational pathways.*

The cultural values of an 'official' curriculum (Apple, 2013; 2014) and associated tests reflected a general acceptance of a type of positivism, where individual performance and school outcome measures reflected pupils' value within the field's symbolic economy (Thomson, 2005). Schools were defined according to how efficiently these 'good' outcomes could be achieved, or in terms of 'good' management practice aimed at achieving this goal. Applications and websites made a link between the cultural values of 'traditional' approaches to learning and a type of high quality, especially in secondary schools. Primary schools mostly promoted broader definitions of excellence, although School A, was described as based on 'tried and tested' practice, using 'traditional' approaches, including within independent schools, see figure 6.8:

*Figure 6.8 Sample school A reference to traditionalism as high quality*

> *XXXX's selling point will be the quality and range of student outcomes, from an expertly delivered, but unashamedly traditional curriculum, drawing on tried and tested (independent and state school) best practice.*

A small number of sample schools chose to emphasise extra-curricular provision as evidence of curriculum innovation. School G, a secondary school, was described in the application as 'unique', with elements that made it 'stand out from the crowd'. These attributes were derived from proposals for extensive extra-curricular provision and a focus on more-able pupils, see figure 6.9:

*Figure 6.9 sample school G unique nature of extra-curricular provision*

> *The most unique part of our school offering and one which will make us stand out from the crowd is the additional 'beyond curriculum' activities which pupils can engage in four days a week. These will be in the arts and PE. They will encompass areas like a choir, school band (even using recorders for the youngest pupils), drama performances and various team sports. This rich enhancement of the curriculum will be carried out by all staff, as a compulsory part of their job description, and will be in addition to the regular after school clubs. During these sessions we will also be able to provide intensive intervention sessions for short periods to tackles areas of development and extend our more able pupils, ensuring that effective challenge and support are at the core of what we do.*

However, all state-funded schools are required to focus on 'more able' pupils and it would be very rare for schools to not include extra-curricular provision, especially in PE and music. School G exemplified the type of change in practice between application and current practice already noted. The requirement for staff to take extra sessions as a 'compulsory part of their job description' in the application form had suggested a quite specific form of innovation noted by Wiborg *et al.* (2018), implying changes to staff terms and conditions. However, the current school G website indicated that 'outside' staff had been employed to take extra sessions and the range of extra-curricular activities offered by school G was similar to other schools, with

only ‘some’ sessions now taken by teaching staff. Practice across the sample schools confirmed conclusions from previous research carried out by Wiborg et al. (2018), suggesting that free schools made little use of curriculum freedom within applications and, once open, had adopted standard practice found in other school-types. Innovation appeared to offer little advantage within the *field’s* symbolic economy. The next section will consider theme 2, changes made to pay, conditions of service and use of unqualified teachers within the sample schools.

## 6.3 Theme 2: Freedom to change teaching staff conditions, or qualifications in sample free schools

Analysis of pay and conditions freedom within the ten sample schools focused on how these schools promoted unqualified teacher status, pay outside national agreements, enhanced forms of appraisal, or different arrangements for staff holidays, pensions, or hours worked. Information about pay, conditions of service and use of unqualified teachers was embedded within documents common within existing school-types, including a ‘job description’, ‘person specification’ and ‘application form’. The information within application forms, websites and job descriptions was compared to approaches already common within state-funded schools. This comparison relied on my experience of recruitment in LAs, academies, MATs and work for the DfE, see 1.7. Criteria were developed for sentiment coding and my analysis was moderated by the views of a small group of professionals with similar experience, see 4.7. This analysis showed that sample schools consistently used

employment frameworks commonly found in existing schools and did not utilise, or emphasise, innovation. Information for job candidates reflected the standard currency of recruitment advertisements, describing practice and conditions teachers would have found familiar.

The sample schools consistently referenced 'national pay scales', required candidates to have a 'teacher qualification', or have evidence of 'teacher training'. Job details mentioned standard additional pay allowances, including 'post threshold', a performance evaluation used to control access to an upper pay spine, 'MPS' (main pay scale), reflecting nationally agreed pay scales, 'UPS' (upper pay scale), the standard pay scale for staff assessed as competent to access higher pay and 'TLR' (teaching, learning or recruitment allowance), an additional payment for staff awarded extra responsibility. See figures 6.10, 6.11 and 6.12:

*Figure 6.10 Sample school advert for languages teacher (MPS, UPS and TLR*

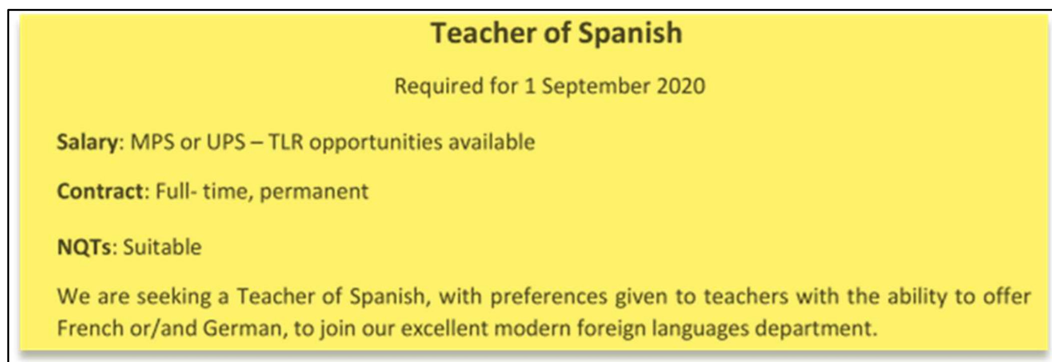


*Figure 6.11 Sample school advert requiring qualified teacher status*

Please complete all sections in black ink and in BLOCK CAPITAL LETTERS

**PERSONAL DETAILS**

Surname

Other names

Permanent Address

Postcode

Postal Address (if different from above)

**PROFESSIONAL DETAILS**

Title of post for which application is made

**WORK DETAILS**

Date of recognition as a qualified teacher

DfES number

National Insurance Number

Have you completed a period of induction? YES ☐ NO ☐

If yes, with which authority

Date completed

Do you need a work permit? YES ☐ NO ☐

*Figure 6.12 Sample advert for leadership role with qualified teacher status essential*

| Qualifications and Experience | Essential (E) Desirable (D | Method of Assessment |
|---|---|---|
| Qualified Teacher Status | E | A |
| Successful teaching experience, including in middle management position(s) **or** a successful Fast Track progression route | E | A |
| Evidence of major whole school responsibilities and experience of turning policy into effective and successful practice | E | A, L, I |
| Leadership of a significant area or phase or inclusion including responsibility for raising standards across the whole school | E | A, L, I |
| Post threshold teacher status | D | A, L |
| Evidence of relevant continuing professional development, including for example Future Leaders, NPQH | D | A, L |

Management roles required candidates to have the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) and reflected expectations common across existing school-types, see figure 6.13:

*Figure 6.13 Sample school advert for leadership expecting qualified teacher status and leadership qualifications (NPQH)*

Person Specification

| Training and Qualifications | Essential/desirable | Evidence (Application/ interview/ref) |
|---|---|---|
| Qualified Teacher Status | E | A |
| Degree | E | A |
| Higher Degree | D | A |
| NPQH | D | A |
| Recent participation in a range of relevant in-service training | E | A |

There were no references to roles where unqualified teacher status was signalled as an option. The arrangements for performance management of staff matched the type of practice found in existing schools. Person specifications did not highlight a need for good quality degrees. The terminology, practice and expectations within the sample school job advertisements, and associated documentation, would have been very familiar for teachers in other school-types. The lack of innovation within the sample school application forms, websites and adverts indicates that proposers chose to emphasise conformity, rather than innovation. It suggests that proposers either saw little value in innovation or, if they did, had adjusted practice once open and established.

The DfE regularly updated its free school ‘pre-opening guidance’, but did not stress an expectation that proposals would use theme 2 pay and conditions flexibility (Department for Education, 2019c; 2020a; 2020e). This suggests, perhaps surprisingly, that pay freedom and flexibility had a low currency-value within application-assessment. The New Schools Network (NSN), a company set up with government grant-funding to promote free schools (The Guardian, 2010), had initially promoted innovative staffing ‘freedom’ as a strength of free schools. It had emphasised the freedom to recruit unqualified teachers (New Schools Network, 2010a; 2010b; 2010c; 2010d) as a positive feature of free schools in official-discourse. However, by 2020, NSN had modified its expectations about free school freedom, suggesting that unqualified teacher status would be ‘unusual’ (The New Schools Network, 2020b):

> *Despite persistent myths to the contrary, the make-up of teachers in free schools is pretty similar to any other school. The vast majority have qualified teacher status (QTS) and free school leaders can even choose to make this official policy. Like all academies, they do have the freedom to hire people with alternative qualifications if they think they will be good teachers.*

**The New Schools Network (2020b, N.P.)**

Within the sample schools there was, however, some evidence of a shift within leadership roles, with increasingly corporatised models of ‘elite’ leadership, such as an Executive Headteacher (head of more than one school), or MAT Chief Executive Officer (CEO), in charge of a several schools within a multi academy trust. This shift

was, however, little different to trends across all school-types, including existing academies and MATs (Courtney and McGinity, 2020; Hay, 2021). It reflected an overall growth in the power of individual ‘elites’ (Higham, 2017, p 203) within the field of school-supply. It has been noted how, from wave 3 onwards, the DfE ‘encouraged’ all free schools and academies to become part of a MAT, rather than a ‘standalone’ institution. The development of executive structures appeared to offer expert ‘game-players’ a chance to extend their capital further (Wilkins, 2017; Kulz, 2020; Vinall, 2021; Hughes, 2022). The potential impact on individuals, or parent-consumers, of the growth in MATs (Constantinides, 2021; Greany and McGinity, 2021; Hay, 2021; Innes, 2021) suggests those with high levels of existing economic and social capital may have found it relatively easy to acquire more. It was noted in 2.5 how there had also been a general shift across school-supply towards increased economic efficiency and private sector models of appraisal. However, data *set* 2 suggests that practice in free schools may have been not unlike other schools.

It has already been noted that Wiborg et al (2018, p. 15) had concluded the development of free schools had seemed to reflect a specific change in national terms and conditions. They ‘detected signs that the extended teaching day introduced in several of our free schools is being introduced at the expense of long hours worked by teachers’. The next section will consider theme 3, changes to school days and terms, a particular feature of free schools which Wiborg *et al.* (2018) considered to have been reflected in staff employment terms and conditions.

## 6.4 Theme 3: Changes to term dates or length of school day in sample schools

Wiborg *et al.* (2018) suggested that existing school leaders described free schools as having an extended school day, or longer term dates, concluding these elements had led to less favourable terms and conditions for teaching staff in free schools. However, the sample free school application forms and websites in this study did not exhibit this difference. Current school websites and applications consistently referred to a standard school teaching year of 195 days, with an additional 5 'in-service' training days. This practice reflected a standard model of employment for teachers, first defined as part of the central government controls imposed through 1988 ERA. The sample schools also reflected a determination to work with other local schools, maintaining consistency of term dates and timings for parent-consumers within a local area. Term dates were aligned with other schools as a way to help parents organise childcare and transport. Sample school websites demonstrated a standard pattern of dates and school days, using a format common across other school-types. The timing of school days reflected practice across other local schools, mediated by a school's designation (mainstream, special or AP). School I provided additional 'optional' sessions, but this practice was common within other similar schools, especially the type of examination revision sessions seen as essential to improve performance in GPMR, see figure 6.13:

*Figure 6.13 School I Typical school day timings*

## Timings of the school day

| | |
|---|---|
| 08:20 | Registration |
| 08:30 | Period 1 |
| 09:30 | Period 2 |
| 10:30 | Break |
| 10:55 | Period 3 |
| 11:55 | Period 4 |
| 12:55 | Lunch |
| 13:40 | Registration |
| 14:00 | Period 5 |
| 15:00 | End of school day |
| 15:15 | Optional Period 6 (Tues, Wed, Thu only) |

School F outlined term dates which reflected a Jewish faith designation, but matched the type of practice common in similar school-types, see figure 6.14:

*Figure 6.14 School F faith-based term dates adjustment*

The school year will be split into three terms: Autumn, Spring and Summer. xxxxxx Council states: "Our term dates total 195 school days. Schools are open to pupils for 190 days and operate Professional Development Days on the additional five full days each year". We will operate on a similar basis, but will take into account the main Jewish festivals that occur throughout the year and during which the school will be closed. These are: Rosh Hashanah (2 days), Yom Kippur (1 day), Succot (4 days), Pesach (8 days), Shavuot (2 days). These days may or may not fall on weekends, depending on the relationship between lunar and solar calendars, which vary each year. Since the school will effectively have an extra 17 days to account for, we will make up the time by putting half-term and end-of-term holidays during the festivals wherever possible and if necessary adding extra days at the end of the school year. The school will be open to pupils for a minimum of 190 days per year.

Parent-consumers who valued Jewish faith schools would have found this pattern of holidays very familiar.

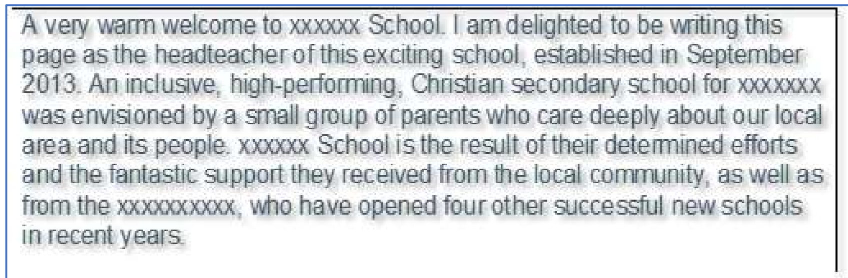
Although Wiborg et al. (2018, p. 16) concluded that free schools had led to an 'increased use of performance-related pay as a management tool in schools, as well as a lengthening of teachers' hours to meet the pressure for an extended school day' this conclusion is not supported by analysis of data from the sample school application forms, or current websites. However, it has been noted how recent research by Mathou, Sarazin and Dumay (2022, p. 302) had concluded that changes to expectations for evaluation of performance may have taken place across all state-funded schools. They noted 'intensification of work, increased mobility, and insecurity (especially regarding pay)'. This conclusion suggests that free schools appear to have reflected a broader series of changes to 'working culture and conditions' common across other schools. The employment practice within state-funded schools had been influenced, over time, by the economic efficiencies of the private sector. It was noted in 5.4 how influence of the 'Big Society', with parents, charities and other community groups allowed to open schools, may have brought new type of innovation.

## 6.5 Theme 4: The 'Big Society' – free schools opened by parents, charities and other community groups within sample schools

Reference to being a parent-led, or community-led school-type did not form a strong feature within current free school websites, but had been referenced within four application forms. The school A website, for example, described how some parents

who ‘care deeply about our local area’ had been involved in setting up the school. Their ‘actions had led to a ‘high-performing’, ‘exciting’ school, see figure 6.15:

*Figure 6.15 Sample school A link to the ‘Big Society’*


A very warm welcome to xxxxxx School. I am delighted to be writing this page as the headteacher of this exciting school, established in September 2013. An inclusive, high-performing, Christian secondary school for xxxxxxx was envisioned by a small group of parents who care deeply about our local area and its people. xxxxxx School is the result of their determined efforts and the fantastic support they received from the local community, as well as from the xxxxxxxxxx, who have opened four other successful new schools in recent years.

There was no reference to how these parents were now involved, or the subsequent impact of this school becoming part of a MAT. The School H application form had also described a relationship between parents, a local diocese and an organisation ‘contracted to carry out work on the project’, reflecting the agency of some parent-consumers with sufficient *capital* needed to appoint skilled consultants needed to write the free school application and manage the set-up process (Higham, 2014a), see figure 6.16:

*Figure 6.16 School H application reference to a parent-led school*

> A group of parents from xxxxxxxxxx of England primary schools and the Diocese of xxxxxxx (through its Diocesan Education Board, worked with xxxx to develop this application. The vision for the school came from them, and they approached xxxxx to turn the vision into precise plans. An xxxxx subsidiary trust – xxxx xxxxxxxxx Free School Trust has been set up so that it reflects xxxxx's responsibility and that of the Church, as well as the vision and passion of its local parent group. xxxxx will set up and run the school, appointing eight directors, at least three of whom will be parents of children attending xxxxxx primary school.

This school also reflected the important social *capital* it had gained through links with a local diocese within the original free school proposal.

School J referenced the capital it had gained through support from a supportive Conservative politician, with an emphasis on 'choice' 'value' and 'better outcomes', see figure 6.17:

*Figure 6.17 'Big Society' reference school J website*

With our vision and the right leadership, we believe that we can develop a model that can be successfully replicated elsewhere, again adding value to the system as a whole, parents and young people with more choice, and, critically, better outcomes for young people themselves.

"As a recent visitor to the xxxxxxx project I am a great admirer of what they do. They are helping to change the lives of the people that they work with. The sense of hope and self esteem that I saw them generate, especially with young people, is priceless. The project is a fantastic model of what the Big Society should be about and I am delighted that they have secured some more funding. This sort of investment has long term benefits for everyone".

The school G application form included extensive references to a local FE college, responsible for setting up the school. This was the only sample school application which suggested the 'Big Society' may have influenced school curriculum innovation characteristics. The college had promoted its access to vocational subjects and qualifications, as well as pupil entry to the school at age 14. However, the current website described a series of subsequent changes, including a consultation to remove links with the FE college, allowing the school to be absorbed into a MAT. This had led to a type of conformity, with a proposed change in age-range to 11 – 16 and a re-focused curriculum organised around academic subjects. These changes reflected the way the currency-value of 'Big Society' innovation was low across the sample schools, and had reduced over time towards the standard practice required by GPMR controls. The next section will consider the impact of thematic group 2 on the sample schools, the currency-value of official 'good' school features and associated cultural values.

## 6.6 Thematic group 2 (themes 5 – 7) within sample school application forms and websites

The sample free schools had not promoted strongly the currency-value of thematic group 1 in application forms, or current websites. School leaders had used marketing, such as a school website (Lubienski, 2005; 2007b), to attract parent-consumers and emphaised thematic group 2 official-discourse, defined as a type of ‘grammar’ found within ‘good’ schools. This ‘good’ school ‘grammar’ was reflected within themes five to seven, which emphasised the currency-value of traditionalism, GPMR and neo-conservatism (Apple, 2005; 2006). The sample free school websites marketed ‘emotional’ themes, with links to qualities which could not be objectively tested. These ‘credence goods’, focused on a set of values ‘that can be assessed only after a purchase’ (Lubienski, 2007b), were focused on the strong currency-value of thematic group 2. The schools promoted ‘good’ school-type status in this way, but mediated by their status as a mainstream, AP, or special school.

Most secondary sample schools signalled the cultural values and cultural *capital* associated with theme 5, emphasising the importance of ‘good’ behaviour, or ‘smart’ school uniform. This was not reflected as strongly within ‘grey’ school-supply, or primary schools. School F, a primary school, did provide detailed guidance on behaviour, but promoted a ‘traffic light system designed to support consistency, and emphasise positive behaviour, see figure 6.18:

*Figure 6.18 School F guidance emphasis on a 'traffic light' continuum, designed to promote positive behaviour*

**Whole School Behaviour Policy: *Stay On Green***
**Overview**
The principle behind ***Stay On Green*** is:

- That all pupils have the opportunity to make positive choices about their behaviour and influence outcomes.
- That teachers integrate a system within daily teaching in order to promote positive behaviour and embed use of effective behaviour management skills.
- Pupils who regularly follow the rules are noticed, acknowledged and rewarded.

The system allows for the following:

- A consistent approach that can be used by all staff
- Whole class and individual reward system
- Whole school strategies for maintaining or improving behaviour (see page 7)
- Teaching of specific behaviours and routines

All pupils start on green at the start of every day

| Red | Orange | Yellow | Green | Bronze | Silver | Gold |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

← Negative choices    Positive choices →

All classes have a rocket display showing the scale with every child's name displayed. We call this 'the rocket'. All pupils start on green every day. If pupils make positive (good) choices about their behaviour or work effort, their name may be moved up the rocket to bronze then silver then gold. Children do not normally move up the rocket more than once in a secular session or once in a kodesh (Jewish Studies) session. If pupils make negative (poor) choices about their behaviour or work effort, their name may be moved down the rocket to yellow, then orange & then red. This clearly demonstrates to children that they need to consider their behaviour & make positive changes to return to green. If a pupil has been involved in a serious 'red' incident during the day, this will prevent them rising beyond green that day, but can do so the next day.

This guidance was supported by additional detailed information for staff and parent-consumers. School F did not focus on punishment, or discipline, and reflected the type of practice common across other primary schools, see figure 6.19:

*Figure 6.19 Emphasis on positive behaviours School F*

**BEHAVIOURS FOR LEARNING that could result in moving UP the rocket:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Completing work to the best of ability | Making an effort beyond the expected |
| Remaining on task | Showing enthusiasm and enjoyment |
| Making progress | Perseverance |
| Meeting a learning target | Being independent |
| Listening well | Good focus and concentration |
| Demonstrating a positive attitude | Being organised and ready to learn |
| Showing resilience | Risk taking (learning from mistakes) |
| Asking good questions | Being responsible for one's belongings & time |
| Contributing extra ideas / taking things to another level | |
| Managing distractions (for example, ignoring another child's disruptive behaviour) | |
| Going above and beyond and producing exceptional pieces of work | |

**SOCIAL BEHAVIOURS that could result in moving UP the rocket:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Keeping the school rules and class rules | Continued good behaviour |
| Being kind or considerate | Avoiding making a poor choice |
| Being polite and showing good manners | Setting a good example |
| Moving around the school sensibly & safely | Tidying up |
| Taking responsibility | Apologising |
| Helping someone | Turn taking and sharing |
| Showing restraint where previously anger or violent behaviour may have been shown | Taking responsibility for a mistake made (e.g. relating to a dispute with a peer) |
| Being a good friend | |

**Behaviours that could lead to a child moving DOWN the rocket (this list is not exhaustive):**

| | |
|---|---|
| • Talking over the teacher / others | • Rudeness |
| • Being unkind / name calling / teasing etc | • Answering back |
| • Opting out / lack of effort | • Not doing as asked |
| • Cheating (age appropriate response) | • Showing disrespect |
| • Lying | • Unsafe behaviour |
| • Calling out and / or disrupting others | • E Safety infringements |

School H, a secondary school, promoted a more 'formal' approach to behaviour, reflecting the punitive discipline promoted within theme 5 official-discourse. This school presented an impersonal interface to parent-consumers, where 'The Academy' was positioned as a remote type of organisation responsible for compliance with 'legal' guidance from central government. Language choices

emphasised power, with formal sanctions seen as unavoidable when caused by ‘misdemeanours’. There was a need to ‘uphold and enforce’ rules in the event of an ‘incident’, where pupils would be ‘detained’ using ‘statutory powers’. The policy indicated how deviant pupils needed to be ‘managed’ and controlled. Lack of compliance would lead to consequences, with a ‘one hour ‘detention’, escalated to a ‘two hour dentition’ if required. Pupil names will ‘appear on a list’ and be ‘read out’ each morning. Government regulations were seen as having ’strengthened the Academy’s position’ by introducing ‘statutory powers’, allowing pupils to be detained ‘even without parental consent’, see 6.20:

*Figure 6.20 School H (secondary) more formal approach to behaviour and sanctions*

These are necessary, in a minority of cases, and are aimed at fostering a culture of good behaviour within the Academy. To assist with this and to aid standardisation in the way misdemeanours are treated, the following sanctions framework will be adhered to:- .

It is the responsibility of all staff to uphold and enforce the Code of Conduct.

Normally when lunchtime detention has been exhausted or when the incident is of a more serious nature after school detention will be set.

Detentions (during the school day and after school) are one of the main sanctions available to the Academy. If a pupil is issued with a lunchtime detention and fails to attend they will be detained for a 1 hour detention after school on the next day supervision is available. Parents/carers will be informed. If a pupil fails to attend any 1 hour detention, without good reason, they will be detained for 2 hours after school on the next day supervision is available. Pupils and parents/carers will always be given at least 24 hours" notice of an afterschool detention.

Should a detention be issued, the detention date is set by the Head of Pupil Progress and a pupil"s name will appear on a list outside his room. Tutors will also read out the names for detentions each morning. It is the pupil"s responsibility to check the detention list to see what date has been given for them to attend the detention. They must not rely on being told; this is an important part of pupils accepting responsibility for their own behaviour and then managing the sanctions received.

From September 1998 all schools have had a legal right to detain pupils after school, even without parental consent. The Government has now strengthened the Academy"s position by introducing statutory powers regarding behaviour and

The School H control and discipline measures provided parent-consumers with a clear understanding of the type of pupil welcome at this school, and the consequences of non-compliance. However, this type of practice and language was not unusual within existing secondary schools. It reflected the way leaders aimed to achieve high-status market position (Clark, 1998; Ball, 2010; Deakin, Taylor and Kupchik, 2018).

There were similar 'formal' approaches to uniform within the sample secondary schools. School D, a secondary school, provided detailed information about uniform, including minimum requirements, which emphasised the 'right' expectations ('correct', 'acceptable', 'not allowed, 'must' and 'not appropriate'), see figure 6.21:

*Figure 6.21 School D secondary type more formalised uniform expectations*

**SCHOOL SKIRT OR TROUSER**
The [redacted] navy blue skirt and navy trousers are only available at [redacted] or [redacted]. School skirts are tailored and of a suitable length above the knee. School trousers are full length, tailored trousers. Skin tight, fashion trousers, leggings and other styles of skirt are not acceptable.

**TRAINERS**
Pupils must wear trainers that are specifically designed for sport. These will provide the correct cushioning, motion control, tread and mid-foot stabilisation which will offer the best support for the foot and ankle and thus minimise any sports injuries. Flat fashion pumps and 'high-tops' are NOT ACCEPTABLE. These are dangerous, offering little support or grip and have been the major cause of injury.

Jewellery is not allowed with the exception of a watch and one pair of plain stud earrings in the lobes of the ears. Other jewellery and/or piercings are not allowed. If a student has an existing nose piercing, then a clear plastic stud would be deemed acceptable for school, to prevent the piercing from closing.

**SOCKS**
Pupils may wear navy blue or black socks or tights. Socks worn with trousers must be ankle socks (that cover the entire ankle) and not the trainer socks that only come to the top of the shoe.

**BAGS**
Large rucksacks and 'sports' bags are also not allowed because they allow too much movement of books which then get damaged. Fashion bags are also inappropriate. Pupils must keep their school bags in their lockers throughout the school day as they can cause congestion on school corridors and within the classroom.

**Make up, nail varnish, false nails, false eyelashes and decorative contact lenses are inappropriate for school and must therefore not be worn during the school day.**

The sample secondary schools emphasised status within the market by signalling a need for compliance to a uniform defined by 'smart' blazers and ties as a type of strong cultural value. The primary schools promoted a more informal dress-code, such as sweat shirts, which also offered a cheap way to create a uniform. School C, reflected practice typical in other special schools, noting that uniform should not be expensive, although pupils would be 'clean and tidy', see figure 6.22:

*Figure 6.22 Special school uniform designed to be inexpensive, whilst 'acceptable'*

At [redacted], we believe that a school uniform is important because it:

- Looks smart
- Wears well
- Contributes to a sense of belonging
- Gives a common purpose
- Fosters a feeling of pride
- Reduces "fashion competition" between children

All children should wear the uniform and we encourage them to maintain an acceptable standard of clean and tidy dress in school. Our uniform is readily available and inexpensive.

**Our Uniform**

| **Boys** | **Girls** |
|---|---|
| Navy/royal blue suit (Years 7-11) Navy trousers only for years 4-6 | Navy/royal blue suit (Years 7-11) Navy trousers only for years 4-6 |
| Plain blue long / short sleeved shirt<br>Or polo shirt | Plain blue long / short sleeved revered neck blouse<br>Or polo shirt |
| Plain navy blue tie | |
| Plain navy blue v-neck jumper (available in 3 different fabrics) or Plain navy blue v-neck sleeveless jumper (available in 2 different fabrics) (optional) | Plain navy blue v-neck jumper (available in 3 different fabrics) or Plain navy blue v-neck sleeveless jumper (available in 2 different fabrics) (optional)<br>Navy Cardigan (available in 2 different fabrics) (optional) |
| Black, plain, leather style shoes(**not trainer/plimsoll style)**<br>Black/navy socks | Black, plain, leather style shoes(**not trainer/plimsoll style)**<br>Black/navy socks |
| [redacted] badge - Optional | [redacted] badge - Optional |

The sample special schools tended to avoid presenting individual pupils within marketing, whilst AP schools emphasised individuals, rather than groups of pupils. However, the difference in approaches between the sample primary, secondary, special and AP schools was similar to the practice common within existing school-types across England's school-supply. Although the sample schools promoted a

range of expectations and approaches, free school status did not lead to distinctive, or innovative approaches, see figure 6.23:

*Figure 6.23 The continuum of marketing which reflected age range and pupil-type, rather than free school status*

**Secondary**

Formal uniform, smart blazer

**Primary**

Standard uniform, but more informal

**AP**

Informal or non-uniform

The superior codification of theme 5 uniform was not reflected within the way leaders chose to present free schools.

The sample schools also emphasised conformity when marketing curriculum provision for parent-consumers. The curriculum was viewed as content-driven (Ross, 2003), a collection of subjects defined by the 'official' knowledge (Apple, 2006) of the national curriculum or, in secondary schools, key examination subjects. Primary schools promoted the importance of the national curriculum and national tests at age five, seven or eleven. Secondary schools emphasised the controls of GPMR and School B, for example, noted how 'a strong academic core sits at the heart of our curriculum.' and noted that 'core subjects are allocated an appropriate amount of time to ensure that all students are thoroughly taught essential capabilities and knowledge'. It has been noted how secondary school subject 'choice' at the end of year 9 was often controlled by leaders, ensuring that pupil outcomes would best support a school's GPMR measures, particularly within the EBacc. School D, was typical, providing 'options' within the science department, whilst ensuring that actual 'decisions' about qualification entry were made by the school, with pupils 'required' to select specific subject qualifications, see figure 6.24:

*Figure 6.24 Choice in secondary subjects controlled by school policy*

**THE CORE**
All pupils are required to study **English** and **Mathematics** at examination level. In addition everyone must study **Science** and a choice of **Language**— Spanish, French or Latin.

**Science:** All pupils study Biology, Chemistry and Physics at Key Stage 4 leading to either **separate GCSE qualifications in Biology, Chemistry and Physics** or a **Double Award in GCSE Combined Science**, depending on the most appropriate examination for the individual pupil.

At the end of Year 9, the Science Faculty will decide whether a pupil is to be entered for the Double Award. This decision will be based on both the pupil's aptitude for science and the work produced to date.

**OPTIONAL COURSES**
Pupils are required to select a further two subjects from the following list of options.
At least one of these subjects must be selected from the list of Humanities:

| **Humanities:** | **Other Options:** |
|---|---|
| History | Art & Design |
| Geography | Business |
| Religious Studies | Computer Science |
| Classical Civilisation | Drama |
| | Food & Nutrition |
| | Music |
| | Physical Education |
| | Textile Design |

Pupils need to consult carefully with subject staff to assess which subjects will play to their strengths as well as enable them to succeed and acquire a range of knowledge and skills.

Whilst pupils are free to choose their Year 9 subjects they should include a Humanities subject and a Language in their selection. This will ensure a sufficiently broad skill set at this stage.

The focus on examination subjects and choices was, however, very similar to existing secondary schools, reflecting the structuring impact of GPMR and its high currency-value.

This type of 'steering' towards important examination subjects, or ensuring that pupils were focused on tests and core subjects reflects the way sample free schools

adopted an existing conformity to the currency-value of official-discourse theme 6 and an epistemology defined by knowledge, tests, specified examination outcomes and pupil value (Apple, 2006; 2019), see 2.6. The sample mainstream free school websites, for example, emphasised the cultural *capital* of theme 6 and 'traditional' knowledge. School A noted the importance of high quality teaching which provided 'challenges', with 'high expectations', and the benefits of 'academic rigour', see figure 6.25:

*Figure 6.25 School A focus on knowledge*

We work hard to provide children with memorable and meaningful opportunities for learning, through a curriculum that engages and challenges, with high expectations and academic rigour are at its heart. Our children enjoy their time at school and talk with excitement about the thrill and joy they experience when they make discoveries, advance their skills and master tricky concepts.

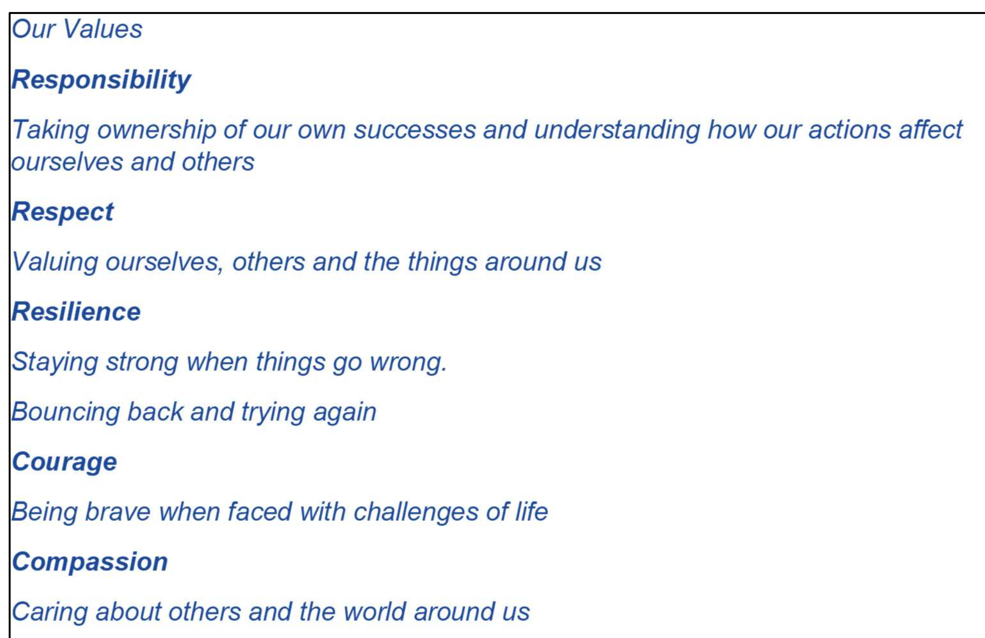
Special schools and AP free schools reflected the greater freedom of 'grey school-supply, promoting broader definitions of 'excellence', and the value of a range of skills. School C, a special school, described the need for provision which allowed individuals to fulfil a broad definition of 'potential', see figure 6.26:

*Figure 6.26 School C focus on a broader definition of excellence*

The school will strive for educational excellence in all it does. It will recognise that each individual has a unique set of skills and that each individual is able to fulfil his/her potential.

School C also emphasised 'personal' development, describing features typical for other special schools, see figure 6.27:

*Figure 6.27 School C website focus on personal development*



*Our Values*

***Responsibility***

*Taking ownership of our own successes and understanding how our actions affect ourselves and others*

***Respect***

*Valuing ourselves, others and the things around us*

***Resilience***

*Staying strong when things go wrong.*

*Bouncing back and trying again*

***Courage***

*Being brave when faced with challenges of life*

***Compassion***

*Caring about others and the world around us*

The structuring effect of GPMR was commonly reflected within the ‘search goods’ (Lubienski, 2007b) used in marketing within websites. Free schools promoted characteristics to parent-consumers that seemed ‘apparent’ and ‘judged relative to quality’ (Lubienski, 2007b). These ‘search goods’ drew on the GPMR of tests and examinations, or Ofsted inspections. Mainstream schools for example included summary data on school test and examination results, in a format which complied with government regulation. School B emphasised the currency-value of an ‘outstanding’ Ofsted rating, see figure 6.28:

*Figure 6.28 School B focus on credentials of Ofsted rating*

The College has enjoyed remarkable success since first opening, gaining an Ofsted Outstanding rating, along with designation as both a Leading Edge and a Teaching School. We are committed to ensuring that all of our pupils achieve their utmost academic potential, whilst providing an outstanding extra-curricular offer and an inclusive, welcoming environment. We sit at the heart of one of the fastest growing communities in the UK and seek to be able to offer a place to all pupils who live in our catchment.

The currency-value of Ofsted formed an important part of free school marketing, providing a signal to parent-consumers of official quality, see figure 6.29:

*Figure 6.29 School I focus on credentials of Ofsted rating*

The credentials derived from Ofsted reports were also an important feature of special schools and AP free schools, despite reflecting different criteria for excellence, see figure 6.30:

*Figure 6.30 School J focus on credentials of Ofsted rating*

Schools with a faith element drew on the credentials of Ofsted reports, but supported by other forms of validation, including aditional reports on how well the school promoted faith values. School F, for example, provided a prominent link to its Pikuach report, see figure 6.31:

*Figure 6.31 School F links to Ofsted report and Pikuach report for parent-consumers*

School H described, in a similar way, how the additional cultural *capital* of Christian values, might be linked to high academic standards, see figure 6.32:

*Figure 6.32 School H Emphasis on Christian values*

Our aim at [redacted] is for every child to reach their full academic and personal potential within a caring, Christian environment in which they are fully known and valued. Everything we do is centred around our four core values of Love, Forgiveness, Respect and Responsibility. Through these values we aim to educate, inspire and enrich.

All of the references to external validation were, however, very similar to other school-types.

Free school freedom and innovation flexibility was not a strong feature within sample school marketing, and none of these schools emphasised ‘free school’ status on current websites. School A website noted that new schools had to be an ‘academy’ or ‘free school’, but did not suggest these were unique, different or superior school-types. Two sample schools made limited reference to being ‘new’ within application forms, suggesting undefined benefits, with a corresponding capacity to ‘instil’ the ‘right’ approach from the outset. However, free school status and power to innovate was not used as a specific marketing advantage, or a type of superior ‘codification’. The currency-value of the sample schools was mostly defined by values of theme 6 and its strong links to GPMR or, where relevant, reference to a defined religious ‘ethos’.

The sample schools all noted the importance of theme 7 within application forms, and current websites showed that sample schools provided information which matched national statutory requirements, noting how additional ‘pupil premium funding’ would support these pupils. These plans and provision were, however, no different to other school types and there was no evidence that sample free schools had sought to attract disadvantaged pupils, or cater specifically for their needs. Disadvantaged

pupils were seen as a problem and something to be addressed through a type of 'intervention'. The sample schools marketed a type of conformity to a traditional 'grammar' of schooling (Tyack and Tobin, 1994), but disadvantaged pupils had to compete within this framework, in a similar way to existing school-types.

## 6.7 Summary

The RTA method has been used to compare official-discourse themes identified within chapter 5 against practice within established free schools. This suggests that thematic group 1 innovation had a weak currency-value. It also shows, in a few cases, a shift in practice between application forms and current websites, with increased conformity to a standard model of schooling. Current free school website marketing and job adverts reflected strongly the type of 'good' school features defined within thematic group 2 official-discourse. The sample free schools promoted a type of cultural *capital* linked to 'good' schools, and reflected within GPMR controls. This suggests that official-discourse thematic group 1 freedom did not have a high currency-value once free schools were established. Mainstream schools, especially secondary schools, were strongly steered by parts of thematic group 2, especially the 'good' school status of a theme 6 academic curriculum, linked to the cultural values of discipline and compliance defined within theme 5. Special schools and AP schools reflected different forms of 'good' school status, reflecting the relative freedom from GPMR of existing 'grey' school-supply.

The analysis confirms previous research (Wiborg et al., 2018), showing that sample schools did not value curriculum innovation. However, this analysis also contradicts parts of this previous research, showing that sample schools did not value pay and conditions freedom, including changes to a school day. The 'Big Society' also provided little currency-value within marketing. The analysis raises questions about why thematic group 2 had more value than thematic group 1, and why the Big Society may have little impact on free schools. The next chapter will consider these themes further by analysing the views of individuals involved in setting up free schools. The RTA method will be used to refine themes using their views about the currency-value of the two thematic groups noted, and how they influenced application-assessment. This will be used to further determine the *field's doxa*, and offer insight into potential *misrecognition*.

# 7 Oral testimonies about freedom and innovation within free schools

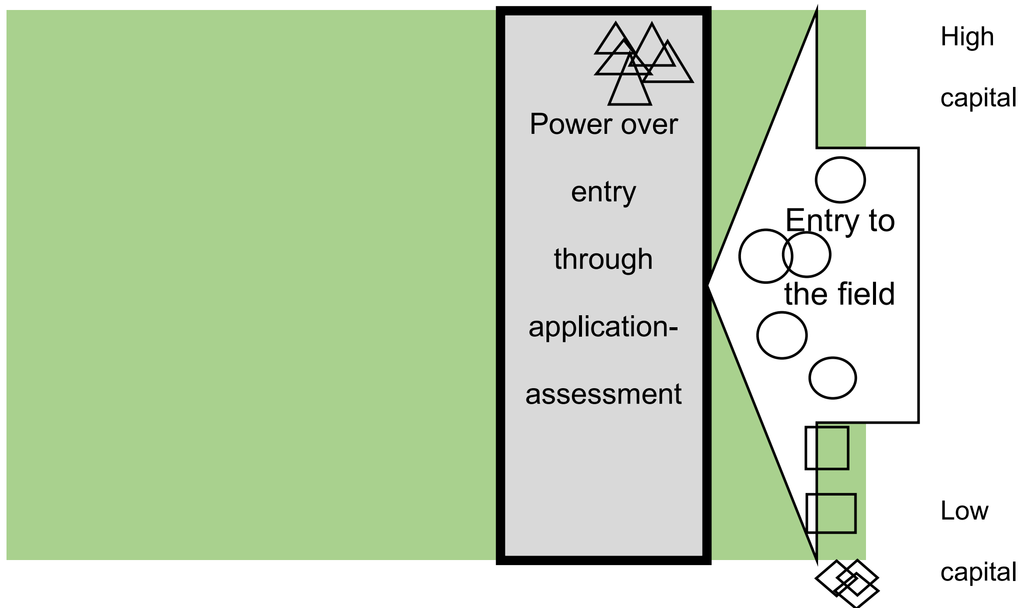
## 7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter showed that established free school websites and application forms did not promote the superior codification (Thomson, 2005) of freedom and innovation identified within official-discourse thematic group 1. These schools mostly promoted the conformity of official ‘good’ school status reflected within official-discourse thematic group 2, especially the traditionalism of a theme 6 curriculum and links to GPMR. This chapter will use the RTA method to refine themes further, analysing data *set* 3, the beliefs of a group of individuals involved with free school application-assessment. The collection and analysis of data within this phase of the research suggested that the ‘position’ of individuals in relation to the power which controlled the *field,* was an important factor in their understanding of its symbolic economy (Thomson, 2005). These ‘positions’ (Thomson, 2010) also reflected a broad indication of individual exchange-value, with an implied link to *habitus*. The next section will define these positions further, noting the impact of the four categories of proposer *agent*, adviser *agent*, other *agent*, and other actor, individuals outside the *field*. These positions have implications for analysis of the *field’s doxa*.

## 7.2 Positions and relationship to the field's symbolic economy

Thirteen interview participants were defined as *agents,* a term which reflects the way Bourdieu described the operation of a *field* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) and the exchange-value (Thomson, 2005) they required for entry to it. The *agent*s had a good 'feel' for the game, reflected in their subscription to the *field's doxa*. However, the *agents* had differing amounts of capital reflecting their roles as proposer *agents* (PA), Education Adviser agents (EAA), and other *agents.* The *field* was, however, controlled by the *agents* with greatest *capital*, especially government ministers and DfE officials. Three individuals outside the *field*, described here as 'actors', had engaged with the *field*, but either not gained entry or, in one case, been ejected from it. These actors were categorised as 'other actors' (OA), reflecting their lack of exchange-value within the *field's* symbolic economy, see figure 7.1:

*Figure 7.1 The position of agents and actors within entry to 2010 school-supply*




○ PA

The proposer *agents* closest to the operation of free schools and GPMR. PAs have to make sense of the field's *doxa* to operate successfully.

△ EAA

The Education Adviser agents appeared to have most power. EAAs are, however, positioned in multiple ways, shape the field and are, in turn, shaped by it.

◇ Oact

Other actors, ether unable to access the *field* or ejected from it. This reflects insufficient *capital* and a *habitus* seen as inappropriate.

□ OA

Other *agents* operating within the field, but at its periphery. They work with PAs, who have more direct engagement with freedom and how it is applied.

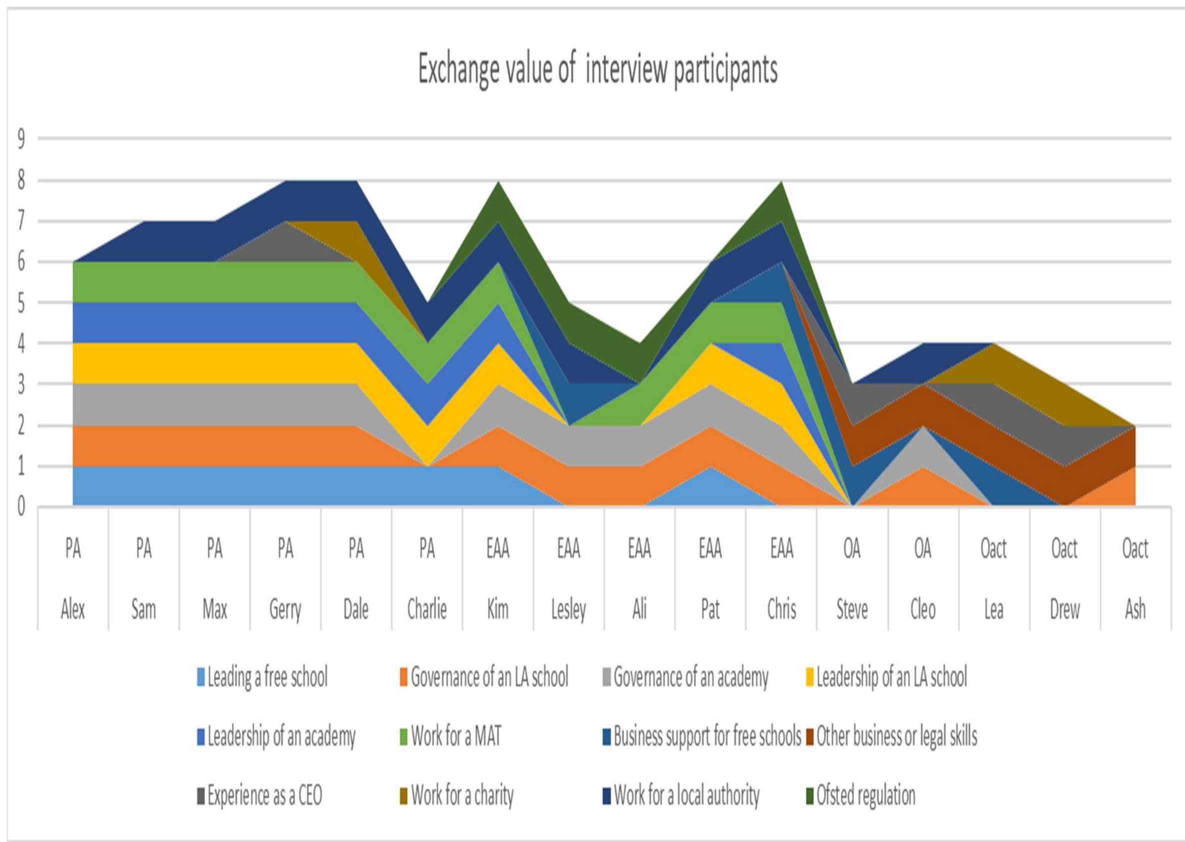
The individuals had demonstrated their exchange-value through an existing social, economic and cultural capital gained within a range of roles and responsibilities within the education *field*, see figure 7.2:

*Figure 7.2 Roles and responsibilities used as credentials for access to the field*

| Interview participant | Position in the field | Leading a free school | Governance of an LA school | Governance of an academy | Leadership of an LA school | Leadership of an academy | Work for a MAT | Business support for free schools | Other business or legal skills | Experience as a CEO | Work for a charity | Work for a local authority | Ofsted regulation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Alex** | PA | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No | No | No |
| **Sam** | PA | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No | Yes | No |
| **Max** | PA | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No | Yes | No |
| **Gerry** | PA | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| **Dale** | PA | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | No |
| **Charlie** | PA | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No | Yes | No |
| **Kim** | EAA | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| **Lesley** | EAA | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | Yes | No | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| **Ali** | EAA | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | No | No | No | No | No | Yes |
| **Pat** | EAA | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | No | No | Yes | No |
| **Chris** | EAA | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| **Steve** | OA | No | No | No | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No |
| **Cleo** | OA | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No | Yes | No | No | Yes | No |
| **Lea** | Oact | No | No | No | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| **Drew** | Oact | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| **Ash** | Oact | No | Yes | No | No | No | No | No | Yes | No | No | No | No |

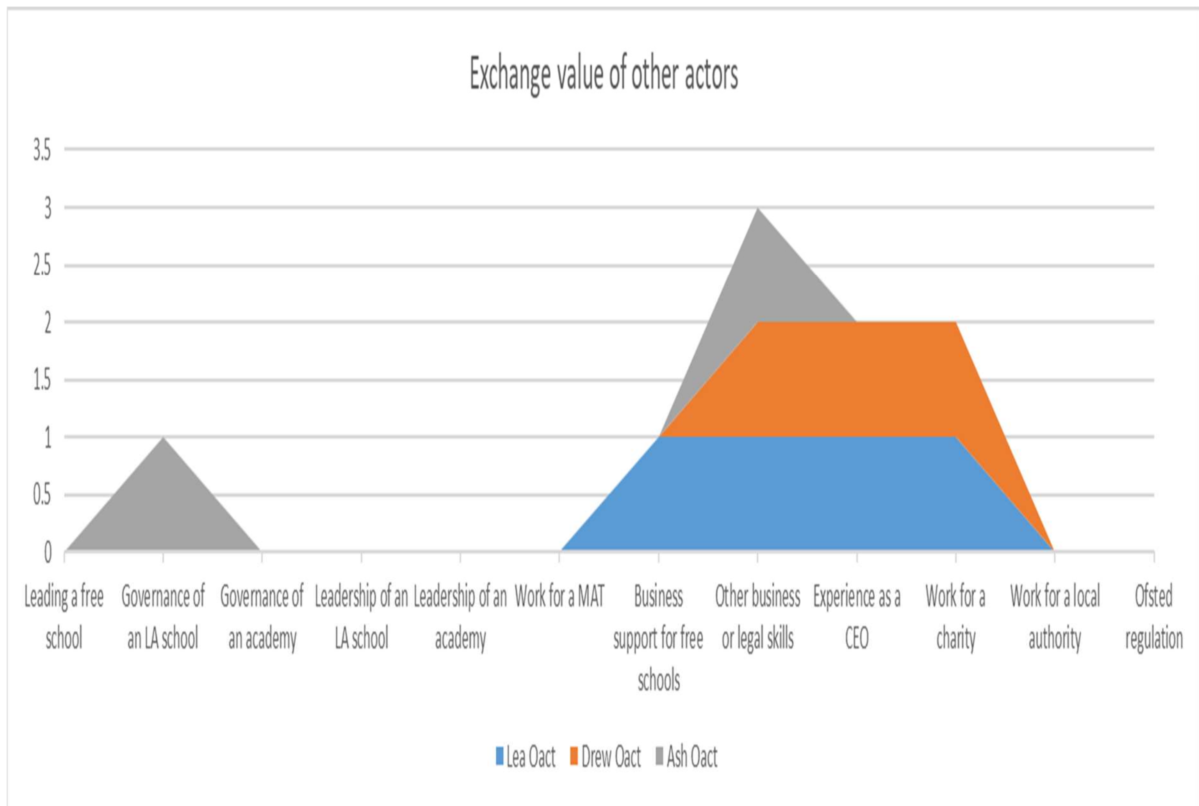
However, feedback from the EAs, who had most experience over application-assessment, suggested that the exchange-value of an association with an existing ‘good school’ was most important, and not something Oacts could evidence, see figure 7.3:

*Figure 7.3 The exchange-value of interview participants within school-supply*



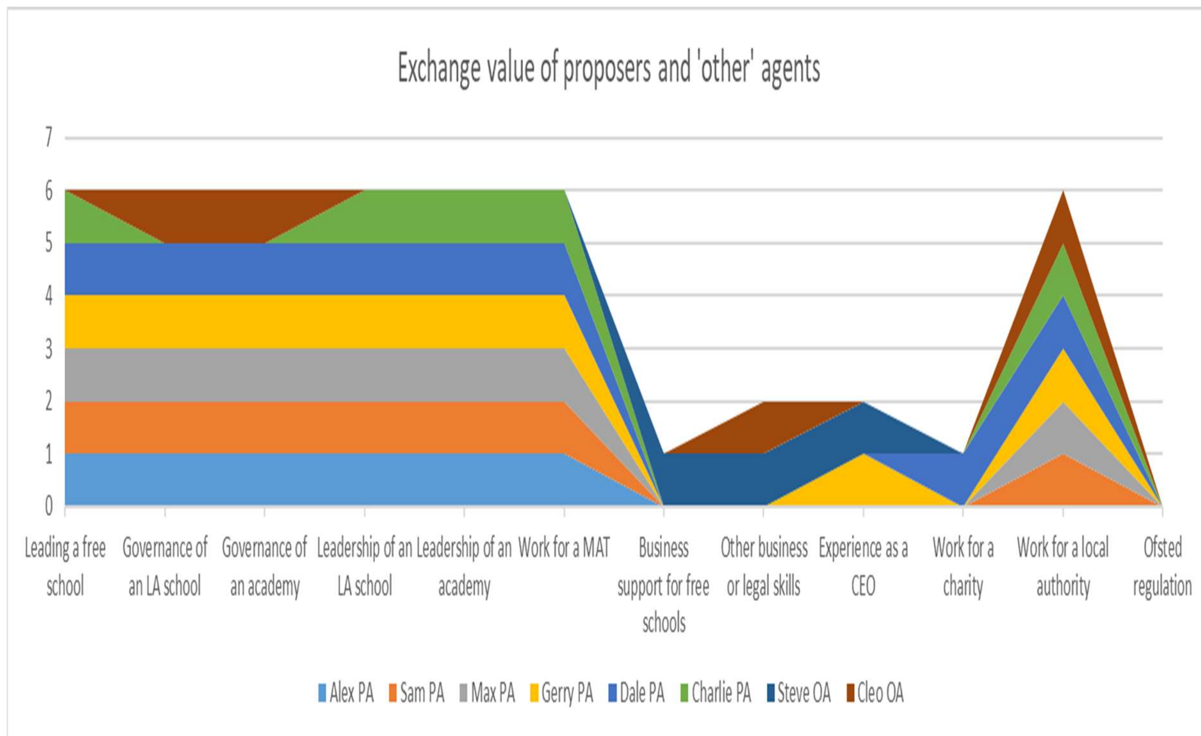

Although Oacts had a wide range of skills, and represented a key part of the 'Big Society' agenda promoted by the 2010 coalition, they did not have sufficient credentials, especially in relation an existing 'good' school status, see figure 7.4:

*Figure 7.4 Exchange-value of Oacts within the field's symbolic economy*



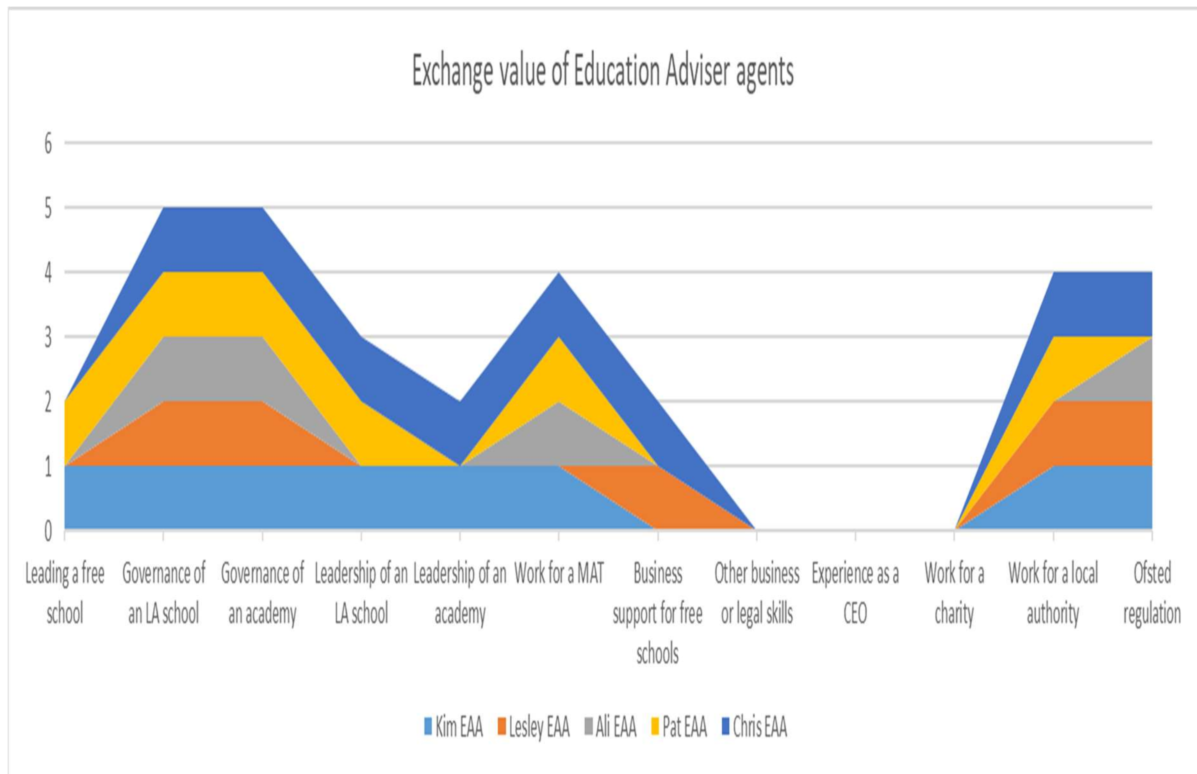

The other *agents* (OA) had peripheral, but tangible links with 'good' schools, but did not have the same level of exchange-value as proposer *agents* (PA), see figure 7.5:

*Figure 7.5 Exchange-value of proposer and other agents within the field's symbolic economy*




The Education Adviser *agents* (EAA) appeared to have most power within the *field.* Their exchange-value was drawn from the broad experience required of their role, especially within regulation and control, such as Ofsted inspections, see figure 7.6:

*Figure 7.6 Exchange-value of Education adviser agents within the field's symbolic economy*




The position of *agents* and actors in relation to the *field* reflects a relationship to the *agents* with most power. This relationship was emphasised within application-assessment, where entry to the *field* required sufficient exchange-value*,* drawn from an existing *capital* linked to the *field's doxa.* The *habitus* and *capital* of individuals, and groups, were assessed through part of application-assessment, within interviews for successful applications and subsequent monitoring of accepted free schools. It was then continually re-assessed through the operation of the *field's* symbolic economy, *its logic of practice*. Successful *agents* required an acceptance of the underlying epistemological and cultural values which supported these structuring forces.

It has already been noted how *habitus* is a key thinking tool often used in evaluation of *fields*. Bourdieu did not provide a 'method' which could be applied when evaluating

a *field*, but suggested that insight into *habitus* might be sought through ‘different systems of dispositions they have acquired by internalising a determinate type of social and economic consideration, and which finds a definite trajectory within the field under consideration’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 117). This stressed a link between the *habitus* (‘dispositions’ and ‘beliefs’) of *agents,* a researcher’s *habitus* and the way a *field* was viewed. Bourdieu described three broad areas where *habitus* might be evident (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, pp. 104 - 105):

- *Analyse the position of the field vis-a-vis the field of power…*
- *Map the out the objective structure of the relations between the positions occupied by the agents or institutions who compete for the legitimate form of specific authority of which this field in [sic] a site.*
- *Analyse the habitus of agents, the different systems of dispositions they have acquired by internalising a determinate type of social and economic consideration, and which finds a definite trajectory within the field under consideration a more or less favourable opportunity to become actualised.*

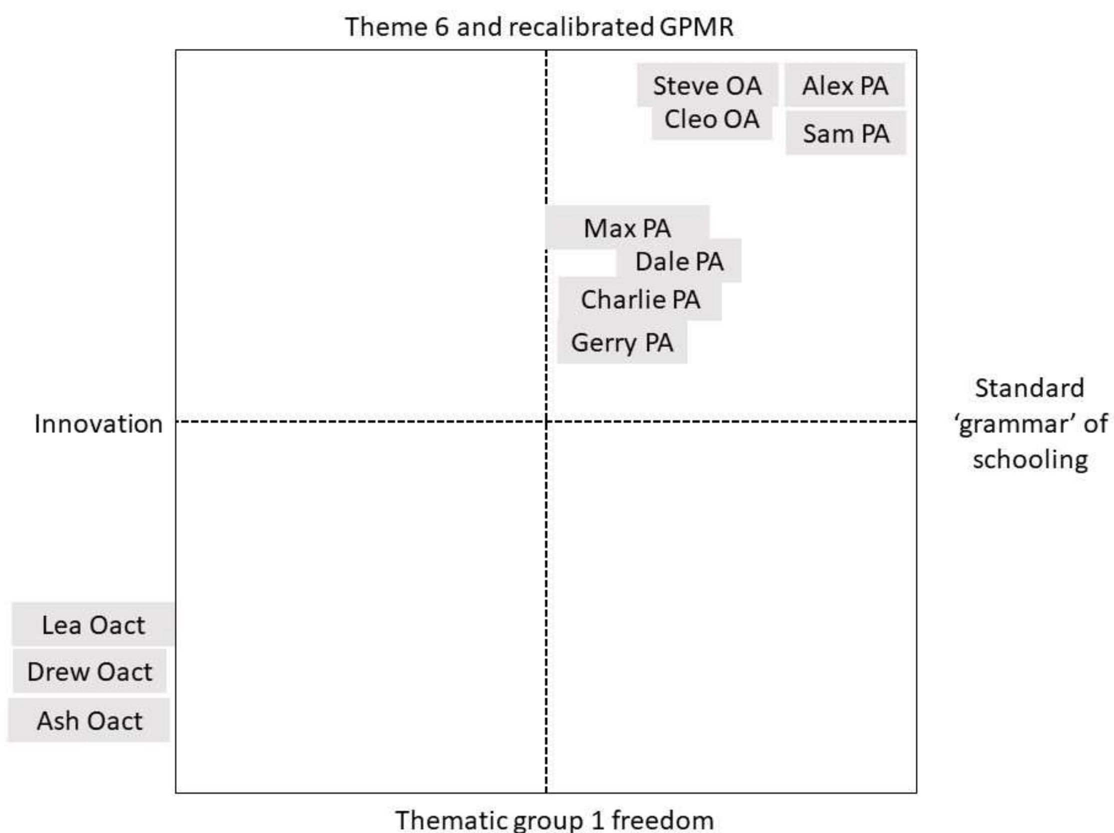
This thesis will not attempt to provide an individual evaluation of individual *habitus*, but will note how the positions noted may have reflected dispositions evaluated within application-assessment. A *habitus* could only have been viewed as part of application-assessment, through links to existing cultural, social and economic *capital*. It would have been evaluated in other ways as part of interviews which followed a successful application, and may have reflected the way race, class, or gender influenced decision making (Hatcher, 2006, Higham, 2014a, 2014b, 2017).

This study does not, however, focus on the interviews, and although an *agent's habitus* might be embedded within applications, analysis focuses on awareness of the *field's doxa*. The participants' responses provide insight into their position 'vis-a-vis the field of power', and rules used to control the *field* and its relationships. A distinction between the dispositions of *agents* and actors provides important information about the values and beliefs which allowed entry to the *field*, or mitigated against it. The analysis of data set 3 therefore takes account of 'positions', providing information about the *'objective structure of the relations between the positions occupied by the agents'*. (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, pp. 104 - 105). They are linked to the existing *capital*, or exchange-value required of agents, and may also contribute to analysis of potential *misrecognition*.

The *field's doxa* required *agents* to subscribe to cultural values defined through an official curriculum and the associated tests which contributed to GPMR. They had to believe in the logic of a school-supply system which defined individual value. Maintenance of position required accepting the value of a curriculum defined by academic subjects, with performance outcomes measured in official tests, or examinations (Apple, 2005; 2006; 2013). The *field's doxa* required an acceptance of a standard 'grammar' of schooling, which defined 'good' ways of organising classrooms, teaching, assessment and behaviour. The *Agents* and actors had a wide range of experience, but their *habitus* reflected the way they had internalised 'a determinate type of social and economic consideration'. The currency-value of existing 'good' schools and MATs in particular provided the credentials required by *agents* with the greatest power.

The ‘position’ of *agents* and Oacts was defined by their existing capital, whether they had a good ‘feel’ for the rules of the game and how they were seen by the *agents* with most power, especially RSCs, DfE officials and government ministers. Position reflected a greater or lesser subscription to the high value of an academic curriculum defined within theme 6, the associated controls of a recalibrated GPMR, and an understanding of the currency-value of a ‘grammar which defined traditional ‘good’ schools. Figure 7.7 provides a visual representation of the ‘position’ of the *agents* and actors in relation to the polarities of innovation or standard ‘grammar’ of schooling found within free schools, the freedom promoted within official-discourse and the structuring control of a theme 6 academic curriculum and GPMR. The *agents* in the *field* accepted the structuring influence of GPMR and the ‘good’ school status reflected within a standards ‘grammar’ of schooling. The actors did not, meaning they were not able to operate as *agents* within the *field*. This diagram, along with others in this study, is original and designed to illustrate one or more key concepts described:

*Figure 7.7 Position of proposer agents, other agents and Oacts in relation to the* field*'s symbolic 'economy'*




The next sections will summarise the views and dispositions of the *agents* and actors in relation to themes identified and what this might show about the *field's doxa*.

### 7.3 Agents and actors' views about theme 1: Curriculum innovation and freedom

The PAs recognised the way innovation had been promoted within official-discourse, but provided little currency-value (Thomson, 2005) within application-assessment, or the *field's* symbolic economy. Alex (PA), for example, noted how the currency-value of 'good' school status was most important, something which had become obvious as the free school policy developed:

> *They very quickly dismantled that particular approach and created a much more rigorous framework around which the school had to be developed. Because I think it's fair to say there are a number of basket case schools existing very early on and the government very quickly had to think No, no, no, this isn't what we need at all. And these are really not helping what we need.* **Alex**

Alex (PA) suggested that a focus on a theme 6 academic curriculum and recalibrated GPMR within application-assessment reflected the type of 'rigour' required of 'good' schools. The impact of a theme 6 academic curriculum and GPMR matched the way established free schools had also emphasised 'search' goods within data set 2, see chapter 6. Alex recognised the importance of GPMR controls, including a statutory requirement for schools to provide a 'broad and balanced curriculum', and how the application-assessment process allowed little 'scope' for innovation:

> *Because the bid sort of drives you towards putting together a very, very solid, I'm going to say standard school really. It asks you to create the*

*vision for the school, but really within there, it sort of talks about how you're then going to meet certain criteria in terms of like a broad balanced curriculum, for instance. You know, there isn't really a huge scope.* **Alex**

Sam (PA), also suggested that a focus on a standard curriculum, expected within Ofsted inspections, had discouraged thematic group 1 innovation in applications, or once open:

*It is. I mean. I have just I just written down Ofsted, because our first Ofsted we were criticised about the curriculum. And I did challenge it because the criticism was particularly about our aesthetic subjects.*

*But because of our specialisms and the way that it was structured, and also class sizes, numbers, staffing, we weren't physically able to put it in, but we did get criticised about that.* **Sam**

Sam understood that the *field's doxa* imposed the structuring influence of a theme 6 academic curriculum and recalibrated GPMR to maintain position in the *field*.

Gerry (PA) had used a type of theme 1 curriculum innovation recognised as innovative by two of the EAAs. This free school had gained approval because, in Gerry's view, the DfE had initially assigned a currency-value to theme 1 innovation:

*And so I think the programme was coming under that criticism I can always remember there was an article, I think it was written by Gove, I think where he said, you know, the free schools programme isn't just*

> *about more of the same it is about innovation and our application was in that round of applications*
>
> *And I think also I think that was one factor. So it was we were in the right place at the right time. I think it's certainly political with a small p. And I could be wrong. But that's just a perception I have. And then secondly, I think when we went for our interview with the Department for Education you know, we had a very strong concept that was standards based, highly rigorous and been seen to work.* **Gerry**

This had allowed Gerry to propose a curriculum based on collaborative and project-based learning, with elements of what Bernstein had described as a type of ‘invisible pedagogy’ (1975), where individual subjects were not strongly framed. This model had been adopted from some USA charter schools and a type of ‘experiential’ learning drawn from the theories of Kurt Hahn (James, 1990) applied within Gordonstoun private school. However, Gerry had subsequently adjusted the school’s curriculum to respond to the structuring impact of GPMR controls. This shift reflected a need to maintain position within the *field*, requiring what Gerry (PA) described as a need for a ‘standards based’ curriculum and evidence of ‘rigour’. This shift demonstrated a type of skilful game playing, where his recognition of the structuring currency-value of a theme 6 academic curriculum and recalibrated GPMR had helped to maintain position within the *field*.

Steve (OA), the CEO of a private company which had supported numerous free school applications, also described how application-assessment had reflected the

currency-value of theme 6, since the DfE had discouraged curriculum innovation within application-assessment:

> *But any sort of thing that's out of the ordinary, curriculum wise, I think it's been, in my experience, they don't like them to be risky. Innovation without risk. I'm not sure there's such a thing. But yes, that's what the idea was. You know, it feels like the whole organisation is around saving ministers from any embarrassment.* **Steve**

Steve still believed that free schools were superior, but also understood that theme 1 innovation had less currency-value than ‘good’ school status within application-assessment.

Ali (EAA), who had assessed many free school applications, noted how the structuring impact of theme 6 academic curriculum and recalibrated GPMR worked against theme 1 innovation. She suggested the DfE would not ‘agree’ with anything unusual or innovative:

> *But in terms of what the DFE would agree with, I think was another question altogether. Because I think the tone of the government at the time was quite into accountability and use of data, pupils making progress and that seemed to outweigh a lot of the aspects of innovation that people were suggesting. So in terms of agendas, clashing, I think there was a clash there between the desire and the believed route to improving achievement, and the creativity that people were bringing to the issue about helping children to make progress.* **Ali**

Ali believed that a ‘good’ school would always reflect a standard ‘grammar’ of schooling (Tyack and Tobin, 1994), with a curriculum defined through the controls of theme 6 and GPMR. This reflected the views of all the EAAs, who described how ministers controlled what was possible by signing off proposals, especially when there were questions over suitability. However, the EAAs had made their own contribution to this structuring currency-value, promoting proposals which focused strongly on GPMR, the value of ‘official’ knowledge and the cultural values of traditionalism. For example, although Chris (EAA) had been impressed by a proposal with theme 1 innovation, she had rejected it as risky:

> *So I think it was this understanding of the curriculum and the perception of an ordinary classroom and how it would work at that level. Because it's all very well articulating a curriculum, but if you don't know how it could be taught actually in the classroom. And how it would appear to kids when they were being taught in a lesson. And how you would explain those concepts, how you might build it and how you might treat it once you felt the children had acquired the concept, then really you've not thought it through.* **Chris**

Chris (EAA) emphasised the credentials required of existing ‘good’ schools; an essential part of the exchange-value required within application-assessment. This view, supported by the other EAAs, confirmed a link between the currency-value of GPMR, a curriculum proposal underpinned by the cultural values of ‘official’ knowledge and pupil’s value within the *field’s* symbolic economy. These features formed an important part of the *field’s* currency-value and *doxa:*

*Oh, academic pressures because they knew that they needed to get a good at Ofsted after two years. And if they were trying a more creative approach, then how could they evidence to an Ofsted team that pupils were making progress?* **Chris**

Chris recognised how this had led to the way proposals increasingly emphasised conformity, becoming 'cloned' versions of existing 'good' schools, especially within MAT proposals. As she noted, it would be 'very rare indeed' for another model to succeed:

*Well, it sort of contradicts itself really doesn't it? On the one hand, they're talking about innovation, and on the other hand, they're talking about traditional curriculum and knowledge and this kind of thing. Yeah, it's a bit of a clash of agendas there. But they did, most of them tended to have a traditional curriculum.* **Chris**

Chris recognised the importance of a theme 6 academic curriculum and GPMR within application-assessment.

Pat (EAA) described the strongly framed epistemological values and beliefs which he had applied to application-assessment. He had favoured a 'knowledge-based' curriculum, because ministers, such as Gibb or Gove, viewed this as important:

*And the other thing of course, is that back at Sanctuary buildings, there has been a move, partly well, largely, influenced by ministers to move towards a knowledge-based curriculum. So if you're, I can't think of one offhand actually. But if you're a free school, where your curriculum, is about experiences and processes, then that central drive now threaded*

*through the Ofsted common inspection framework as well, to see sequencing of knowledge, is not going to match up with what an inspector might want to see.* **Pat**

EAAs could only recall one, or two, examples of successful proposals with a type of theme 1 innovative curriculum practice, despite having been involved, between them, in more than one hundred applications and interviews. They described how the large number of rejected applications, especially in wave 1, had reflected the way innovation was initially welcomed, but then viewed as risky, impractical or unsuitable for 'good' schools. The EAAs had contributed to an increased conformity to a standard 'grammar' of schooling within free school application-assessment, accepting the views of government ministers as logical and evaluating proposals accordingly.

The clash between the weak currency-value of thematic group 1 and the strong value of a theme 6 academic curriculum was also reflected within the experiences of Oacts. Drew (Oact), for example, had come to realise that theme 1 curriculum innovation had little currency-value within free school application-assessment. He had proposed a school with what Ross (2003) described as a 'progressive', or 'developmental' model, a school which utilised 'experiential' learning:

*Now, if you look at Emilia Reggio preschools in Italy, that whole experiential learning, you look at any child before they get to school, the way they learn is experiential, nobody criticises that. As you go through the school system, the curriculum gets narrower and narrower until everything is pretty much second hand, third hand learning and here's*

*a funnel, here's a curriculum, learn it, assess it and see where you come. And it just became very clear that first response that they could not get any kind of education system that wasn't curriculum heavy. It wasn't assessment loaded.* **Drew**

A key reason for Drew's failure to gain access was a lack of exchange-value associated with an existing 'good' school. Ash (Oact) had reached similar conclusions after his two unsuccessful applications had been rejected because of a lack of focus on theme 6 and the controls of GPMR. However, Ash had also recognised how it was possible for 'traditionalism' to be re-positioned as a type of theme 1 curriculum 'innovation' within the controls of the *field's doxa:*

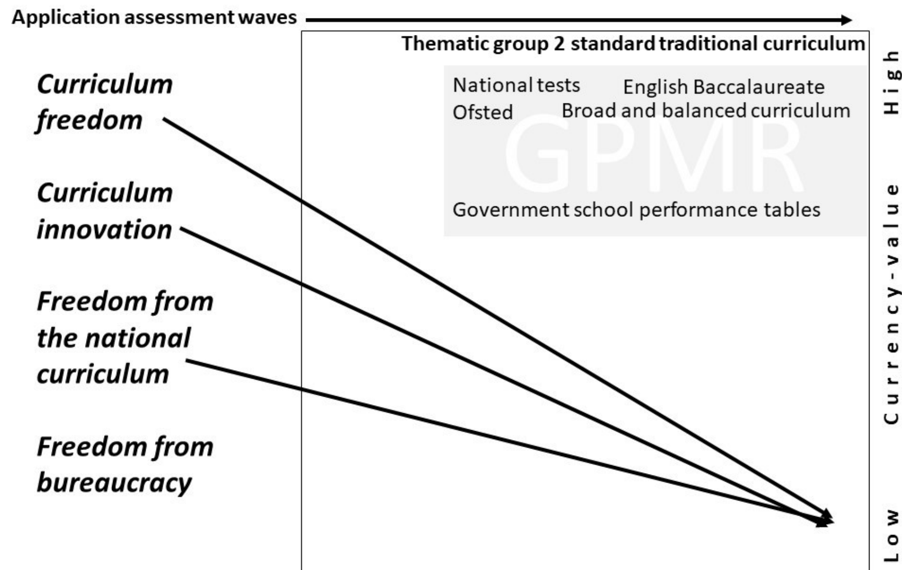
*And at some point I came back to him because I was involved in a project trying to support innovative free schools. A group of schools that were taking a different curriculum through. And, [high profile individual] cornered me on this, he said do you know, why aren't we included in being innovative? We're really innovative, our [name of school] free school, and this school, and this school are all really innovative. And I was like, no yours are really traditional, and that's fine, that's your choice and he was like no. Innovation that is what we are doing.* **Ash**

Lea (Oact), who represented a small group of 'independent' schools brought into the state-funded sector as free schools, described a tension between what might be seen as a 'progressive' or, in Bernstein's terms, weakly framed curriculum (1971a), and official 'good' curriculum. These free schools had been created from existing private schools, which then struggled with the discipline of GPMR. They had 'failed'

an inspection by receiving an inadequate grade and been ‘taken over’ by another MAT, which promoted a strongly framed curriculum. Lea described the negative impact this had on parent-consumers, who valued a type of curriculum innovation which did not position pupils into a hierarchy of value. The failure and ejection of these application proposals meant that most of these parents had opted for home-schooling.

The Oacts had been attracted to the free school policy because they had seen an opportunity for theme 1 curriculum innovation, and a flexibility which would meet some parent-consumers’ needs. The *agents* and Oacts all recognised the importance of GPMR, official ‘good’ school status, and the way application-assessment favoured compliance, rather than innovation. They understood the currency-value assigned by ministers to a standard ‘grammar’ of schooling and curriculum conformity. They knew that theme 1 curriculum innovation had little real value within application-assessment, unless promoted as a form of traditionalism. This part of the *field’s doxa* is summarised in figure 7.8:

*Figure 7.8 The high currency-value of a traditional curriculum within the 2010 field of school-supply*




The *agents* and actors often recognised the way traditionalism could, in this context, be positioned as a type of innovation. The next section will consider their views about theme 2, pay, conditions and staff qualifications.

### 7.4 Agents and actors' views about theme 2: Freedom to change teaching staff conditions, or qualifications

The PAs had been involved in constructing free school proposals and considered the potential benefits of theme 2 changes to pay, or conditions. However, none believed that adopting different employment practices to existing school-types offered any advantage, either in application-assessment, or once open. Two PAs had some experience of early free schools where theme 2 experiments had been tried, but

noted how this had been followed by a shift towards standard terms, conditions and pay. Max (PA), for example, had experienced an early mainstream free school where these changes had led to high staff turnover, a factor which contributed to the school being judged as ‘inadequate’ by Ofsted. Max noted how various ‘contract changes’ had ‘led to an awful lot of people moving on an awful lot quicker than they would have done had they not had that different circumstance’. This was a key reason for Max deciding to leave this school and he was happy that practice in his current free school was ‘in line’ with standard conditions, seeing this as a moral choice:

> *So again, the original experience, there was lots of bending of pay and conditions, to try and secure people and to try and, you know, put conditions in place that meant that they would be accountable for certain things that they might not be normally in teachers normal pay and conditions contract. But the second experience, everything was in line with teachers’ pay and conditions, because the reality is, you are kind of recruiting in the job market with everybody else. And you want to be seen to be in a level playing field.* **Max**

Max viewed a ‘level playing field’ as ‘fair’ and ‘honest’, but was also keen to appoint, as far as possible, ‘good’ teachers.

The *agents* who had set up a new mainstream school had seen an opportunity to plan an ‘ideal’ school and recruit ‘good’ new staff. They saw this as a positive feature of free schools, but Alex (PA), drawing on recent experience, noted that recruitment was also constrained by a local employment ‘market’ and national staff shortages:

*But in reality when there's a desperate shortage of teachers that exists, and that's across the piece, let alone in shortage subjects, the idea that they are going to step away from national pay conditions is going to put off a vast number of candidates. And as a consequence, I would say that it is equally less likely to happen in a free school as anywhere else.* **Alex**

Alex (PA) believed that a standard approach to pay and conditions, rather than flexibility, might help a new school to attract 'good' teachers:

*We are adhering to those national pay frameworks. And we are still finding it a challenge to recruit the quality and number of staff that we need to. The idea that you would step away from that and make that even more tricky, is crazy and at the moment, I don't think there's anything about our pay conditions that operate in our school that are different from any other maintained school. So, in short, it's no different for us here than it would be if I were working at another maintained school.* **Alex**

Alex knew that 'good' teachers were important for free schools which, as start-ups, initially needed a small number of staff able to cover a multitude of roles. Budget constraints meant that paying more for 'good' staff was not a realistic option and Alex's free school was part of a MAT which already included several other 'converter' academies. Staff in these schools had transferred on existing conditions of service and Alex could gain no benefit in 'competing' for teachers across this, or other MATs.

In fact, as he noted, decisions about pay, or conditions, were determined by the MAT CEO, and part of a 'bureaucracy' which limited his freedom to innovate.

PAs, did not believe that recruiting staff with 'better' degrees, particular forms of training, or without qualified status would provide any sort of benefit or advantage. They aimed to recruit 'effective' teachers, defined by the contribution made to the currency-value of GPMR measures and 'good' schools. Alex (PA) was also driven by what he believed parent-consumers wanted, a view emphasised by other PAs. Pay innovation, or use of unqualified teachers, offered little value within this context:

> *Once you start describing schools as a free school, I do use the phrase and I've used the phrase with a simple bracket. This is just the way in which new schools are built these days, close bracket. There's nothing else about it because most parents are familiar and comfortable and confident with the way in which schools operate. And if they believe the school was doing something that was out of step with the way in which most schools operate, that would cause more concern than anything else.* **Alex**

Two PAs described existing pay flexibility within AP settings, which had been maintained on conversion to a free school. This pay flexibility was identical to the previous 'independent' schools, but the PAs noted a pressure for greater conformity to national conditions when moving into the state-funded sector as AP free schools. Dale (PA), for example, suggested that becoming a free school had helped to legitimise her AP setting, allowing independence from the charity which had set it up.

However, being in the state-funded sector meant competing for the same staff as other schools, leading to less flexibility and freedom when recruiting new teachers:

> *They're coming from mainstream. We have to work hard to explain well it's different here. But maybe there's other advantages. There's maybe other benefits that aren't about your pay scale. But we have certainly tried to match teaching pay scales to make sure that we can recruit the best teachers that we can.* **Dale**

Kim (PA) had briefly worked at an 'independent' school run by a charity whilst a free school was in the process of opening. She expressed concern about a considerable level of 'confusion' over pay and conditions:

> *So what they did do, but it was within your contract, it said that at any point if they decided to they could withdraw from that. So again, they did pay into the teachers' pay and conditions. But it was clearly stated that actually you could withdraw. I mean, this is something I'd be happy to share with you that contract and you can have a look through it. Because it was bizarre. You know, they could opt out at any point.* **Kim**

Kim had only worked in LA schools, or PRUs before, and this 'confusion' contributed to her decision to resign from this free school and return to work in an LA provision.

The OAs, however, believed that theme 2 pay and conditions freedom might offer an advantage for free schools. Cleo (OA) noted what she saw as unethical practice, where the excessive pay demands of an early high-profile principal had caused pressures on the limited income of a small start-up school. This practice had been possible because of governance weakness, especially a lack of challenge from the

principal's 'best friends'. Steve (OA) felt that free schools were superior to other schools and therefore able to hire 'good' headteachers, implying that other schools had weak leaders. He also suggested, however, that teacher recruitment had not really changed that much, mainly because existing practice was 'established':

> *I think there's been some freedoms around that pay scale. But I think it's just a bit easier. I think it's still an established sector. I think teachers coming into the profession still seem to be fitting within this sort of established way of, you know, going through the ranks and pay and so on.* **Steve**

The EAAs had collective experience of more than 150 free schools, but struggled to cite examples where they believed that pay, or conditions of service innovation had been used. They described a general conformity to standard conditions or pay, and noted how flexibility had attracted a low currency-value within application-assessment. EAAs also believed that applications had become increasingly dominated by MATs, which had mostly already adopted national agreements in 'converter' academies. Pat (EAA), for example, felt that staff in existing schools would be reluctant to choose less favourable terms and conditions in a free school:

> *So I'm thinking about the profession at large and whether in joining a free school, they will be reducing their earnings and the protection of their salaries. I think by and large, from my experience anyway, and as I say, a few hundred schools, then most free schools would have a salary range that's fairly in line with the national.* **Pat**

However, Pat (EAA) also suggested that freedom had led to senior staff benefitting disproportionately from increased salaries:

> *So what hasn't been picked up is where significantly higher than national average salaries have been paid and accepted by the equivalent of governance, especially for executive heads or, CEOs of very large MATs.* **Pat**

This was a view echoed by several *agents*, who noted high-profile cases where powerful 'elites' had received extravagant salaries and Ali (EAA) suggested that:

'*…the only people in free schools and academies who do benefit more are the people at the top of the chain. But apart from that everybody else is on basic, you know, the same basic pay and conditions'.* **Ali**

Pat (EAA) emphasised how control over pay was imposed through a mandatory DfE free school application template, with staff 'costs' linked to an 'expected' model, see figure 7.9:

*Figure 7.9 DfE financial benchmarking 2020 with typical costs of maintained schools and academies'*

51. The GOV.UK website includes schools benchmarking information and academies' spend data. These provide details of the costs typically incurred by maintained schools and academies. You should explain in your assumptions how you have taken these benchmarks into account when setting the level of spend on staffing costs for your school. Where a financial plan using the budget planning tool indicates that a significantly greater or lesser proportion of the school budget will be spent on staffing than is typical, we would expect you to set out clearly why this is appropriate for your school.

This template controlled proposals by 'benchmarking' salaries against national 'average' costs and steered proposers towards curriculum models which reflected a standard 'grammar' of schooling (Tyack and Tobin, 1994).

Ash (Oact) also noted how this template had restricted his application:

> *And they seem to mitigate quite strongly against anything that wasn't 30 kids, one teacher, cycling through a certain number of cohorts.* **Ash**

Lea (Oact) had seen free school status as an opportunity to bring practice within existing independent schools into line with state-funded schools, providing a type of credibility through conformity to standard practice. However, as she noted, although staff in these existing 'independent' schools were not 'qualified' they had an accreditation provided by the charity, and the schools had a 'flatter' management structure:

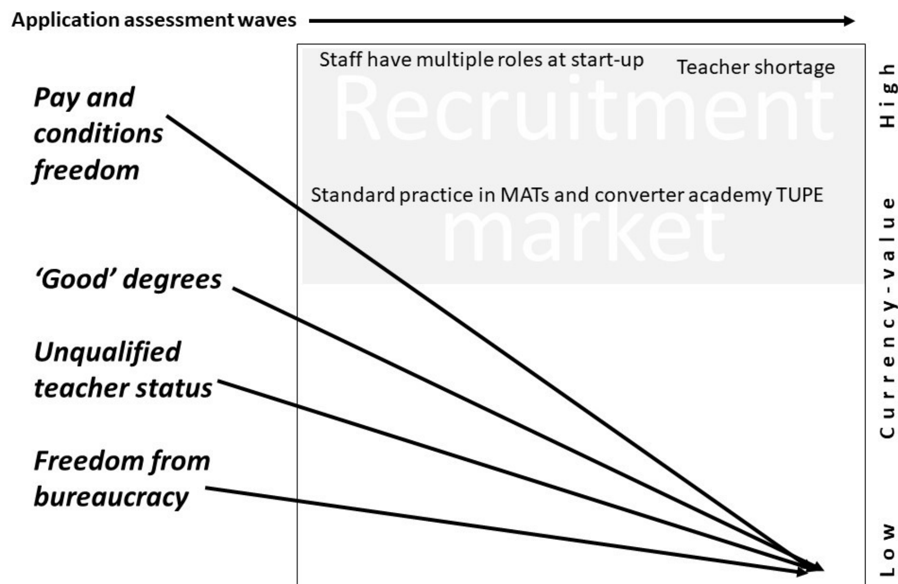
> *I guess that enabled them to set up in a way that was similar to how they've been running the independent sector, which was quite flat from a management perspective, although the state required that there'd be a principal, which I was not against. I think that's a good thing. And so we had more teachers in our schools than your average national curriculum school. But and their pay was lower. And you know, it's amazing [charity name] teachers are willing to earn less in order to be able to work in a way that they are, in the way that they're committed to.*
>
> **Lea**

Lea noted how this staffing model was an important part of the schools' social values, and also reflected within a 'progressive' curriculum with blurred subject boundaries, informal uniform and a culture without strong discipline. However, although this flexibility and informality was valued by parent-consumers it had limited currency-

value within GPMR, or the *field's doxa.* The tension between the charity's philosophy and the rules of the game had led to a forcible take-over by another MAT. It meant that '…these schools that were set up by hopeful parents, or groups of people have not really been given the chance to establish themselves effectively within the state regime'.

The *agents* and Oacts all agreed that the currency-value of pay and conditions flexibility was not strong within application-assessment, although noted some early applicants who had seemed to use extended school days. However, once open and operating free school leaders had responded to pressures created by staff recruitment shortages. Pay and conditions flexibility offered little advantage within this context and parents valued schools with traditional structures, including qualified teachers. Proposers viewed 'good' teachers as those who might best contribute to the structuring currency-value of GPMR and 'good' school status. Flexibility and innovation provided little advantage within application-assessment, was of very little value to proposers when recruiting staff, and not steered strongly by GPMR. The impact of pay and conditions of service on the *field's doxa* is summarised in figure 7.10:

*Figure 7.10 Shift in practice towards stand pay, conditions, term dates and school day*




However, it has been noted how previous research had suggested that free schools had adopted changes to terms and conditions or pay (Wiborg *et al.*, 2018). This was not confirmed within the evaluation of sample school websites and job adverts, or through the views expressed by interview participants within this study.

### 7.5 Agents and actors' views about theme 3: Changes to term dates or length of school day

In chapter 6 it was noted how innovation applied to school term dates and length of a school day was weak in the sample schools. The *Agents* confirmed this and described a shift towards conformity following some early experiments in a few schools. Charlie (PA), for example, had worked at an early free school which had required staff to work on a Saturday morning. She described this practice as

‘informal’, with staff ‘paid the same’, reflecting the sort of practice identified by Wiborg *et al.* (2018), or Mathou, Sarazin and Dumay (2022). Charlie noted, however, how this had ‘little impact’, and caused ‘problems’ with staff recruitment:

> *No, we work to teachers pay and conditions. Initially when the school opened the school did work extra hours, so they used to work a Saturday each month and there was no additional pay for that. It was just an expectation that the school would stay open for a Saturday each month. And, also the school was open for a longer school day. But it was found that it had very little impact, and also with issues around recruitment and retention.* **Charlie**

Sam (PA) described how additional ‘enrichment’, including an extended school day, had seemed feasible when a free school opened with two year groups. However, it had become increasingly difficult to sustain as the free school grew to capacity:

> *But at that time, we had two year groups. And therefore there were two days where there is enrichment and extension. And the governance and the leadership from the college at that time was very direct in expecting that for every year group every day. And it just became untenable. It just was not realistic for anybody.* **Sam**

Max (PA) noted how this flexibility and innovation had reflected the approach of some groups of early free school proposers, driven by a type of private-sector economic efficiency:

*On the Wednesday afternoon, there was an extra hour and a quarter enrichment curriculum that was enforced for the three year groups that the school opened with.*

**Max**

Max concluded this had contributed to staff recruitment problems, and also described how parent-consumers did not value a flexibility which caused differences in local school day patterns, or term dates:

*So actually, if you're running different term dates, you're making it much harder for families to be able to secure childcare and book holidays and all those kinds of things.* **Max**

Cleo (OA) saw the value of theme 3 flexibility, but also noted this made staff recruitment difficult:

*You know, they had long days. And I remember when we were advertising for staff, that was something in the advert to say, you know, you're expected to work longer hours.* **Cleo**

Pat (EAA) suggested that employment practice in free schools was increasingly controlled by MATs. This reflected the way organisation of school days and holidays was designed to meet parent-consumers' needs, especially if they had children in more than one school:

*And I'm just thinking, I have to think hard. I can think of a few but there, again, exceptions rather than the rule, where free schools have maybe had different holidays from the rest of the maintained schools in the*

> *area. And then of course, that's created problems for parents, especially if they have one child at one school.* **Pat**

This was a view held by all the EAAs and Lesley (EAA) also noted how free schools had responded to what parent-consumers wanted:

> *If you've got a child at secondary school and a child at primary school. The primary schools, free schools, secondaries and you know, all of a sudden you end up with holidays all over the place and parents wouldn't be happy.*
>
> **Lesley**

Despite their extensive experience the EAAs could not cite examples of free schools which had changed school days, or term dates and then maintained this practice. They believed that some early free schools may have used this flexibility, but found these changes contributed to staff recruitment problems, or concerns from parent-consumers about a lack of coordination with other schools.

The Oacts had mostly focused on curriculum innovation within applications and did not view changes to a school day, or term dates as a valuable flexibility, or efficiency. Drew (Oact) had challenged the concept of a 'school', based on a framework inspired by a 'de-schooling' model, proposed by Illich (1971). He had proposed flexible timings, links to local vocational learning opportunities, and strong curriculum flexibility. The school would, however, be staffed by qualified teachers, who would be on standard terms and conditions. However, although this proposal had a radical type of theme 1 curriculum innovation and flexibility, which had seemed to match the

innovation expected of free schools, these features contributed to rejection within application-assessment, despite strong support from the local community:

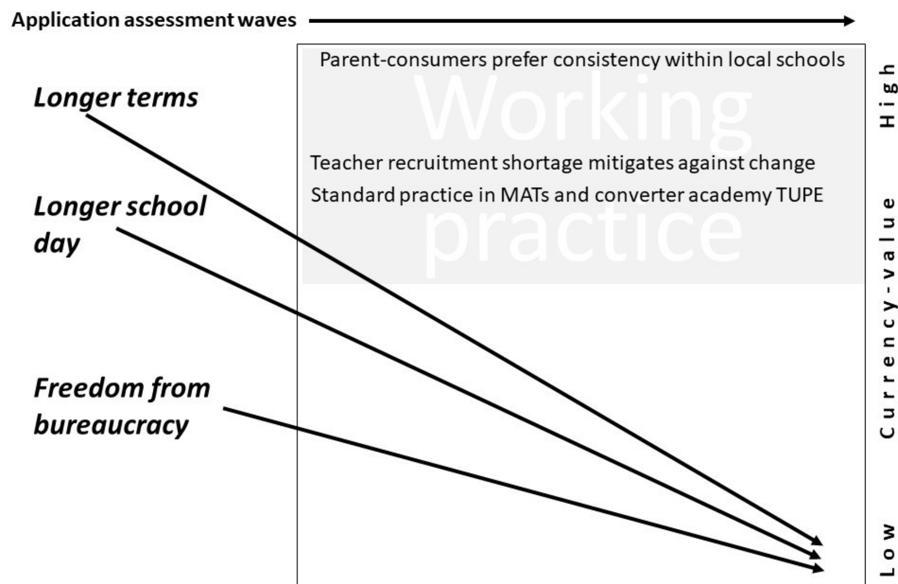
> *We had I think 70 businesses signed up who were happy to have young people there to do experiential learning within the context of their business, now that ranged from theatres, to science labs, etc. So a broad range of stuff and we were looking to increase that. And it also would have required a number of volunteers.* **Drew**

Ash (Oact) agreed that aligned local term dates were important for parent-consumers:

> *It was something that we did some initial research on especially around holidays, because everyone was really keen to do it, until we went and asked everybody else and they were like. What if our kid's not at your school and then how are we going to do holidays, book holidays. It's a good point. So, we backed off on that and also local transport infrastructure meant that it, you know, it was just safer.* **Ash**

Theme 3 innovation was viewed as having little currency-value within application-assessment, and even less value within the field's symbolic economy. Decisions about pay and conditions of service were steered by the market of teacher recruitment, parent-consumer needs and, in some cases, a moral choice about not over burdening staff. These features are summarised in figure 7.11:

*Figure 7.11 Low currency-value attached to longer days, longer terms*




### 7.6 Agents and actors' views about theme 4: The 'Big Society'

PAs distanced themselves from the 'Big Society', believing that parents would not have the time, capacity or experience to set up, or run schools. Max (PA) had concerns about parents 'outsourcing' operations and employing a 'for profit' group:

> *I think my opinion is probably quite strong in the fact that I'm absolutely for the project, if it's run by a proven educational group, rather than maybe people who weren't that into education or may not have that much education experience prior to that, or dare I say, for profit groups.*
>
> **Max**

Although free school trustees are not allowed to make a profit, Max had experienced a 'for-profit' group from Sweden, which had opened a 'not for profit' subsidiary as a mechanism to gain access to the England's free school 'market' (Wiborg, 2015).

Steve (OA) had extensive experience within the private sector and subscribed to the freedom of theme 4, describing how the energy and 'sheer determination' of some community groups had been very positive. However, he was also troubled by the way an 'impressive' and 'dedicated' group had still 'failed' the application process:

> *I helped a failed application for a charity that helped profoundly deaf people. And my gosh, they put a lot of effort into two rounds of an application. They bought the best people in. It was it was probably more robust than many of the MAT applications I've seen. And in the end, they just got turned down. They were so impressive and professional and dedicated, not just to the deaf children but all children and then they turned around to me at the end of the day and they said, we couldn't have done any more, could we? It's not for us neither. I just had to agree.* **Steve**

Steve (OA) could not explain why the credentials of this proposer group had not been evaluated more positively within application-assessment. He had come to terms with this tension by accepting it as an example of how the programme had changed and 'matured', increasingly moving away from local community groups towards the capacity demonstrated within MATs, or through use of 'free school presumption', a later mechanism introduced by the DfE to allow greater collaboration with LAs:

> *I think as the programme has matured, that that sort of feel has gone to a degree and it now seems to be well, is you know, all new, all new facilities or new schools have to be free schools, whether for a wave or through LA presumption. And only multi academy trusts seem to have*

*their applications approved. So it's gone from a, you know, a real innovative, it's groups of people looking to drive the school to a, this is how we, we open the school in an area where we need to open the school and we're going to use the same set of hands to do so.* **Steve**

Steve summed up views noted by all *agents*, describing the way application-assessment had increasingly favoured MATs and enabled a relatively small number of elite individuals, with sufficient exchange-value required to acquire more *capital*.

Pat (EAA), noted an initial 'healthy scepticism' about schools set up by parents

*But I just did have my suspicions as to how a school could be initiated by a group of parents, who may not have education experience, would work. So I suppose I had a healthy scepticism about it all.* **Pat**

Chris (EAA) saw parent-led schools as something where parents perhaps had 'good intentions', but believed this model was never going to be viable because of the time, expertise and finances needed:

*And after a couple of years, very few if any parent groups put forward a proposal, partly because the process was very involved. It was quite, it was costly. And there were very few parent groups who understood what was needed and could meet that business perspective and meet the costs.* **Chris**

EAAs had become very aware of how proposals had increasingly featured a more 'corporate' approach, which reflected the growth of MATs and a type of MAT

bureaucracy. Lesley (EAA) saw this change as inevitable and logical, but did not see how she might have contributed to it:

> *My experience now is that that that policy has moved quite a long way away from that, although there are instances where you still get these proposal groups that consist of, I suppose non-education specialist type, or not MATs. It's now moving in my view towards MATs away from the standalone academies anyway, which are not ideal, I think.* **Lesley**

Ali (EAA) described how free schools had become increasingly similar and reflected that some 'exciting' schools, developed by local communities, were unlikely to succeed, with proposers not able to 'jump through the hoops', with successful applications increasingly just 'cloned versions of existing academies':

> *Whilst the ones that did open were the ones that to be honest, were either being opened by existing academy chains or existing outstanding schools, or there were those sorts. It felt like a way of circumnavigating local authorities in taking way from local authorities into academy chains opening schools. By the end that was how it felt. And if anything, very, very similar, almost cloned versions of academies that are already up and running.* **Ali**

Ali did not comment on the way she might have contributed to this process by promoting an exchange-value within application-assessment which required this existing *capital*.

Oacts represented the local community groups promoted as part of the 'Big Society'. Their experience reflected, for Ash (Oact), a stark difference between 'policy' and 'reality':

> *We knew who we were dealing with and we knew what the politics were. There were a couple of incidents, which, a couple of situations, where I took that cynicism and sort of tried to get help on whether we were being nuts or not. And we were supported to continue and told to continue and that we will be all right and that the process would protect us.*
>
> **Ash**

Ash (Oact) believed that free school application-assessment reflected 'ideological' and political priorities. Whilst he had been prepared to 'live with' this to 'hitch a ride' and 'do something good, despite the policy', he believed that the rules applied within application-assessment mitigated against the 'Big Society', especially parent-led groups:

> *There was and remains a very clear ideological agenda, underneath the free school policy. And while I think that proposals like ours, were to be encouraged because they gave flavour to the overall mix it made it look like it was more open. And I think it was, except for a few notable and brilliant exceptions [name of school] school being one such brilliant example.* **Ash**

Drew (Oact) also viewed the mismatch between an official-discourse focus on the 'Big Society' and the reality of assessment as an example of 'square pegs in round

holes'. He noted how this had led to an application assessment system which did not match the innovation promoted within official-discourse:

> *And that was again another challenge because when it came to filling in forms, the forms were absolutely designed for the educational offer we weren't trying to put into place. So it was trying to fit square pegs in round holes. And that was quite a struggle.* **Drew**

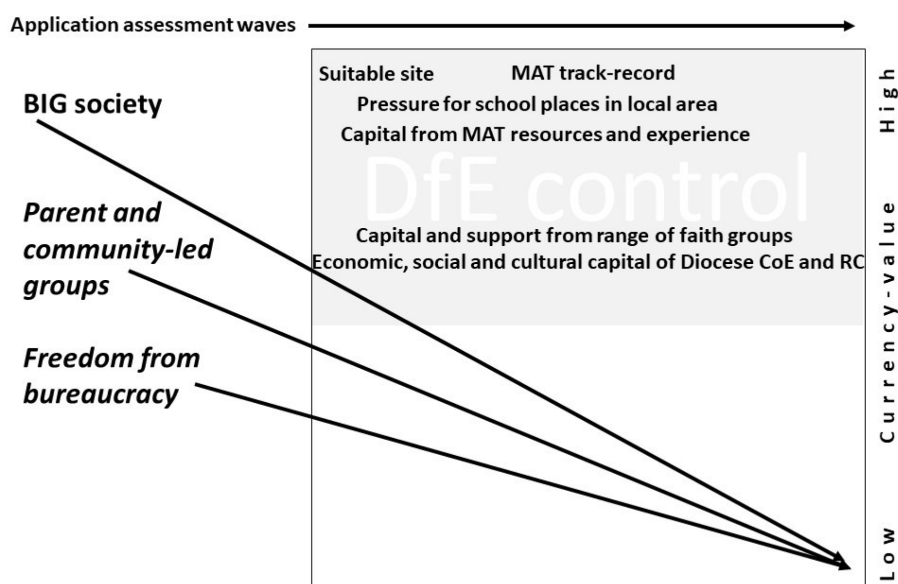
Drew (Oact) seemed to have a significant amount of exchange-value (Thomson, 2005), with a very strong reputation within the charitable sector, a key element of the 'Big Society', as well as comprehensive links with his local community and significant local support. However, this free school proposal was considered too far removed from a standard school model and, despite its innovation, and changes made within a second application, the DfE had suggested starting again from a 'blank sheet of paper':

> *And so we worked really hard to address the two or three comments that were made in that first rejection When we got the second rejection, to be honest, it was so thoughtless and so cruel, because it came back basically saying, we don't understand what free schools are like, go back to a blank sheet of paper.* **Drew**

Parent-consumers were seen as having very little economic or social *capital* within the application assessment process, relying on external private companies for support (Higham, 2014a; 2014b). Successful parent-consumers needed significant amounts of social, cultural and economic *capital* in order to negotiate the application process.

MATs, in contrast, were viewed by the *agents* and actors as having considerable amounts of economic *capital*, including significant financial resources. MAT proposers were seen as having substantial skills and expertise through an association with ‘good’ schools. Faith-based MATs were also seen to have relatively large amounts of additional social, cultural and economic *capital*. The existing *capital* of MATs and an association with ‘good’ school status gave this group the highest exchange-value within the field’s symbolic economy. Other ‘Big Society’ groups had limited value and the controls used within application-assessment mitigated against parent groups, especially if they made proposals which did not match a standard ‘grammar’ of schooling. The value of ‘Big Society’ groups is summarised in figure 7.12:

*Figure 7.12 The low exchange-value of ‘Big Society’ groups within 2010 school-supply*



Proposers aiming to establish credentials could focus on strong discipline and smart uniform, and the next section will consider the impact of theme 5 on free school proposals.

### 7.7 Agents and actors' views about theme 5: 'Good' schools: strong discipline (behaviour) and 'smart' uniform

The PAs understood that strong discipline and smart uniform could offer a way for new schools to signal 'good' school status to parent-consumers. These elements provided a type of 'credence' good (Lubienski, 2007a), which implied a superior quality. Alex (PA), for example, believed these features were increasingly expected within all 'good' secondary schools, reflecting the way sample secondary schools had emphasised these values, see 6.5:

> *And as a school, I think that we make it our business to ensure that's how the parents and the pupils understand our operation, but I have to say that I don't consider that to be any different to an academy that I've worked at before or all the academies I have worked at before.* **Alex**

Alex (PA) emphasised the high currency-value of control and compliance, with sanctions for poor behaviour. He did not, however, subscribe to a type of 'no-excuses' policy associated with some high profile free schools and academies (Time Magazine, 2018), see also 5.5.

Max (PA) had experienced a secondary free school which had adopted what he saw as inflexible approaches to discipline. He believed this approach had been counter-productive:

> *In the behaviour system, lots of detentions were taking place. So, you know, it was, again, taken from another country's model and what their culture of education is and how we behave as students and as teachers. They were trying to follow that kind of culture. So that was very, very different.* **Max**

Max (PA) emphasised a preference for positive feedback and rules, systems he saw as 'normal':

> *Again, second experience, normal education group, following normal kind of procedures. It was typical behaviour expectations and discipline from what you would normally expect.* **Max**

Sam (PA) had replicated practice drawn from another large secondary school, where uniform compliance provided a strong form of control:

> *You know, for example, yeah, we do a line up with the whole school in the morning. We check their uniform. Yeah, they're inside, it's alphabetical order. Top buttons are done up, logos on the tie, so we can see that ties are the right length, and you know, skirts an inch above the knee, hair tied back, no makeup We're pretty rigorous and robust on those elements.* **Sam**

Sam believed this type of discipline was important, providing a way to promote the cultural values of this secondary school. Uniform provided a useful marketing tool, a way to broadcast ‘quality’, and attract parents, reflecting the type of marketing noted by Lubienski (2003a; 2006b; 2007a). Alex noted how this signal of quality was important for new schools:

> *It's a feature in my school. Yes, it is. And I think that probably comes about when free schools start and I guess this is interesting to really to distinguish between a free school and simply a school that's starting up new in an area. So we are effectively the new kid on the block, the new school and you've got to do something, to promote your uniqueness. And for us we have not got an elaborate uniform, I think it's a smart uniform.* **Alex**

Charlie (PA), accepted that a relatively formal approach to uniform in a primary school might help children to feel ‘part of something’. However, she also noted how this was something inherited from a previous leader and, although she did not value this approach strongly, she could see no opportunity for change:

> *In terms of the uniform that was definitely a feature of the school. It was a decision made to have a uniform where the children had blazers, and I suppose it looked more like the type of uniform you might see at a private school. And I think I have mixed views on it really. I think the children did feel smart and did feel part of something.* **Charlie**

Max (PA), however, suggested that a rigid approach to primary dress code might have a negative impact on some parents not able to afford an expensive ‘smart’

uniform. He had concerns about the way local schools had used this signal to filter out 'undesirable' parent-consumers:

> *The first free school I refer to was not in an affluent area, yet the uniform was pitched as if it was in the middle of Chelsea. So that did cause an awful lot of problems. Whereas [name of school] was what I would call a traditional primary school uniform, very much in line with the rest of the trust schools. Simple logo, accessible in terms of price and comfortable and durable for the children.* **Max**

The expectations for behaviour, discipline and uniform noted by the PAs partly reflected a difference in approach between secondary settings and more informal primary settings, a feature already noted in chapter 6. These were not, however, distinctive features of free schools. The impact of an increased focus on strict behaviour and uniform codes in mainstream secondary schools, and some primary schools, had been experienced by PAs working in AP free schools. They noted an increased number of pupils excluded from local schools and believed this reflected a general shift in culture across mainstream schools (*The Guardian,* 2021a; 2021b). Dale (PA), for example, believed this led to difficulties for some pupils, especially those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). She described the impact on a pupil with undiagnosed autism, who had struggled to cope with a mainstream school's one-way pedestrian system:

> *And there's a one-way system around school, which logistically, I can see why they did that. But for him to come out of one door to go to his next class, which was there on the left, and he had to walk the long way*

*around by turning right. And he wouldn't do that because it made no sense to him. And then when his tie wasn't completely straight, those two issues together, got him a fixed term exclusion and he came to us with a view to it becoming long term.* **Dale**

The OAs saw strong behaviour and uniform systems as an important element of free school quality and distinctiveness. Cleo (OA) thought that 'smart' pupils sent a strong positive message to the local community, providing a way to signal the superior status of a new free school:

*So there was a lot of discussions. And yeah, I totally agree. And now I see the children from there and they still do look really smart, you know, as I'm driving I think, and you could tell straight away they're from the free school, because it was so distinct.* **Cleo**

Steve (OA) agreed, noting how 'newness' was a potential problem for free schools, so uniform provided a way to signal quality to the 'right' parents:

*I think most of the free schools I've been involved in, obviously especially the secondary schools have wanted to have smart uniforms. In some respects, it's about the branding of that school. The school has got to make a name for itself. It's a new entity, it's got to have a theme. It's got to have something that parents will easily understand and appreciate without having to go through the full prospectus.* **Steve**

Steve and Cleo both viewed smart uniform and strong discipline as a way for schools to attract 'good' parent-consumers.

The EAAs noted that well planned approaches to discipline and clear uniform policies were important within application-assessment, but they generally did not assign value to very strict codes. Ella (EAA), however, believed that smart uniform and strong discipline were linked to a school's 'vision and values' and something all 'good' headteachers should be promoting:

> *This is what we're here for. The children pick those things up very quickly. So I think in some ways, it's an absence of leadership, or a way of working in terms of leadership in schools, that people have had an opportunity to consider maybe as in the free school sort of phase, which perhaps, has gone adrift a little bit in the schools that are already well established.* **Ella**

Lily (EAA) also saw the importance of establishing a 'serious purpose' for schooling, but expressed concern about the potential impact of strict codes, noting how it had the potential to contribute to social stratification:

> *They had an instance at the beginning of last September term where they sent children home because their trousers were too short. Now it might well have been a fashion statement on the part of some of those children but on others short trousers might have been because you've got to make do with last year's uniform you know.* **Lily**

Chris (EAA) believed that free school proposals had to have clear systems, but free schools were no different to other schools:

> *Not more so than other schools no. No, I don't think uniform, I think it comes hand in hand if you if you adopt this 'zero-tolerance' approach*

*and children walking on corridors in silence and that kind of thing, then the smart uniform, you know, the ultra-smart uniform comes with it. But I don't think it's been a particular factor in a free school that I've worked with. So no, no more than the other schools.* **Chris**

The Oacts were critical of local schools which had used theme 5 to exclude pupils. Drew (Oact) believed in the importance of self-discipline:

*I am not a believer in imposed discipline. I'm a great believer as a teacher, I want to earn the respect of my children, my pupils in front of me. That was my role. It wasn't: I have got the power that comes with the label of teacher. Yes, I had some power, of course I did, but actually, my role was to give them self-discipline, not impose this thing.* **Drew**

Lea (Oact) had made a choice to send her children to a school with a 'compassionate' approach to discipline and uniform. She stressed that good behaviour was important, but wanted a school which helped pupils to develop an understanding of good behaviour, rather than just comply with 'rules'. She rejected a regime which seemed rigid and 'unforgiving', preferring 'kindness' and allowing pupils to gain an 'understanding of consequences':

*Well our schools didn't have a uniform. Well, it depends what you mean by strong discipline. I know. I can imagine what his idea of strong discipline is. Well, I'm aware, having detentions and things. I would say that [name of charity] schools, that good [name of charity] schools operate strong discipline, putting in a strong structure, but it's done in a*

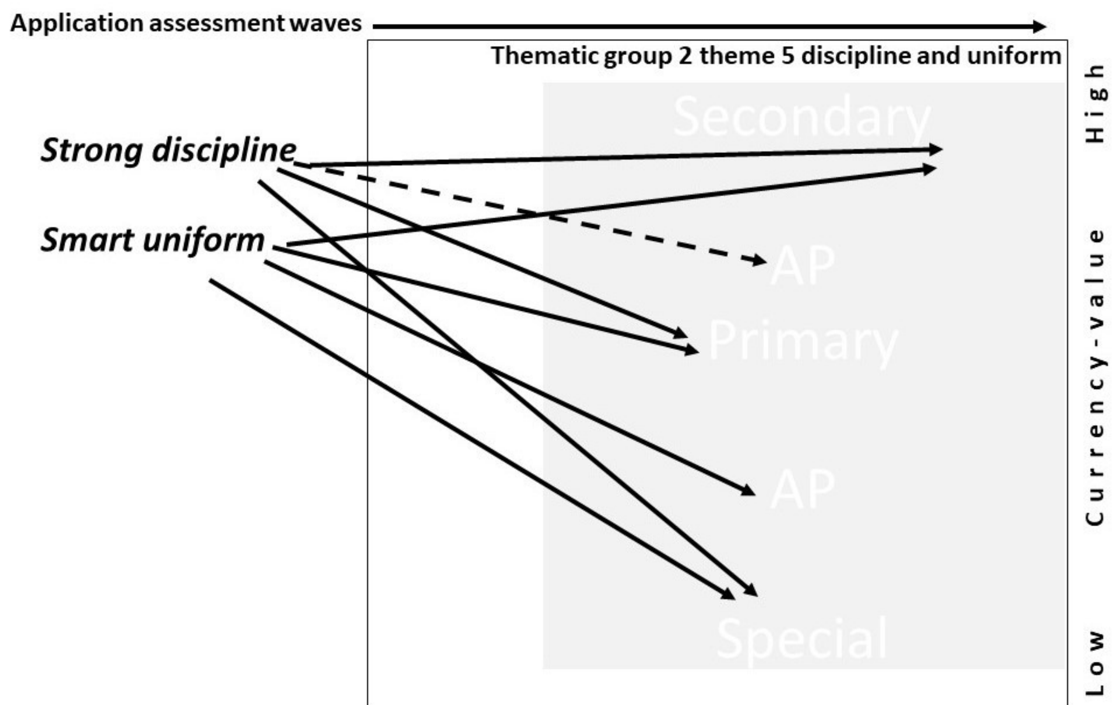
*different way. It's done with kindness. It's not done with punishment.*
**Lea**

Ash also felt that 'self-management' was important and was concerned about a 'zero-tolerance' approach to discipline. He noted how this rigid approach could be seen as an example of 'innovation' within application-assessment:

> *Well it depends what you mean by strong discipline David, I don't think I meant the same. I think we, we had, we presented a model using restorative justice. We had three local people who, two of whom are international experts on behaviour and restorative justice. We talked about discipline, a lot in terms of behaviour and in terms of self-management in terms of all the, what's now quite in, around all that, but at the time I think was a bit, wasn't quite, the innovation that perhaps Michaela school has managed to demonstrate.* **Ash**

Theme 5 had a medium level of currency-value within application-assessment and the *field's* symbolic economy. The *agents* viewed this element as quite important, especially within secondary schools, and noted how it had an increasing currency-value across all schools. The *agents* understood that some free schools might use theme 5 to promote superiority and filter-in 'good' parent-consumers, leading to increased levels of exclusion. The *agents* and Oacts all recognised how a focus on theme 5 might enable some schools to gain a market advantage. Although approaches to uniform and discipline tended to reflect status as a secondary or primary school, informal systems a low currency-value within application-assessment. These features are summarised in figure 7.13:

*Figure 7.13 The currency-value of theme 5*




The next section will consider the views of *agents* and Oacts in relation to the cultural *capital* linked to an academic curriculum, 'official' knowledge, recalibrated GPMR and associated 'traditional' teaching approaches.

**7.8 Agents and actors' views about theme 6: academic curriculum, knowledge, examination rigour and traditional teaching approaches**

The PAs viewed a traditional, academic curriculum as something which all 'good' schools, including free schools, needed to provide. This reflected the structuring impact of GPMR controls, including performance tables and Ofsted inspections. Sam (PA), for example, viewed 'practical' learning as important, but difficult to maintain:

*It's really difficult to put your finger on it, but there is something about the relationship and the students having the opportunity to go outside and learn in a different way in a very practical way and to be treated in a potentially a more adult manner because they're being treated almost like FE students. And then having that, you know, next to the very structured, coordinated you know, more of an academic focus in school works really, really well.* **Sam**

Sam had needed to adjust a free school's curriculum to reflect pressures from Ofsted. Gerry (PA) had valued curriculum innovation and introduced elements of weaker 'framing' of curriculum content (Bernstein, 1971a). However, this practice also had to be adapted, ensuring sufficient emphasis on a 'standards based' model as a way to maintain position in the *field*:

*And it was a standards-based curriculum a standards based model. So it was not unfamiliar to us. But it was also highly engaging, incredibly interesting in terms of the development of student character, as well as high levels of academic success as well.* **Gerry**

PAs with experience of alternative provision noted how becoming a school, rather than an existing informal setting, had changed their practice. Dale (PA), for example, felt that being a state-funded 'school' had required a shift in approach, with a move from 'babysitting' to 'academic stuff' in order to meet GPMR requirements:

*And some of us were working really hard to move away from it just being youth work just being babysitting, because we knew we needed to do the academic stuff. We needed to make sure these young people were*

*reaching their potential and there was real teaching going on. And yeah, I guess I've often used the phrase, we've got to do that because Ofsted expect it.* **Dale**

Kim (PA) emphasised strongly the negative impact on some pupils of an increasingly theme 6 traditional curriculum model within local mainstream schools. She believed this approach, as well as the development of large, impersonal schools, did not suit pupils who needed more emotional support:

*I think often there's not enough time spent on the social and emotional concepts, you know, the kind of giving them time to, communicate, cooperate, you know, all of that within schools. You know, if you're in a mainstream busy, busy school, there's not a minute to do anything but really academic, academic, academic, and I think actually, that model doesn't fit quite a large number of students, or maybe the pressures become too much on teachers and on pupils and then, therefore, you know, because they're not they don't fit in with that discipline model. You do, you get the high rate of exclusions, it's not working for them.* **Kim**

Kim was also aware of a pressure for AP schools to have a sufficient focus on literacy and numeracy, in order to be evaluated as 'good'.

Steve (OA) believed that schools needed the 'right amount of hours' for subjects in order to provide a 'proper full education', a phrase borrowed from Gove:

*No, it's got to be broad and balanced. You've got to deliver the right amount of hours of different subjects. I think there's probably creativity within how you*

*deliver those, those, the curriculum. But not, you know, we only teach outside, you know, we only teach Mandarin, you know, there is not that. There isn't that big freedom that I think everyone was assuming. And again, I think that's all about risk and children aren't guinea pigs to be experimented on. At the end of the day, you know, every child needs a proper full education.* **Steve**

Steve (OA) also reflected on the impact of theme 6 examination rigour designed to ensure 'good' school status in application-assessment and once open:

*There were lots of questions around that from the DFE interviews and the huge thing of course is once the school is open, doors are open and children are in there the scrutiny from the Department of Education has been incredible. And I've witnessed it first-hand. The concern is that school is going to be a good school from day one.* **Steve**

The EAAs understood how the controls of GPMR had a very strong impact on entry to school-supply and maintenance of position within it. They had promoted the link between 'good' schools, an academic curriculum and official knowledge:

*Oh, academic pressures. Because they knew that they needed to get a good at Ofsted after two years. And if they were trying a more creative approach, then how could they evidence to an Ofsted team that pupils were making progress? And because they needed to evidence that people are making progress and achieving age related standards, if it wasn't a special school, then I think they got sucked into the usual approach and the usual curriculum and the usual delivery. And were*

*worried about how they would evidence progress if they had a more creative curriculum.* **Chris**

Lesley (EAA) emphasised that a strong focus on literacy and numeracy in particular was a key element in being a ‘good’ school:

> *And of course, if you're going to start, you know, going off at a tangent and not giving them literacy skills, reading skills, maths skills, etc, then that's not going to be good for them, is it? So I think that there has to be, you know, certain things that have to be traditional things. Traditional subjects have to be part of the school curriculum.* **Lesley**

Ali (EAA) had applied these same principles, but also saw a tension in the impact of a recalibrated GPMR, suggesting that some features of a traditional curriculum underpinned by ‘official’ knowledge might not really make sense in terms of a child’s development:

> *Personally, I think we've been driven away from innovation and creativity. And the new primary curriculum doesn't help at all. I mean, the one that was. It was never was a brilliant curriculum. It was just so skills based and creative and logical. I mean, this curriculum, the primary curriculum at the minute isn't even logical. Now you start in history. Back at the stone age with key stage one. How does that ever work? You know, you can't do that. You start with where they are, talking to grandma? You know, that's how we get into this. You go further back, not from the Stone Age. What does that mean to the five year old?* **Ali**

Ali had ignored her concerns because she understood that conformity was most likely to lead to the 'good' school status needed.

Ash (Oact) understood that the application-assessment process had required a focus on an academic curriculum and official knowledge. However, he had not seen this initially, believing that free school freedom offered options for innovation. Drew (Oact) described the negative impact this curriculum focus had on some pupils in local schools:

> *there's been the local school in [local authority name] that has caused quite a controversy because it's taken a very traditional and very authoritarian approach. It got rid of that 25% of its most challenging pupils in order in order to achieve it is academic benchmark. You can't do that to children. You're just achieving your organisational institutional aims at the cost of, the expense of these lovely people who didn't ask be a part of this political mess when they applied to a free school.*
>
> **Drew**

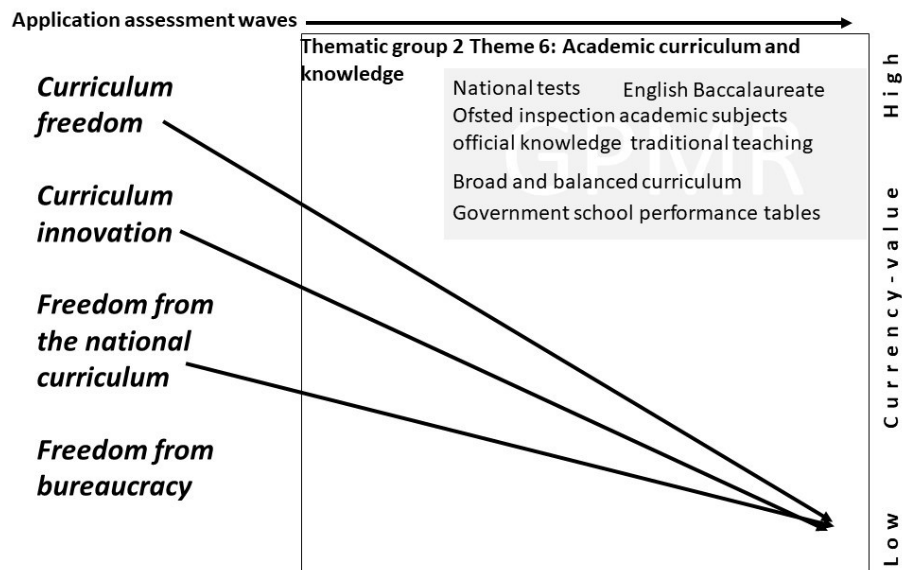
Lea (Oact) described how the high currency-value of theme 6 and recalibrated GPMR had mitigated against the 'progressive' approaches valued by some parent-consumers. She believed that free schools had therefore not lived up to some parents' expectations:

> *It was originally set up by parents who wanted that kind of education. I got involved with it when it was been running for about four years and became increasingly involved. So and then when we managed to raise the money to buy a building, I ended up giving up my job and stepping*

*into run the school to develop it from being this. It started off as a very voluntary type organisation where parents ran it and didn't charge any money and we only paid the teachers.* **Lea**

The *agents* and actors all agreed that theme 6 had a high currency-value within application-assessment and maintenance of position within the *field* of school-supply. They recognised the structuring effect of recalibrated GPMR, its impact on application-assessment and links to the exchange-value of an association with 'good' school status. These features are summarised in figure 7.14:

*Figure 7.14 The currency-value of theme 6 and recalibrated GPMR*




## 7.9 Agents and actors' views about theme 7: social equality and traditional schools

The PAs knew that disadvantaged pupils were a priority, and accepted the failure of these pupils to perform within GPMR would be seen as the fault of school leaders.

Alex (PA) reflected the views of other PAs, noting that free schools were not in a position to provide any more support than other schools:

> *I will slightly go off the point is to get through that enormous funding challenge that exists. So for us as a school, the opportunity to do more for disadvantaged pupils does not exist in terms of any additional funding or otherwise, what it might be, is that we could make an extra emphasis on those pupils because that's where we come from.* **Alex**

Charlie (PA) felt the best solution was just having 'effective' schools, but she did not see how free schools might be more effective than other schools:

> *What I would say is that a good school or you know, any effective school, whether it's a free school local authority, Academy, it wasn't to do with the fact that it was a free school it was just to do with the fact that it was an effective school. I don't think being a free school had anything to do with it.* **Charlie**

The PAs in mainstream schools understood the high currency-value of theme 6 and the impact of recalibrated GPMR, but did not consider how the cultural values embedded within this currency-value might contribute to the way some disadvantaged pupils appeared undesirable, or ended up excluded. They also did not consider how other government policies might play a role in contributing to disadvantage.

The OAs suggested that marketing which emphasised superiority, quality and traditionalism might provide a way to attract better parent-consumers and filter these unwanted pupils out. The OAs tended to equate improved outcomes for pupils as the

result of ‘good’ free schools being able to attract better parent-consumers, with less disadvantaged pupils. Cleo (OA) described how parental aspiration was reflected in a local market, so ‘good’ parents would choose what they saw as the best local school. Steve (OA) described how government performance measures (GPMR) made disadvantaged pupils seem undesirable for ‘good’ schools. He believed that free schools might struggle because of a need to support these pupils, and there was too much scrutiny from government:

> *I'm not sure whether social justice was ever the key objective of any of the free school projects I was involved in. No, it wasn't. It was about delivering a really great school for children and being successful. I think it's more about that. I think some of the measures that the department’s put in place made it difficult for free school proposers to purely look at disadvantaged children, because there was so much scrutiny about the results.* **Steve**

EAAs also did not see how free schools might improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Chris (EAA) reflected the views of other EAAs, believing that free schools were no better, or worse, at promoting equality than other school-types. Chris reflected the view of many *agents*, seeing this as a problem caused by an individual ‘lifestyle’:

> *And I don't think that free schools are any better, or worse than other schools at tackling that kind of need, because it's a really difficult thing to do. It's very difficult to work with disadvantaged kids from year seven*

*through to year 11, and try to undo the lifestyle and understanding that they've developed from birth to age 11.* **Chris**

Ali (EAA) agreed, noting how free schools were not able to change outcomes for disadvantaged pupils:

*But I personally didn't see any of that. I heard about it, but I didn't see it in practice. I just saw schools that were fulfilling the same role as other schools.* **Ali**

Oacts had tended to make social justice a high priority within applications and were critical of free schools which had filtered out the 'undesirable' pupils who might not perform well in tests or examinations. Lea (Oact) suggested that a focus on theme 6, with a 'high quality' academic curriculum and GPMR had contributed to some pupils struggling in free schools:

*I am aware of a number of free schools who have taken that approach in order to deliver in inverted commas, a high-quality academic offer, we've got to have this kind of pupil. And, you know, I think, by and large, that disadvantage that vulnerable group of young people have been ill served by free schools rather than well served by them.* **Lea**

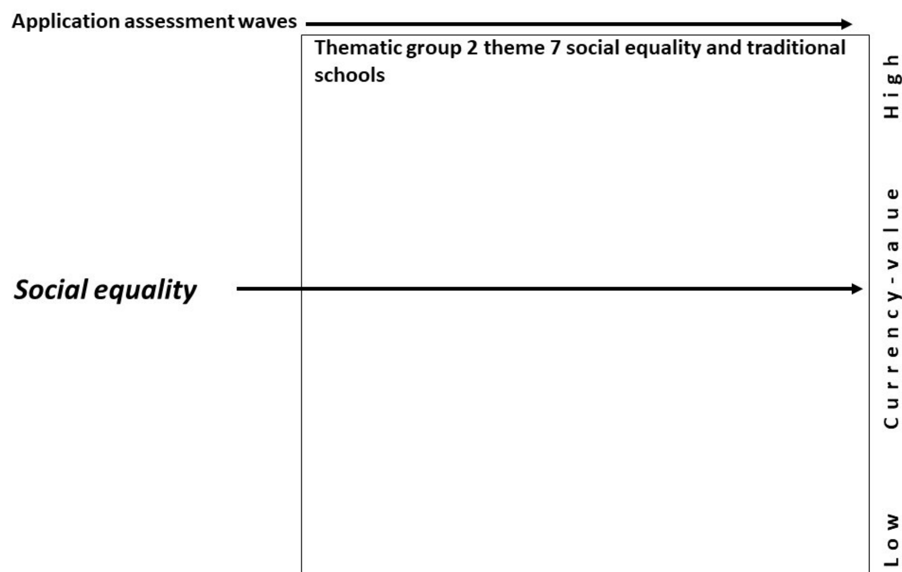
Ash (Oact) described the way a strong focus on disadvantage had been noted positively within application-assessment feedback, but this was not enough to gain approval:

*OK there's two questions there aren't there? Let me, let me pick them apart. There's the first bit which is what they have done? Then the*

*answer is nothing. Do I think the policy has done anything to support social justice in education? No. Do I think the government's done anything to do that? No.* **Ash**

The Oacts suggested that a general shift towards an academic curriculum across mainstream schools had encouraged some mainstream schools to shift disadvantaged pupils out of mainstream schools into AP schools. This view reflected the experience of AP *agents*, who believed they were experiencing exactly this trend. Theme 7 had a medium level of currency-value within application assessment. Applications were expected to acknowledge theme 7 but, as already noted, application-assessment innovation was mostly steered within official-discourse towards schools with longer school days, or shorter holidays. These changes were, however, also viewed as impractical, or not necessarily useful by proposers. The value of theme 7 is summarised in figure 7.15:

*Figure 7.15 The currency-value of disadvantaged pupils' under-achievement*



### 7.10 Summary

This chapter has reviewed data *set* 3, the views of individuals involved with free schools about the themes and thematic groups previously identified within data *set* 1, the official-discourse which defined policy, and data *set* 2, the way established school application forms or websites promoted freedom. This shows that all *agents* and Oacts recognised how official-discourse thematic group 1, free school innovation and freedom, had been promoted strongly as part of the superior codification of free schools within official-discourse. However, engagement with one or more free school applications had allowed all individuals to recognise the limited currency-value of innovation within the *field's* symbolic economy. This confirmed conclusions from data *set* 2, where a sample of established free schools had not promoted curriculum innovation, or pay and conditions freedom. The *agents* noted the impact of conservative parent consumers, pressures of staff recruitment within a context where 'good' teachers were difficult to attract and, for some, a moral choice about fairness. The official-discourse theme 4 'Big Society' freedom also had a weak currency-value within the *field's* symbolic economy, despite its importance within official-discourse.

The proposer *agents* demonstrated a good 'feel' for the game by recognising the particular value of theme 6, an academic curriculum, linked to a recalibrated GPMR. They understood the structuring effect of theme 6, the inescapable controls of GPMR and the resulting pressure towards conformity. Proposers relied on an exchange-value gained from links to existing 'good' schools or MATs for entry to the *field*. These credentials provided sufficient *capital* and allowed access to additional economic and social *capital*. An association with a 'good' school, or 'good' MAT,

helped to maintain position within the *field*. The PAs within AP school settings had used a linked, but different currency-value, associated with an alternative ‘grey’ school-supply ‘good’ school status. The AP proposer *agents* understood the negative impact on some pupils of thematic groups 5 and 6 in mainstream schools, especially in the secondary sector. These strong discipline and smart uniform rules, or the rigour of an academic curriculum, defined the cultural values of ‘good’ schools. However, they led to some ‘low value’ pupils being excluded and, as a result, greater pressure on AP schools. This had also led to an increase in home schooling, where parent-consumers opted out of state-funded schools before pupils were excluded, or because mainstream schools did not provide the type of schooling they wanted. These pressures were reflected in the way ‘other’ *agents* tended to subscribe to official-discourse themes, despite tensions between the thematic groups. They believed that ‘good’ free schools might benefit from attracting fewer disadvantaged pupils.

The EA *agents* had recognised and then applied the high currency-value of theme 6 and recalibrated GPMR within application assessment. They had promoted the credentials and exchange-value of ‘good’ school status for proposers. They accepted the credentials gained through association with established faith groups and the high *capital* value of MATs. This acceptance of the currency-value and exchange-value of the *field* was required to support their own position within the *field*. They needed to approve schools which met the expectations of government ministers. The ‘other actors’ recognised how their definition of ‘good’ schools did not match the currency-value used for application-assessment. They continued to value a type of innovative curriculum practice and non-traditional learning desired by some parent-consumers,

but had accepted this was a barrier to entry. They lacked an association with existing 'good' schools, leading to an insufficient exchange-value. The next chapter will bring together the analysis of data sets 1, 2 and 3 to provide the final stages of the RTA method. This will be used to analyse the *field's doxa* and some of the ways agents may have *misrecognised* it.

# 8 The balance between individual freedom and central control within the 2010 free school policy

## 8.1 Introduction

The previous chapter noted how the ‘position’ of *agents* and actors in relation to the *field’s* symbolic economy influenced their views. The *agents* with most power, including Education Advisers, DfE officials, RSCs and, most importantly, government ministers defined the currency-value and exchange-value of the *field*. This chapter provides the final report stage of the RTA method, bringing together analysis of conclusions from chapters 5, 6 and 7 to outline the *field’s doxa*, the rules which controlled entry to the *field,* and supported maintenance of position within it. It also notes areas of potential *misrecognition*, the way these rules appeared logical, but can be seen as arbitrary. The *field’s doxa* had an impact on proposers, controlling the type of schools they could create and the values embedded within free schools. This will, in turn, have had an effect on the schools available for parent-consumers. These factors contribute to the RTA final report stages, which evaluates the interface between freedom and control within free school proposals. The next four sections will do this by revisiting the research questions outlined in 1.5.

## 8.2 Research question 1 How did official-discourse legitimise free school freedoms, promote 'good' school characteristics and de-legitimise alternative approaches to schooling?

The 2010 free schools were built on a generally accepted economic theory of school choice, school diversity and market freedom within supply-side provision which had been legitimised and widely accepted within public service provision since the late 1980s. The superior codification (Thomson, 2005) of free schools was reflected, in this context, through the way 2010 official-discourse legitimised free schools as an object, a distinctive and superior school-type defined by additional freedoms and opportunities for innovation. These 'new' school-types were also legitimised by central government as contributing to improved outcomes for pupils, and meeting the needs of parent-consumers. Free schools would, in these terms, reflect the entrepreneurial energy of school leaders free from bureaucracy. Free schools reflected pure market school-choice theories favoured by right wing theorists Chubb and Moe (1988; 1990a) and codified in USA charter schools and Sweden's *friskolor*.

Free schools and academies were also legitimised as an example of private sector efficiency within public services. 'Heroic' headteachers, and 'great' teachers would work long hours, whilst 'good' schools would benefit from extended days and reduced holidays. This efficiency was legitimised through an official-discourse which seemed to steer proposals towards increased pay flexibility, use of unqualified teachers, or robust performance management of teachers (Department for Education, 2010a, 2010b; 2010f; 2011g; 2013b; 2019c; Bietenbeck and Collins, 2020). Free school reform would weaken collective bargaining and reduce the

‘power’ of unions. Strong performance management systems would reflect the value assigned to ‘good’ teachers within the market, allowing weak practioners to be removed.

The 2010 coalition also legitimised the ‘Big Society’, promoting an enhanced form of choice, which allowed parents and other community groups to open new schools (Cameron, 2011a; Goodwin, 2011; Leeder and Mabbett, 2011; Wylie, 2012; Higham, 2014a; Hastings and Matthews, 2015). However, whilst the policy attracted considerable interest, many proposals from ‘Big Society’ groups struggled to gain entry to the *field*. Parent proposers had little exchange-value within application-assessment, whilst charities and other groups were all expected to adopt the increasingly favoured economic and social capital of a multi academy trust (MAT). ‘Good’ MATs were legitimised as high quality and economically efficient. Opening a free school provided a way for MATs and academy leaders to expand their economic and social *capital*. The legitimisation of the currency-value and credentials attached to existing ‘good’ academies, or ‘good’ MATs, was reflected within the relatively light-touch scrutiny of free school application-assessments for these groups.

The exchange-value required of successful proposers had initially seemed to be defined through a type of theme 1 curriculum innovation and freedom, encouraging ‘Big Society’ groups to bring new ideas and energy from outside the *field* of education. However, the exchange-value required of proposers during the first three waves of application-assessment shifted, and an association with a ‘good’ school became an essential credential for entry to the *field*. The currency-value and exchange-value of ‘good’ schools required that proposers needed to reflect the cultural values associated with a theme 6 academic curriculum, ‘official’ knowledge

and recalibrated GPMR controls. This pressure mitigated against innovation, with the actual credentials required for ‘good’ school status drawn from the aggregated status of ‘good’ pupils legitimised through performance within national tests and examinations controlled by central government. The framework used to determine pupil performance reflected high status cultural values promoted by politicians. The centralised system of control over tests and examinations ensured a standard deviation of outcomes across a population, placing pupils, schools and teachers within a hierarchy of value and worth. Although codified as ‘free’, free schools were subject to the same GPMR regulation as other schools. Once through the application-assessment stage new school-types operated within a ‘second best’ market, encouraging improvement derived from narrowing the curriculum, teaching to the test, or selecting-in higher quality parent-consumers. Curriculum innovation offered little advantage within a free school application, unless mobilised as a government-defined ‘progressive’ form of traditionalism, with longer school days, shorter holidays, or a narrowed curriculum.

The exchange-value of proposers was assessed by DfE officials and Education Advisers, the consultants employed by the DfE to provide expertise gained within school-supply. Proposer value was legitimised by association with an existing ‘good’ school, provided it had academy status, or was part of a ‘good’ MAT. Entry to the *field* was linked to an exchange-value derived from an existing track-record in the currency-value of GPMR, reflected through performance in national tests and examinations, aggregated school performance tables and Ofsted inspections. The exchange-value of the ‘Big Society’, including business skills, work for charities or

other experience outside school-supply had little value, unless securely linked to an existing ‘good’ school status.

Official-discourse legitimised ‘good’ teachers and ‘good’ leaders as working extra hours, rejecting the ‘latest trendy nonsense’, or those with ‘good’ degrees and ‘good subject knowledge’ in ‘important’ subjects. It legitimised ‘good’ pupils as a high-value commodity, with a cultural *capital* derived through engagement with ‘official knowledge’, and an innate ability, confirmed within above average outcomes in tests and examinations. ‘Good’ schools had compliant pupils, and teachers who respected the values and authority of central government. The ‘good’ school features defined within the academic curriculum of theme 6 official-discourse and a re-calibrated GPMR provided a key structuring element of the field’s *doxa*.

Grammar schools and private schools had a high status within the *field’s* existing symbolic economy. These ‘good’ schools legitimised ‘good’ pupils, signalled through symbols associated with the cultural *capital* of middle class traditionalism. Free school proposers could promote similar types of *capita*l, including a ‘smart’ uniform, ‘traditional’ behaviour codes, or an ‘academic’ curriculum. They could not, overtly promote selection, although ‘good’ parents could select the best schools. However, all school leaders, regardless of school legal status, were encouraged to promote similar ‘credence goods’ in marketing. Uniform and discipline provided a way to signal superiority. The secondary mainstream free schools in the sample used this elite symbolism, but were little different to other similar schools within their marketing.

The free school programme legitimised the cultural *capital* of faith groups and supported an increase in the influence of ‘established’ faiths within the school-supply

*field*. The Church of England and Roman Catholic dioceses were viewed as *agents* with a potentially strong cultural and economic *capital*, but free school policy also provided a potential entry point to school-supply for minority faith-groups. However, faith groups also required an exchange-value gained through an association with existing ‘good’ schools, or ‘good’ MATs. The superior status of ‘good’ free schools and academies was contrasted with the de-legitimised ‘not good’ schools funded via a local authority. LA maintained schools were positioned as inefficient, with weak leadership responsible for low standards, poor discipline, or inequality in test and examination outcomes for pupils from different social groups. Failure was assigned to a lack of innovation, but also linked to an insufficient focus on a traditional ‘grammar’ of schooling (Tyack and Tobin, 1994). Poor outcomes were attributed to schools with ineffective leadership, unable to deal effectively with dysfunctional families. Schools which lacked a strong focus on official knowledge (Apple, 1993; 2005; 2006; 2013; 2014), strong discipline, or smart uniform were de-legitimised as not providing a ‘proper’ education.

Existing tests and examinations were delegitimised as not rigorous, leading to low standards and a system overtaken by international competitors. Revised tests, more ‘rigorous’ examinations, and changes to school performance tables, or inspections, re-defined the cultural *capital* required for ‘good’ school status (Department for Education, 2010c; 2013a, 2013b; 2013c; 2016; 2018; 2019a; 2019b, 2019d). Free school proposers with a good ‘feel’ for the game recognised this recalibrated currency-value of GPMR. Entry to the field, via a free school application, and maintenance of position once open, required a skilled understanding of how to respond to this value shift within GPMR. Proposers accepted their role as

responsible for the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils, but did not accept that free schools offered an advantage over other school-types.

Although legitimised as superior within official-discourse, free schools had to attract parents within a context where start-up schools often had no building, were likely to operate in temporary accommodation and had no track record within the type of ‘search goods’ defined within GPMR (Lubienski, 2003a; 2005; 2007a). Free school proposers could promote ‘credence’ goods to emphasise quality within marketing, but ‘good’ school status, or links to a ‘good’ MAT, provided the strongest legitimisation within application-assessment. Once open and established free schools tended to emphasise the same GPMR ‘search goods’ as other schools and free school status was not, on its own, marketed as a superior feature.

Critics of 2010 reform were ridiculed as the ‘blob’, individuals stuck in the past and resistant to modern change (Toby Young, 2014). The ‘progressive’ curriculum innovations of the 1960s,1970s and 1980s were de-legitimised, whilst a new type of ‘progressive’ reform was re-positioned as an innovation focused on longer school days or reduced holidays, drawing on some charter school models. A narrowed curriculum, or a curriculum which emphasised the cultural values of a classical language could be legitimised as innovative. Official-discourse ignored a wide range of contemporary international school-supply models, including private schools, which provided an alternative ‘progressive’ curriculum (Brehony, 2001; Moore, 2000; Reese, 2001; Labaree, 2005; Traxler, 2015; Wyse *et al.*, 2018). The coalition acknowledged Finland’s high-performing school-system, but ignored the way its local school enrolment system offered a credible alternative to the neo-liberal parent-consumer choice model (Sahlberg, 2007; 2011;). Other models of independent state-

funded school-supply, such as Denmark's parent-led *friskolorne*, were also ignored (Wiborg, 2013; Yuhas, 2018).

Government ministers controlled entry to school-supply through application-assessment and controlled existing school-supply through GPMR. Ministers and officials used their high levels of economic and symbolic *capital* to codify and legitimise free school superiority, predicting above average performance in tests, or examinations, and 'good' outcomes in Ofsted inspections. The government utilised a new meso level bureaucracy, including MATs and RSCs, to control entry to the *field* and position within it. The legitimisation of conformity and traditionalism as innovation within application-assessment controlled what free schools could be like, and defined the credentials required by proposers.

### 8.3 Research Question 2a: Did 'established' free schools use additional 'freedoms' assigned to them (teachers' conditions of service, pay and freedom from the national curriculum)?

Central government codified free schools as superior through freedom from the national curriculum, or national pay and conditions. This 'innovation' drew on models already used in the post-1988 Conservative CTCs and New Labour's post-1997 academies (Dale, 1989; Walford, 1997; 2002; 2014a; Beck, 2009; Ball and Exley, 2011; Chitty, 2013; West and Bailey, 2013a). However, recent research by Wiborg et al., (2018) suggested that free schools may not have utilised curriculum freedom strongly. This finding was confirmed within this study, where analysis of a randomly selected group of 'established' free school applications and websites demonstrated conformity rather than difference. Free school leaders defined a curriculum as content-driven (Ross, 2003), whilst reflecting status as a mainstream school, alternative provision school, or special school. They did not emphasise free school status, or superior innovation within marketing.

References to curriculum innovation in application proposals were limited, described in vague terms, or adjusted significantly once open. The curriculum of sample free schools reflected the 'grammar' (Tyack and Tobin, 1994) of England's official national curriculum, or examination subjects for older pupils. It was defined by the cultural values and GPMR controls of national tests, examinations, school performance tables and inspections. The sample schools described approaches to teaching, learning and assessment which reflected the type of practice already common across

other state-funded schools. This lacked innovation and relied on 'good' teaching models, developed under New Labour, to maximise performance within GPMR.

The curriculum practice within established free school websites also reflected a general shift towards the high currency-value of a theme 6 academic curriculum and re-calibrated GPMR. The limited innovation in some early proposals changed once schools were open, reflecting the safety of conformity to a standard 'grammar'. The small number of references to theme 1 curriculum innovation within sample school applications was restricted to extended school days, or enhanced extracurricular provision, a type of innovation steered by official-discourse. However, once open, established free school websites marketed emotional themes (Lubienski, 2007a), promoting values and high quality to attract 'good' parent-consumers, but in a similar way to other schools. Some secondary free schools emphasised elements of theme 5 discipline features, including a smart uniform, or a traditional type of formal discipline. This was not evident within primary schools, AP schools or special schools. The use of theme 5 within marketing was not, however, different to other school-types. Once established mainstream free schools also highlighted 'search' goods (Lubienski, 2007a), including performance in tests and examinations, or Ofsted outcome grades. However, this was also similar to other school-types. None of the sample schools emphasised free school status or innovation as evidence of superiority.

The sample school applications rarely promoted benefits gained through pay and conditions innovation. Once established the sample free schools did not utilise flexible pay, use of extended teaching days or changes to holidays, even when these had featured in a small number of applications. The sample schools did not

emphasise additional performance management measures or seek to recruit teachers without qualified teacher status. Job advertisements and associated documentation did not promote high-status ‘good’ degrees as a requirement for new teachers. The job advertisements placed by established free schools emphasised essential criteria which matched similar roles in existing schools, promoting the cultural values of ‘good’ schools and ‘good’ teachers. The lack of innovation within pay and conditions adopted by the sample schools did not confirm the findings of research carried out by Wiborg et al., (2018).

Job advertisements, and other website information, indicated that most sample schools had, over time, become part of a MAT, reflecting a shift in the *field’s* symbolic economy encouraged by central government. This had led to changes within leadership roles and associated pay, including ‘new’ roles such as Chief Executive Officer (CEO). However, this move towards a small number of highly paid senior managers reflected a general change across school-supply, including within LAMs, where a growth in executive leaders was required to address staff shortages. Opening a free school, or creating a MAT, offered an attractive option for existing leaders, allowing them to increase their economic and social *capital.* In some cases, the rewards for this shift were very significant.

The use of standard practice within pay, conditions of service and curriculum within random sample schools suggests that free schools may not have generally adopted longer school days, or reduced holidays. Freedom and flexibility were not key distinctive features of free schools. However, there was a general shift across school-supply towards private sector efficiency, reflecting a neo-liberal school-choice system, where everything was assigned a value. This shift towards ‘efficiency’ within

England's school-supply had not, however, improved an existing shortage of teachers, or the general poor retention of staff. As new start-ups free schools faced significant challenges in recruiting staff and many had limited freedom, having to comply with MAT employment policies.

### 8.4 Research question 2b: What did a group of actors involved with free schools believe about how these additional 'freedoms' were operationalised?

Having a good 'feel' for the game had allowed *agents* to understand the relatively high currency-value of a theme 6 academic curriculum and recalibrated GPMR. *Agents* understood that 'playing the game' required subscription to this structuring theme. They recognised that a traditional content-driven curriculum, with defined subjects and a focus on official knowledge had a high-value within the *field's* symbolic economy. The *agents* viewed curriculum innovation as a weak force within the *field's* symbolic economy and the Education Adviser agents could only recall one example of what they saw as innovative practice, despite their significant experience of free school proposals. This practice did not, however, require free school status, and this school had also shifted its practice to ensure it was 'standards based'. Although the *agents* interviewed did not believe that curriculum innovation had been used within free schools, some were aware of pay and conditions experiments linked to longer days and shorter holidays within the first three waves of free school development, up to 2013.

*Agents* recognised a shift within the *capital* required for entry to the school-supply *field*, noting the increasing dominance of academy schools and MATs within the school-supply landscape, especially in the secondary sector. The proposer *agents* and EA *agents* believed the development of MATs had contributed to reduced innovation. *Agents* knew that 'good' school status might encourage some schools to teach to the test, or narrow the curriculum towards government performance measures, such as the EBacc (Department for Education, 2019b). They accepted

these features of the *field's doxa* as logical and necessary, an example of how the policy had 'matured', and a reflection of the practice used by other schools.

The proposer *agents* believed they could make some small changes to classroom practice, including organisation of teaching or assessment. This flexibility was, however, limited and did not require free school status. *Agents* also noted how parent-consumers were relatively conservative and wanted the reassurance of a curriculum which reflected official-discourse theme 6, or of qualified teachers. The EA *agents* viewed curriculum innovation in free schools as limited, or short-lived, and noted how theme 6 and GPMR provided a structuring force, which limited how innovation could be used. The relentless competition of the game meant that *agents* expected to assign value to pupils through ability-assessment, and discipline teachers through rigorous performance management systems. However, these features were reflected in practice across existing state-funded school-supply, and did not appear distinctive to the *agents*.

*Agents* were aware of the way official-discourse thematic-group 1 had promoted a specific type of curriculum innovation, especially schools with longer hours, reduced holidays or an increased focus on core subjects. However, a key driver for successful proposers was a need to recruit staff within a context of shortages and poor retention. *Agents* believed that free schools had limited, formula-led budgets, and could not increase pay. Proposers saw little benefit in trying to reduce pay or lever changes in conditions of service. Some *agents* viewed maintenance of existing conditions of service and pay as a moral choice, and were keen to retain a 'level playing field'. They were also influenced by the way that parent-consumers were inherently conservative, more likely to value conformity to a standard 'grammar' of

schooling, including qualified teachers. Proposers and parent-consumers did not see the high status degrees, or specific teacher training routes, valued within official-discourse as superior.

*Agents* understood the focus within official-discourse on performance of ‘disadvantaged’ pupils. The proposer *agents* accepted that improving outcomes for these pupils was their responsibility, but did not believe that free school innovation offered an advantage. The proposer *agents* tended to subscribe to a key element within theme 7, believing that disadvantaged pupils lacked aspiration, or were restricted by a particular home background, especially single parent families. The proposers identified pupils for intervention and also believed they would benefit from additional cultural *capital*. However, longer days, or reduced holidays, were seen as impractical within a context of staff recruitment shortages and funding restrictions. The *agents* were confronted by the same challenges as other school leaders and did not see free school status as beneficial.

The other *agent*s believed that ‘good’ schools needed ‘good’ pupils and noted how effective marketing might support free schools to discourage others. All *agents* understood that a free school could promote a high-value status through smart uniform, or formal discipline systems. They understood how these elements could be positioned to attract better quality parent-consumers and were aware of a general trend across school-supply for all schools to do this. The secondary school proposer agents were more likely to use theme 5 artefacts to define a school’s ethos. However, the innovation of free schools offered no actual advantage within a context where all schools promoted similar cultural values within marketing.

The *agent's* response to the field's *doxa* reflected their 'position' within the *field* and existing *capital*. Proposer *agents* had used *capital* gained from 'successful' experience within the *field*, including within one or more free schools, LAMS, academies, other school-supply settings, or 'grey' school-supply. This association relied on 'good' school status, which provided the exchange-value required for entry to the *field*. Education Adviser *agents* had high levels of *capital* gained from experience across school-supply and through their role in application-assessment. They appeared to have significant power, with an ability to recommend applications, influence interviews, or monitor free school projects as they opened. However, Education Advisers also needed to compete for additional *capital*, and maintain their position within the game. They had to subscribe to the *field's doxa*, especially the structuring influence of theme 6 and GPMR. EAs needed to recommend applications which led to 'good' schools, allowing their work to be evaluated positively by DfE officials and ministers. The 'other' agents were likely to view traditionalism in free schools as a type of innovation, but still understood that free schools were no different to existing schools. The position of *agents* in relation to the *field* reflected their subscription to its *doxa*, especially the structuring effect of theme 6 and GPMR. The acceptance of the *field's doxa* was linked to their *habitus* and levels of existing *capital*.

Being outside the *field* reflected a different set of experiences, dispositions and beliefs. The actors had initially been drawn to the freedom and innovation defined within thematic group 1, believing it indicated a distinctive part of free schools within the *field's* currency-value. The other actors represented key elements of the 'Big Society' and had constructed proposals designed to support the needs of specific

parent-consumers. Failure to gain entry to the *field* reflected their insufficient exchange-value within application-assessment or GPMR, especially links to ‘good’ schools. Their experience of rejection, or ejection, meant the actors viewed free schools as a form of ideology, a politically driven set of priorities designed to maintain control. They recognised the way increased traditionalism could be positioned as innovation in official-discourse, and in some free school proposals. The actors believed the field’s *doxa* had negative consequences for some pupils and parents, leading to an increase in excluded pupils, or use of home schooling. This trend was also experienced by PA *agents* in AP free schools, who believed that local mainstream schools had increasingly excluded low-value pupils to gain a better position within the discipline framework of GPMR. The other actors viewed the field’s *doxa* from their position as outsiders, seeing the controls imposed by government as making innovation an impossibility. They noted the negative impact this had on parent-consumers who wanted different types of state-funded schools.

### 8.5 Research question 3: What effect did a range of government controls have on practice within free schools and what 'good' schools could be like?

Free school application-assessment controlled which proposers could enter the field and the school characteristics approved. Those with most power, especially government minsters, ensured that 'good' schools, including free schools, would reflect a curriculum defined by elite cultural values ('the best that has been taught and said'), providing a framework to develop compliant pupils and teachers. Free school policy was high-profile and central government needed free schools to be successful, achieving a 'good' school status defined by the controls of a recalibrated GPMR applied to existing schools. This framework of official tests, examinations, school performance tables and inspections disciplined state-funded schools and categorised pupils, schools and teachers into a position of value. It drew on a cultural capital defined through official knowledge (Apple, 1993; 2005; 2013; 2014; 2018; 2019) measured within national curriculum tests and examinations. Controls over entry to the school-supply field and status within it defined the values required by 'good' pupils, 'good' schools and 'good' teachers. These values were translated into the currency-value used within application-assessment and the exchange-value required of successful proposers.

Success within application-assessment, followed by a subsequent interview, reflected the way 'good' proposers were able to demonstrate a strong 'feel for the game. Proposers required an exchange-value gained through association with 'good' school status within existing school-supply, including a *habitus* aligned with a standard 'grammar' of schooling (Tyack and Tobin, 1994). For mainstream proposers

this meant a school with above average test or examination results. AP and special proposers required an exchange-value associated with alternative ‘good’ school status, where existing flexibility allowed greater freedom. ‘Big Society’ proposers were initially seen as bringing new ideas, business skills and a focus on schools wanted by parents and local communities. However, these groups were viewed as low-value within application-assessment if they could not evidence an association with a ‘good’ school, or ‘good’ MAT. A type of *capital* which did not align with ‘good’ school status was assigned little value. The DfE interview, which controlled entry to the *field,* evaluated the existing social, cultural, economic and symbolic *capital* of proposers and may also have taken account of proposers’ accent, class, gender or race, something not explored within this study. The application and interview favoured the economic and social *capital* of a MAT, contributing to a growth in groups of schools led by individual elites. An association with a large MAT, or firm plans to join one, provided privileged access to the *field*.

Official-discourse thematic group 1 promoted the superior status of free school innovation, but defined and constrained how it might be imagined. Application-assessment could, for example, tolerate the innovation of USA charter school models, defined as a type of narrowed, ‘liberal’ or ‘traditional’ curriculum, with increased emphasis on literacy and numeracy. It could allow a type of curriculum ‘innovation’ with extended school days, reduced holidays, or compulsory classical language. The relentless competition of the game meant that leaders and governors of existing ‘good’ schools could most easily maintain status by admitting fewer disadvantaged pupils, and more ‘good’ pupils. Leaders could also exclude pupils who

did not comply with a school's values or, informally, encourage them to apply to a different school.

Management flexibility and economic efficiency were positioned in official-discourse themes 2 and 3 as a type of innovation within pay and conditions of staff, use of unqualified teachers, or extended days. Although aware of some early experiments, proposers believed these innovations were impractical, unattractive for most parent-consumers and, in some cases, not ethical. Proposers were aware of the need to recruit new staff within a context of national shortages, high staff turnover and job dissatisfaction caused by excessive workload (Buchanan, 2010; Leaton Gray and Whitty, 2010; Dolton and Marcenaro-Gutierrez, 2011; Evans, 2011; OECD, 2012). The superior codification of free schools was also weakened by the rapid growth of new academies and MATs, which had the same legal status and freedom as free schools, and accepted the need for staff to transfer on TUPE arrangements, with existing pay and conditions. Free schools were unlikely to attract 'good' staff by offering worse terms and conditions or pay. The *agents* did not view unqualified teachers as superior and believed that parent-consumers would want the reassurance of qualified and experienced staff. Although recent research into free schools by (Wiborg *et al.*, 2018) has suggested evidence of innovation changes to pay or conditions of service within free schools, this study suggests these changes may be quite limited, especially when compared to the flexibility available within existing schools.

The *agents* who successfully entered the *field* and then maintained position through association with a 'good' school, had high levels of economic and social *capita*l within the *field's* symbolic economy. This supported them in acquiring more, leading in

some cases, to an elite group of school leaders (Higham, 2017, p 203), with considerable power and *capital*. However, actors unable to gain entry were viewed as having limited *capital* and an unsuitable *habitus*. They lacked an association with a 'good' school and had a limited exchange-value in the *field's doxa*. Although the actors interviewed for this research had strong links with the 'Big Society', their considerable experience beyond education was viewed as of low value, despite the strong support of local communities.

England's post-2010 school-supply reforms drew on existing economic theories which had been applied to public services since the late 1980s. The free school policy appeared to extend market choice and diversity further. The benefits of new school-types focused on parent-consumer needs reflected the approach of Chubb and Moe (1988; 1990b) and had been utilised within previous CTCs and New Labour's academies. These previous new school-types had operated within a 'quasi-market' (Le Grand and Bartlett, 1993; Whitty, 1997; Whitty and Power, 1997; Exley, 2014; Allen and Higham, 2018; Esper, 2023), with limitations over profit making and 'charging' flexibility when compared to pure markets. However, England's school-supply appears to have operated more like a 'second-best' market (Lubienski, 2006b). The superior characteristics of new schools could not be objectively assessed by parent-consumers since free schools often opened with small year groups and, in many cases, temporary accommodation. Leaders mostly promoted 'emotional' qualities within marketing, with references to quality features designed to attract 'good' parent-consumers. The relative lack of 'search goods', including outcomes within tests, examinations and inspections meant that free school

proposers promoted ‘credence’, or ‘experience’ goods (Lubienski, 2003a; 2005; 2007a), in a similar way to other schools.

Parents chose free schools using similar criteria to other school-types (Morris and Perry, 2019). Pupil outcome data or, if available, Ofsted reports (Schneider and Buckley, 2002; Fitz, Gorard and Taylor, 2003) were important. Some secondary free schools used proxies, signalling a type of cultural superiority through smart uniform, strict discipline, or the cultural value of an academic curriculum. However, these characteristics reflected a general trend across all school-types, especially within the secondary school sector. Government ‘good’ school definitions had a high currency-value within application-assessment, and the recalibrated rules of GPMR encouraged all schools, including free schools, towards a conformity designed to achieve ‘good’ school status. The second-best market encouraged perverse effects, such as teaching to the test, curriculum narrowing, or a focus on attracting ‘good’ parent-consumers. England’s 2010 school-supply reforms, especially free schools, appeared radical when announced, but actually reflected a type of policy ‘tinkering’ (Tyack and Cuban, 1995). Innovation, freedom and choice was limited by the impact of central control.

The *doxa* of England’s 2010 school-supply reflected similar public sector reforms (Greener and Powell, 2009) designed to deregulate provision, create competition and improve ‘efficiency’. This neo-liberal framework relied on a value assigned to pupils, teachers and schools. Value was defined according to the currency-value of national tests and examinations, a system controlled by central government. Value was embedded within a framework where pupils were sorted into performance bands, ensuring a standard distribution of intelligence across the school population. It was

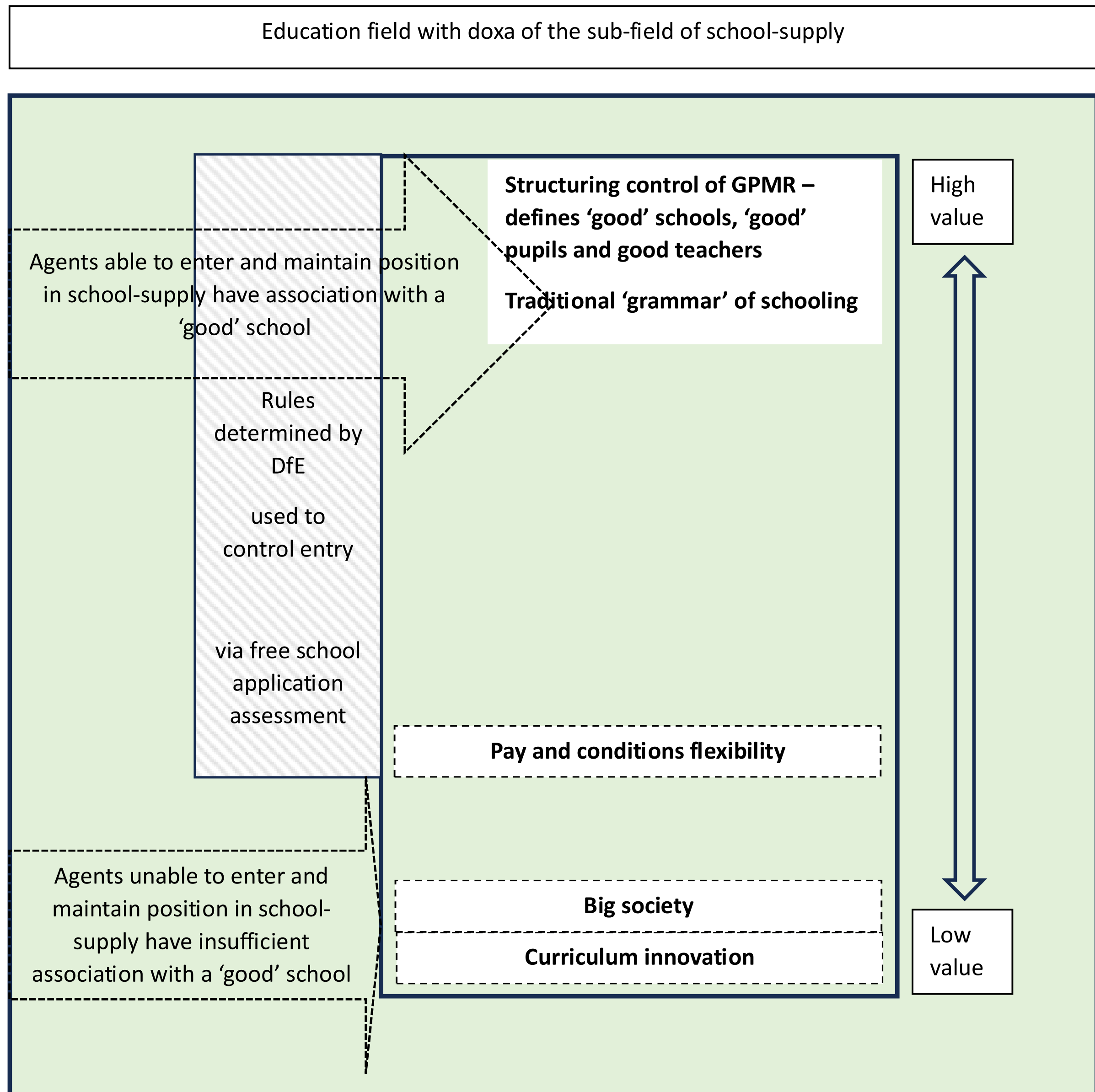
reflected within evaluation of schools through government school performance tables, or inspections. The ‘grammar’ of ‘good’ schools favoured a ‘traditional’ academic curriculum, links to an established faith, and school characteristics associated with strong discipline and control (Clark, 1998; Deakin, Taylor and Kupchik, 2018; Friedrich and Shanks, 2023). Academic subjects, ‘official’ knowledge and formal learning were re-emphasised, while ‘soft’ content, including vocational qualifications, or social development, were downgraded. The controls over ‘good’ schools reflected a set of elite cultural values defined by government ministers.

Although government ministers promoted the superiority of freedom as part of a pure market, the field’s *doxa* discouraged innovation, unless it reflected a stronger form of traditionalism. The leaders of free schools, academies and MATs entered an increased central control relationship with government through a ‘funding agreement’, a contract defined by the DfE. Extensive audit and reporting requirements ensured increased central control over free schools and academies, including the option to ‘re-broker’ schools through a take-over by another MAT. Controls were imposed through re-calibrated GPMR, application-assessment, EAs, RSCs and, ultimately, ministers. Failure to perform within the *field’s* rules risked closure, or a hostile takeover by a different MAT. England’s free schools were controlled in the same way as other state-funded schools and reflected what Tyack (1974), reviewing the system of publicly-funded schooling in the USA, described as a ‘one best system’, a state-funded school-supply which meets the needs of government, but may not meet the needs of some individuals or local communities.

The control over free schools was reflected within the *field’s doxa,* which defined the exchange-value required for entry and the currency-value required for maintenance

of position. It mitigated against the ‘Big Society’, but supported the growth of approved elites, individuals with sufficient *capital*. The *field’s doxa* reflected the strong value assigned to ‘good’ schools embedded within the academic curriculum of theme 6, an existing *capital* linked to ‘good’ schools, or MATs, and an acceptance of a cultural values framework which assigned value to individual pupils, teachers and parent-consumers. Entry to the *field,* and maintenance of position within it, required *agents* to have sufficient exchange-value and see innovation as a form of traditionalism. They needed to subscribe to a *doxa* controlled by government ministers, the *agents* with most power. Figure 8.1 provides a visual representation of the fields’ *doxa*, drawing on conclusions from analysis of the research questions. It summarises how entry to the *field* was controlled, requiring an exchange-value gained from links to ‘good’ schools or ‘good’ MATs, but with little value assigned to innovation.

*Figure 8.1 The sub-field of 2010 school-supply and its doxa*




## 8.6 Potential misrecognition

The previous section analysed the way entry to England's 2010 school-supply *field* and subsequent position within it was controlled by a *doxa* defined through the structuring effect of GPMR. Bourdieu suggested that *agents* within this type of *field*

would unconsciously *misrecognise* how these rules might be arbitrary, just one option from several possibilities. It has been noted how *misrecognition* cannot be analysed through empirical data and how a researcher, especially one who has been an *agent* in a *field*, may also be prone to *misrecognition*. However, the method used for this thesis suggests that some insight into potential *misrecognition* might be found within what *agents* accepted without question as logical, especially when compared to alternatives. It will be reflected in what they did not say, and the specific experience of actors outside the *field,* who had come to recognise contradictions within the *field's doxa*.

The agents who participated in this research accepted official definitions of 'good' schools and subscribed to rules used to control application-assessment, but also recognised that free schools were not innovative. The *agents* recognised the government's recalibrated GPMR rules, including tests, school performance tables and inspections as logical and necessary. They understood the currency-value required by 'good' schools and the standard 'grammar' of schooling required for maintenance of position in the *field*. They accepted that pupils and teachers had a hierarchy value within the field's symbolic-economy, defined by GPMR. *Agents* accepted, unproblematically, the way ministers controlled the *field* of school-supply, including decisions about free school proposals.

The position of the *agents* was reflected in their views and relationship to the *field*. Proposer *agents*, such as Alex, who had experience across several schools and school types viewed the term free school as a 'misnomer', just 'a mechanism for building new schools within a framework controlled by central government'. Alex suggested this meant 'working in and around a normal school in lots of ways. It just

happens to be a free school'. The other *agents*, such as Steve, who had supported many free school bids as a consultant, believed that 'free schools were the same, but had more challenges, because of how they were set up', but noted that 'fundamentally, it's a school by any other name'. The views expressed by Alex and Steve were typical of proposer *agents* and other *agents*. They accepted that free schools were new schools, with little real freedom, but had been comfortable with using the policy to gain additional *capital*. However, the proposer *agents* and other *agents misrecognised* much of the structuring impact of recalibrated GPMR on school characteristics, seeing 'good' school definitions as logical. They did not consider the embedded elite cultural values this imposed on parent-consumers, pupils and teachers. They were not able to reflect on freedoms within alternative schooling models, private schools, or within the profession-led reforms of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. The credentials of 'good' school status appeared logical to them, reflecting their role within the relentless competition of the game.

The Education Adviser *agents* also believed that free schools were just like other schools, and part of a school-supply system which had become increasingly 'samey'. The EAs *misrecognised* how they had contributed to this process, promoting a standard 'grammar' of schooling within application-assessment as most likely to contribute to 'good' school status within GPMR. They *misrecognised* how their understanding of 'good' schools had been shaped by ministerial power, or how approving 'good' proposals might mitigate against the desires of some parent-consumers. The EA *agents* did not see any tension between a thematic group 1 innovation promoted as increased traditionalism, and the freedom which had seemed to define the free school policy. The *field's doxa* was, for EA *agents*, just part of

ensuring that ministers ended up with ‘good’ schools, whilst also allowing the EAs to maintain their own position within the *field*.

The other actors viewed the field’s doxa from a position as outsiders and experience of rejection. This enabled them to recognise what they had initially failed to understand about actual innovation and freedom. The Oacts had valued an opportunity to create smaller than average schools, with a type of informal, ‘progressive’ ‘grammar’ of schooling which did not emphasise a value hierarchy. Lea, who had experience within governance of schools with an alternative approach to schooling, reflected how this opportunity for innovation had been one of the attractions of the free school programme. The tension between what some parents wanted, and the controls over free schools, had become clear through a hostile ‘takeover’ by another MAT, which had ‘cut off the secondary division’ and ‘made it into a primary school’ because ‘there would not be enough pupils all the way through’. Lea had concerns about what she saw as the negative influence of a type of economic efficiency, and an increasing ‘business’ ethos within some MATs. She believed that some groups were motivated by ‘profit’ and a type of asset-stripping, which had allowed, in this case, a previously private school to be appropriated and then repurposed according to the needs of MAT leaders.

The *agents* and Oacts all recognised the high levels of bureaucracy used to control free schools. Sam, a PA, reflected how ‘in my experience, particularly in the last eighteen months, there has been nothing but bureaucracy and red tape’. Alex described a ‘world of paperwork’. The OAs believed the level of monitoring from the DfE was ‘burdensome’ and for Steve (OA), the scrutiny was incredible, ‘and I put it down to this risk factor not wishing to have a policy that opened failing schools’. Ali,

who had worked in LAs for many years, suggested the free school programme was, in many ways, less efficient than the previous system run by LAs. However, the agents and Oacts accepted that centralised controls were necessary. The *agents* accepted a general private sector economic efficiency as evidence of progress.

Although *agent*s were aware of some early free schools with a type of curriculum innovation defined by longer school days or shorter holidays, they saw these schools as unrepresentative and unworkable. *Agents* believed there might still be cases, where free schools used curriculum innovation, but could only identify one example. This secondary school was viewed as innovative, but the three *agents* who knew the school well, including a proposer who had set it up, *misrecognised* how this innovation was already possible within existing school-types and had been a common 'progressive' feature of previous school-supply. The *agents* understood that application-assessment had increasingly favoured the corporate structures and economic capital of MATs. They accepted the need for the credentials of 'experienced' professionals, including MAT leaders, as part of a shift in the field's symbolic economy, where 'good' state-funded schools would be run more efficiently. They tended not to consider whether this had brought actual benefits to pupils, parent-consumers, or other stakeholders.

The impact of the field's doxa on proposers and the parents who might want other types of innovation was generally *misrecognised* by the *agents*. None reflected on the high levels of curriculum freedom and innovation available to professionals within the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s. The *agent*s showed little awareness, or support, for 'progressive' innovation 'traditions' which had helped to define some private schools, or school-supply systems outside England. They saw no obvious tension

between individual freedom and the way innovation was controlled within free school application-assessment. The *agents misrecognised* the way ‘good’ schools could only be defined by central government, had to reflect its elite cultural values, and did not see how some parent-consumers may value a different ‘grammar’ of schooling. Most *agents misrecognised* the potential negative impact of recalibrated GPMR and theme 5 discipline on some parent-consumers, leading to a potential for increased numbers of pupils in AP provision, home schooling or out of school. This trend was recognised by proposer *agents* managing AP schools. The actors were also aware of this tension, and it was their focus on a curriculum innovation with reduced emphasis on individual pupil value which had made entry to England’s school-supply, or maintenance of position within it, impossible. The tensions noted between recognition and *misrecognition* suggest a need for further research, and highlights some of this study’s limitations.

## 8.7 Conclusion

This study has noted how previous analysis of similar new ‘independent’ school-types has mostly focused on their impact on the consumer-side of the market, especially the outcomes data of tests and examinations, admissions criteria, or effects of covert selection on individuals, or groups. Previous research has also examined how far free schools reflected a type of privatisation, or whether they contributed to a growth in a new type of elite individual. These research studies are crucial in understanding the effects of government policy on social groups, including

how they might be viewed through the lenses of class and race. This thesis adds to previous research studies through a focus on the school-supply side of markets and the impact of application-assessment on free school proposers. Although the post-2010 free schools were positioned by the 2010 coalition government as an object, a new and distinctive school-type, this was not how these schools were viewed by those operating in the school-supply *field*. Established free schools were not promoted as different by free school proposers, who operated within a framework of 'good' school values promoted through the GPMR overseen by government ministers. These 'good' schools emphasised the standard 'grammar' of traditional schooling and elite cultural values designed to filter pupils into categories of worth. The free school policy helped to maintain an existing hierarchy of school-supply, where parent-consumers with the greatest *capital* could identify schools which met their needs.

This study has examined the concept of individual freedom reflected within the characteristics, or 'grammar', of free schools. These mostly new state-funded schools formed an important part of the 2010 coalition's supply-side reforms of an existing school-choice market. Creating a new school seemed to allow proposers to innovate, but steered by official-discourse towards a type of curriculum flexibility defined by central government as longer teaching days, or reduced school holidays. Proposers could also adopt a type of pay and conditions flexibility which emphasised teachers' value according to their market worth. The 2010 coalition government introduced its free school policy quickly, retaining central funding to replace the role LAs had previously played in creating new schools. Free schools were created in response to pressure for additional school places and the open application system seemed to

offer a way for new providers to enter the school-supply market. The opportunity to start a new school was popular, with a high number of proposals in the first three waves of application. The free school policy allowed central government to control the setup of new mainstream, AP, and special schools, as well as some new UTCs and Studio schools. It also provided a way for a small number of existing private schools to transfer into the state-funded sector. The unique freedoms assigned to free schools had, however, already been used in previous school-types, such as the Conservative CTCs and New Labour's academies. The unique nature of free schools was also weakened by the government's policy of allowing existing schools to change legal status and become an academy, acquiring the same status and freedom as free schools. These reforms to England's supply-side provision seemed designed to create a purer market, reflecting freedom benefits promoted within a strand of right-wing free market ideology.

Free school proposers were, initially, drawn from many different groups, encouraged by the freedom promoted within the coalition's 'Big Society' concept, which encouraged parents, charities and existing schools to open new schools. The assessment of the first three application waves reflected an initial lack of clarity over how freedom and innovation might operate. The DfE quickly developed evaluation criteria, which allowed it to filter-in proposals viewed as likely to create 'good' schools, fulfilling its need for the policy to be viewed as successful. Although free schools seemed to offer an opportunity for proposers to imagine new types of curriculum innovation, or utilise the economic efficiencies of increased employment flexibilities this was not how applications were assessed. The criteria chosen to assess applications reflected the social and cultural values of government ministers,

but valued a type of innovation positioned as a form of traditionalism. Free school application assessment criteria were shaped by the structuring force of GPMR controls and the coalition's contemporaneous re-calibration of England's national curriculum, tests, examinations, Ofsted inspections and government performance tables.

Free school proposers were confronted with a decision over how to utilise freedom, but also steered through an official-discourse which emphasised a type of innovation steered as a traditional academic curriculum, or extended school days. A high value was assigned to existing links to a 'good' school in application-assessment, resulting in the approval of new schools which demonstrated a strong conformity to a standard 'grammar' of schooling. Successful proposals drew on links to an existing track record within central government's GPMR regulatory framework. MATs provided a preferred organisational model, where power seemed to be devolved, but also strongly controlled through a funding agreement. The combination of new free schools and existing schools converting to academy status resulted in a shift within the symbolic economy of England's school-supply, increasing the proportion of schools funded and controlled directly by central government; although set within an official-discourse which emphasised increased freedom.

This thesis has used RTA in a new and unique way to analyse how the field's *doxa* was controlled by government ministers, and how successful proposers needed a good 'feel' for the game. Entry to the *field* required proposers to understand the low currency-value of thematic group 1 innovation, and the high value of thematic group 2, especially theme 6 traditionalism, linked to a recalibrated government GPMR regulation which underpinned it. Successful proposers needed to subscribe to the

cultural *capital* reflected in official-knowledge, ensuring that ‘good’ schools, ‘good’ pupils and ‘good’ teachers could be identified and sifted. This meant that curriculum innovation, promoted as a type of free school superiority, had little value unless positioned as a type of ‘new’ and ‘progressive’ traditionalism. Pay and conditions freedom also had little value within application-assessment, or in the context of recruiting staff, since schools already had considerable flexibility, whilst two decades of central control over teachers’ pay and conditions had failed to address significant problems of staff shortages, high turnover and job dissatisfaction. Increased private sector efficiencies, defined as identification of individual worth managed through strong performance monitoring, contributed to a demoralised and deskilled workforce.

The *agents* with most power, central government ministers, controlled the rules used for overall entry to school-supply. Successful proposers needed an exchange-value drawn from credentials gained through association with an existing ‘good’ school. Government ministers, Education Advisers, RSCs and other DfE officials filtered out ‘unsuitable’ applications and applicants. Once open and operating free schools had to operate within the relentless competition of GPMR, with recalibrated tests, examinations, school performance tables and Ofsted inspections. This regulatory framework was, however, also applied to other mainstream school-types, where ‘good’ schools, ‘good’ teachers and ‘good’ pupils were identified through values defined through an official elite culture. These values were controlled by politicians rather than teachers, reflecting a shift away from curriculum freedom and control within state-funded schools after the 1988 ERA. Teachers had been increasingly positioned as technicians, best trained through ‘on the job’ training models

associated with the economic efficiencies of corporate values. Although the freedom of free schools was meant to increase choices available to parent-consumers this choice was limited by *agency.* It relied on credentials assessed within the context of application-assessment, and free schools had little potential to change a school-supply system where social reproduction was already strongly embedded.

The opportunity to open a new school seemed to provide some individuals with a chance to gain, or extend, existing *capital*. It allowed some MAT leaders to gain increased pay and power. The rules used for application-assessment discouraged 'Big Society' parent and community-led applications, which had initially seemed to form a key part of free school freedom. The rules of the game meant that pupils with insufficient cultural *capital* had little value within the *field's* symbolic economy, and school leaders could gain most by steering them towards AP schools, home schooling or other forms of 'grey' school-supply. Existing staff shortages, high levels of staff turnover, the conservative views of parent-consumers, and maintenance of standard terms and conditions within existing academies and MATs meant that pay and conditions flexibility had little value within the *field's* symbolic economy. Curriculum innovation also had little value within application-assessment, unless seen as use of extended days, shorter holidays, curriculum narrowing or teaching a 'liberal' curriculum, defined by politicians as the 'best that has been thought and said'. The *field's doxa,* driven by the structuring controls of GPMR, discouraged innovation and supported conformity. The free school policy could not, therefore, accommodate what some parent-consumers wanted, especially types of 'progressive' curriculum freedom which rejected positioning pupils into a hierarchy of worth, emphasised social development, or aimed for weakly framed curriculum innovation.

The individuals involved in successful free school applications and application-assessment *misrecognised* the essentially arbitrary nature of the rules used to control the *field*. They viewed GPMR controls and a conformity to a standard 'grammar' of schooling as logical and unremarkable. These *agents* were unable to consider alternative models and could not, for example, utilise the curriculum innovation and freedom which had characterised England's schools during the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s, or existing international schooling models based on similar 'progressive' models. However, *agents* accepted free schools, loosely, as an example of innovation, whilst not comparing this to the professional freedom available before the 1988 ERA. They did not consider the way England's private schools, or elements of 'grey' school-supply might provide alternative curriculum 'traditions', offering different 'good' school definitions valued by some parent-consumers. The advisers contracted to support application-assessment promoted proposals they believed would perform well within the government's regulation framework. They *misrecognised* how these schools were likely to be most attractive to parent-consumers with high levels of social and cultural capital, especially the aspiring middle-class. The advisers also *misrecognised* their own role within shaping, and then controlling, the *field's doxa*.

The actors unable to gain entry to the *field*, or ejected from it, viewed the *field* from a different and more critical perspective. They had valued the freedom to introduce innovation, especially 'progressive' approaches to teaching, assessment, or discipline. They represented the views of some parent-consumers and 'Big Society' groups who wanted a different type of state-funded school. These actors had initially seen an opportunity to create schools with a new 'grammar' of schooling, but failed to

recognise the low currency-value assigned to freedom or innovation, unless viewed as a new form of 'traditionalism'. Their subsequent experience within application-assessment, or the *field's* operation, led to an understanding of the potentially negative impact of thematic group 2 traditionalism, especially the structuring effect of a theme 6 academic curriculum, linked to recalibrated GPMR. Being outside the *field* enabled these actors to recognise how the rules of the game contributed to existing conformity and failed to provide what some parent-consumers wanted.

Although the 2010 coalition promoted the benefits of free school innovation this research has demonstrated how free schools could not fulfil this aim. Government ministers controlled GPMR and 'good' school characteristics. This meant that free school proposers who valued different models had little chance of gaining access to the school-supply *field.* Parent-consumers who wanted an alternative were limited to private schooling, or home schooling. Pupils who struggled with the elite cultural *capital* which underpinned 'good' school definitions, including the discipline codes associated with them, could be passported into AP schools. 'Good' schools could gain or maintain status most efficiently by attracting 'good' pupils, teaching to the test, or narrowing the curriculum. In this respect free schools were, however, no different to other school-types. Free school proposers also gained no value from pay and conditions flexibility, or by employing unqualified teachers. Existing staff shortages, and the standard practice adopted in many MATs coupled, for some, with a moral choice which valued fairness, meant this freedom had little value. Free school proposers discovered through rejection, or a good 'feel for the game, how freedom was illusory, but also misrecognised the structuring force of GPMR. Proposers were always controlled by a framework which mitigated against freedom,

unless it matched the approved cultural values embedded within ‘good’ schools, ‘good’ pupils and ‘good’ teachers. Despite an official-discourse emphasis on the freedom of free schools, proposers were, in these terms, not free from anything.

### 8.8 Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study reflect its broad focus, and limited space for reporting. For example, it has not been possible to include some data collected for this research. Information about pay, conditions of service and the curriculum in sample schools was restricted to ten cases. This restriction was, however, mitigated by using random choice to identify cases. Information on free school websites and application forms represented a four-month window and further legislation, or shifts in the *field*, may have changed the way these schools were organised. However, the sub-*field* of school-supply is constantly shifting in response to policy shifts and pressures. Analysis of sample schools did not, as previously noted, identify school age range, Ofsted grade, region or other features which might be used to distinguished schools. These categorisations were deemed as unnecessary and unlikely to add additional information.

The interviews with free school proposers, other individuals and Education Advisers were limited to sixteen cases. This reflected, in part, the challenge of gaining access to individuals with very specific experience within the *field*, as well as the scope of this research. The choice of cases was mostly restricted to people I knew, allowing them some confidence in talking openly about a high-profile and contested policy. The unsuccessful proposers were an unknown group, but provided a crucial and previously ‘unheard’ group, contributing to the way this research unique. The lack of a previous relationship with these individuals may have influenced their confidence within interviews. However, as described above, they recognised and were critical of features of free school application, drawn from their experience. The individuals

involved in interviews cannot be seen as representative. No claims can be made about casual effects. However, none of the sixteen individuals interviewed believed that free schools were distinctive or innovative. The views described and analysed here are important, providing a new and important insight into the impact of 2010 free school policy on individual proposers.

No attempt was made to analyse the social profile of proposers, or provide a detailed understanding of their *habitus*. The application process may have disadvantaged proposers from different faith groups, gender, ethnicity or class. However, the limited scope of this research meant these factors were not considered. Previous research suggests that application-assessment may have had an effect on proposals made by individuals from different social class groups (Hatcher, 2011, Higham, 2014a). A study by Warner (2019), for example, used Critical Race Theory to interrogate how race and covert racism might have operated in the free school application and approval process. This filtering of proposers is likely to be covert, and embedded within the cultural values used to define 'good' schools. A direct link was established between the credentials and exchange-value of those who gained access to the *field*, underpinned by an epistemology which valued an official and elite cultural *capital*. It would be surprising if these factors did not have an effect on different social groups. However, more work is required to explore these issues further.

It is possible that information retrieved from websites may not have reflected the true nature of one, or more of the mini case-study schools analysed. This is very unlikely given that legislation required schools to update key information regularly and failure to do so would be picked up by regulators, such as Ofsted. Regular checks ensured a consistent approach to retrieval, with weekly searches for teaching job adverts on

school websites and within the two largest recruitment sites (TES and E-teach) between September and December 2020. This target group of free schools may have advertised vacancies elsewhere, but the information here reflects frequent checks of information on school websites.

There was a risk that some of the interview participants might have adopted the position of an elite, with a reluctance to engage fully or, since I worked as an Education Adviser assessing applications, have viewed me as an elite and be reluctant to provide honest answers. My prior engagement with most of the school proposers and EAs interviewed provided a relationship where they appeared willing to discuss free schools openly. An emphasis on anonymised profiles for transcribing interviews added reassurance. One *agent*, an EA, chose not to participate at the last minute, due to critical family illness and the late notice made it impossible to replace this participant. The interviews took place during an international pandemic and had to be conducted via video. In another context this may have made communication more difficult, but at the time this process was commonplace and widely accepted. No technical issues were encountered.

This research may seem difficult to replicate. My position in the field was unique and another researcher would require very specific skills and experience, including links to education advisers involved with the policy since its inception. Most of the advisers interviewed had moved on to other roles, or stopped work altogether, having been increasingly replaced by reliance on ‘system leaders’, existing school-based staff who worked within the field. It would therefore be impossible to replicate exactly the same profile of individuals interviewed here. However, the method, with thematic analysis of official-discourse compared to practice within established free schools

and the views of those involved could be replicated. Research with a different group of *agent*s and actors, would produce equally valid data.

The research did not focus on some elements of the 2010 school-supply field. It has been noted how it excluded UTCs and studio schools. Both are important and contested areas of the field, but currently under-researched. They struggled to recruit pupils and generally fared badly within inspections and government performance tables, mainly because the vocational qualifications offered did not match a standard 'grammar' and *doxa* reflected within GPMR. Many became a form of unintended alternative provision, with local schools 'dumping' unwanted pupils by suggesting they enrol elsewhere rather than face exclusion. These schools provide interesting and, to date, little explored cases. Studio schools have gradually closed and no new ones were created after 2017. I have noted the way 'grey' school-supply, and the elite and non-elite private school provision may have influenced the field's symbolic economy, providing examples of innovation outside the state-funded sector and an option for some parents who valued freedom. The scope of this research has required only passing reference to these schools and their role within the *field* of school-supply. However, they provide insight into interesting cases where alternative views about 'good' schools and their characteristics have survived. These schools may provide insight into different views about what makes a 'good' school.

### 8.9 Implications for policy and future research

The free school policy seemed to create a group of new independent schools, which operated outside LA bureaucratic ‘control’. However, this research shows that free schools, academies and MAT leaders opted into a stronger control relationship with central government. Freedom was therefore an illusion, within a context where rules within application-assessment controlled entry, where GPMR controlled a standard ‘grammar’ of schooling and a funding agreement controlled whether a particular school remained open. There is no evidence to show that free schools, or the complementary 2010 academies, led to ‘better’ schools, solved teacher shortages or had a positive impact on social inequality. However, most existing research has accepted the way official-discourse positioned free schools as an object, a distinctive school-type. This makes comparison between free schools and other schools seem logical, especially within the outcomes achieved by social groups. However, this thesis has challenged the idea of free schools being a separate group of schools, other than as mostly start-ups which, once established, had the same status as an academy. It has confirmed previous research by Wiborg et al. (2018) which suggested that free schools were ‘not unlike’ other school-types, but suggests this previous research may have overestimated pay and conditions reform within free schools. This may be through not considering the existing freedoms already available to state-funded schools, or the impact of a general shift towards private sector employment efficiencies across the state-funded sector.

The study therefore provides an important insight into the way central government ministers controlled what free schools could be like. This is important for several

reasons. Future government education policy may build on similar concepts, developing new and symbolically superior school-types as elements within supply-side changes designed to enhance a free market. However, this type of freedom can never be achieved when proposers are constrained through application-assessment rules which define 'good' schools, and leaders have to respond to the controls of GPMR. Innovation requires freedom over a curriculum, including the cultural values which determine how it can be shaped, organised and assessed. It requires a landscape where teachers are valued for their professionalism, work in a context of trust and where teaching is viewed as an occupation with a manageable workload. Freedom within this type of pure market will allow diversity, innovation and the type of school which some parents want, but which government might not value. State-funded schools can only be free when all parent-consumers are able to access the type of school they want.

This research also suggests that critical policy analysis linked to *field* theory needs to take account of wide parameters. Examining the freedom of proposers requires, for example, an understanding of the structuring effect of GPMR, the cultural values underpinning recalibrated tests, examinations, performance tables, or school inspections. It is also reflected within changes made to teacher training, where 'good' teachers are defined according to the *field's doxa*. School-supply reform driven by GPMR and 'good' school status, or strong discipline and smart uniform, may marginalise some groups, pushing pupils into alternative provision or home schooling. There is, therefore, a need to consider the impact of school-supply reforms on pupils who end up in alternative provision, or 'missing' from education. 'Grey' school-supply, non-elite and elite private schools, various forms of alternative

provision and previous models of profession-led innovation all provide an alternative way to define ‘good’ schools. They form an important part of the experiences and needs of some parent-consumers. The tensions between freedom and control are embedded within the rules used for application-assessment and the linked values which underpinned GPMR.

## References

Adams, J. (2013) ‘The English Baccalaureate: A New Philistinism?’ *The International Journal of Art & Design Education* 32: 2-5. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1476-8070.2013.01777.x

Adams, J. W. L., Bell, R. M., Meade, J. E., Salisbury, L., Hurstfield, J., Glazer, N. and Butler, L. (1969) 'Demolition: Work in progress', *Critical Survey,* 4(1), pp. 51-56. Vol. 4. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/41553772

Adams, P., Berg , L., Berger, N., Duane, M., Neill, A. S. and Ollendorff, R. (1971) *Children's Rights: towards the liberation of the child.* New York: Praeger Publishers, Inc.

Adnett, N. (2003) 'Commentary. Reforming teachers' pay: incentive payments, collegiate ethos and UK policy', *Cambridge Journal of Economics,* 27(1), pp. 145-157. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/cje/27.1.145

Aitken, G., Jones, D., Fawns, T., Sutherland, D. and Henderson, S. (2019) 'Using Bourdieu to explore graduate attributes in two online Master’s programmes', *Advances in Health Sciences Education,* 24(3), pp. 559-576. Available at: https://doi: 10.1007/s10459-019-09885-6

Al, S., Sari, R. M. and Kahya, N. C. (2012) 'A Different Perspective on Education: Montessori and Montessori School Architecture', *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences,* 46, pp. 1866-1871. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.05.393

Aldrich, R. ed., 2002. *A century of education*. London: Routledge/Falmer.

Alexander, R., Rose, J. and Woodhead, C. (1992) *Curriculum Organisation and Classroom Practice in Primary Schools: A discussion paper*. Available at: http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/threewisemen/threewisemen.html (Accessed: March 18 2021).

Alhojailan, M. I. (2012) 'Thematic analysis: A critical review of its process and evaluation', *West East Journal of Social Sciences,* 1(1), pp. 39-47.

Allen, A. (2013) 'Radicalism, Education and Political Practice', *Power and Education,* 5(3), pp. 262-267.

Allen, R. (2015) 'Education Policy', *National Institute Economic Review,* 231, pp. R36-R43.

Allen, R., Burgess, S. M. and Mayo, J. (2018) 'The teacher labour market, teacher turnover and disadvantaged schools', *Education Economics,* 26(1/2), pp. 4-23.

Allen, R. and Higham, R. (2018) 'Quasi-markets, school diversity and social selection: Analysing the case of free schools in England, five years on', *London Review of Education,* 16(2), pp. 191-213.

Allen, R. and Sims, S. (2018) 'Do pupils from low-income families get low-quality teachers? Indirect evidence from English schools', *Oxford Review of Education,* 44(4), pp. 441-458.

Allen, R. and West, A. (2009) 'Religious schools in London: school admissions, religious composition and selectivity', *Oxford Review of Education,* 35(4), pp. 471-494.

Amis, K. (1969) 'Pernicious Participation', *Critical Survey,* 4(1), pp. 9-10.

Anders, J., Henderson, M., Moulton, V. and Sullivan, A. (2018) 'The role of schools in explaining individuals' subject choices at age 14', *Oxford Review of Education,* 44(1), pp. 75-93.

Angus, L. (2015) 'School choice: neoliberal education policy and imagined futures', *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 36(3), pp. 395-413.

Apple, M. W. (1993) 'The politics of official knowledge: Does a National Curriculum Make Sense?', *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education,* 14(1), pp. 1-16.

Apple, M. W. (2004) 'Creating Difference: Neo-Liberalism, Neo-Conservatism and the Politics of Educational Reform', *Educational Policy,* 18(1), pp. 12-44.

Apple, M. W. (2005) 'Doing things the 'right' way: legitimating educational inequalities in conservative times', *Educational Review,* 57(3), pp. 271-293.

Apple, M. W. (2006) *Educating the "right" way: markets, standards, God, and inequality*. New York: Routledge.

Apple, M. W. (2013) *Knowledge, power, and education.* New York: Routledge.

Apple, M. W. (2014) *Official knowledge: democratic education in a conservative age.* New York: Routledge.

Apple, M.W. (2018) *Ideology and curriculum.* New York: Routledge.

Apple, M. W. (2019) 'On Doing Critical Policy Analysis', *Educational Policy,* 33(1), pp. 276-287

Archer, L. and Francis, B. (2006) 'Challenging Classes?: Exploring the Role of Social Class within the Identities and Achievement of British Chinese Pupils', *Sociology,* 40(1), pp. 29-49.

Archibald, M. M., Ambagtsheer, R. C., Casey, M. G. and Lawless, M. (2019) 'Using Zoom Videoconferencing for Qualitative Data Collection: Perceptions and Experiences of Researchers and Participants', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods,* Vol 18. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919874596

Armitage, E. and Lau, C. (2018) 'Is the English Baccalaureate a passport to future success?', *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice,* 25(3), pp. 230-251.

Arnold, M. (1889) *Culture and Anarchy An essay in political and social criticism*. London: Smith, Elder and co. Available at: https://archive.org/details/cultureanarchyes00arno (Accessed: June 17 2019).

Arnot, M. (1991) 'Equality and Democracy: a decade of struggle over education', *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 12(4), pp. 447-466.

Arreman, I. E. and Holm, A. S. (2011) 'Privatisation of public education? The emergence of independent upper secondary schools in Sweden', *Journal of Education Policy,* 26(2), pp. 225-243.

Arthur, J., Waring, M. and Coe, R. (2012) *Research Methods and Methodologies in Education.* London: Sage Publications.

Ashley, M. (2009) Education for Freedom: The Goal of Steiner/Waldorf Schools. In: Woods, P.A. and Woods, G.J. (eds.) *Alternative Education for the 21st Century: Philosophies, Approaches, Visions*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 209-225.

Atkinson, A. (2009) 'Evaluating the impact of performance-related pay for teachers in England', *Labour Economics,*16(3), pp. 251-261.

Attride-Stirling, J. (2001) 'Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research', *Qualitative Research,* 1(3), pp. 385-405.

Bacchi, C. (2000) 'Policy as discourse: what does it mean? Where does it get us?', *Discourse,* 21(1), pp. 45-57.

Bacharach, S. B. and Mundell, B. L. (1993) 'Organizational Politics in Schools: Micro, Macro, and Logics of Action', *Educational Administration Quarterly,* 29(4), pp. 423-452.

Badley, J. H. (1967) *John Haden Badley,1865-1967: Bedales School and Its Founder.* Petersfield (Hants): Bedales Society.

Bagley, C., Glatter, R. and Woods, P. (1997) 'Diversity, Differentiation and hierachy', *Choice and Diversity in Schooling*. London: Routledge, pp. 23-44.

Bagley, C., Woods, P. A. and Glatter, R. (2001) 'Rejecting Schools: Towards a fuller understanding of the process of parental choice', *School Leadership & Management,* 21(3), pp. 309-325.

Bailey, P. L. J. (2015) 'Consultants of conduct: new actors, new knowledges and new ‘resilient’ subjectivities in the governing of the teacher', *Journal of Educational Administration and History,* 47(3), pp. 232-250.

Ball, S. J. (1981) *Beachside Comprehensive: a case-study of secondary schooling.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ball, S. J. (1984) *Comprehensive schooling. Issues in education and training* London: Falmer.

Ball, S. J. (1990) *Politics and Policy Making in Education.* London: Routledge.

Ball, S. J. (1993a) 'Education Markets, Choice and Social Class: the market as a class strategy in the UK and the USA', *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 14(1), pp. 3-19.

Ball, S. J. (1993b) 'Education policy, power relations and teachers' work', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 41(2), pp. 106-121.

Ball, S. J. (1993c) 'Education, Majorism and 'the Curriculum of the Dead'', *Curriculum Studies,* 1(2), pp. 195-214.

Ball, S. J. (1993d) 'What is policy? Texts, trajectories and toolboxes', *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 13(2), pp. 10–17. Available at: https://doi.org10.1080/0159630930130203.

Ball, S. J. (1994) 'Some reflections on policy theory: a brief response to Hatcher and Troyna', *Journal of Education Policy,* 9(2), pp. 171-182.

Ball, S. J. (1997a) 'On the cusp: parents choosing between state and private schools in the UK: action within an economy of symbolic goods', *International Journal of Inclusive Education,* 1(1), pp. 1-17.

Ball, S. J. (1997b) 'Policy Sociology and Critical Social Research: a personal review of recent education policy and policy research', *British Educational Research Journal,* 23(3), pp. 257-274.

Ball, S. J. (1998) 'Big Policies/Small World: An introduction to international perspectives in education policy', *Comparative Education,* 34(2), pp. 119-130.

Ball, S. J. (2003) 'The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity', *Journal of Education Policy,* 18(2), pp. 215-228.

Ball, S. J. (2006) *Education policy and social class: the selected works of Stephen Ball.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Ball, S. J. (2007) *Education plc: understanding private sector participation in public sector education.* London: Routledge.

Ball, S. J. (2009) 'Academies in context: Politics, business and philanthropy and heterarchical governance', *Management in Education,* 23(3), pp. 100-103.

Ball, S. J. (2010) *Foucault and Education: Disciplines and Knowledge (1st ed.).* London: Routledge.

Ball, S. J. (2011) 'A new research agenda for educational leadership and policy', *Management in Education,* 25(2), pp. 50-52.

Ball, S. J. (2012a) *Global Education Inc : New Policy Networks and the Neoliberal Imaginary.* London: United Kingdom.

Ball, S. J. (2012b) *Global education inc.: new policy networks and the neo-liberal imaginary.* New York: Routledge.

Ball, S. J. (2012c) *The Micro-Politics of the School.* London: Taylor and Francis.

Ball, S. J. (2012d) 'The reluctant state and the beginning of the end of state education', *Journal of Educational Administration and History,* 44(2), pp. 89-103.

Ball, S. J. (2013) *Political interviews and the politics of interviewing*, *Researching the powerful in education*: Routledge, pp. 108-127.

Ball, S. J. (2015) 'What is policy? 21 years later: reflections on the possibilities of policy research', *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education,* 36(3), pp. 306-313.

Ball, S. J. (2016) 'Following policy: networks, network ethnography and education policy mobilities', *Journal of Education Policy,* 31(5), pp. 549-566.

Ball, S. J. (2017) *The education debate (Third Edition). Policy and politics in the twenty-first century.* Bristol: Policy Press.

Ball, S. J. (2020) 'The errors of redemptive sociology or giving up on hope and despair', *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 41(6), pp. 870-880.

Ball, S. J., Bowe, R. and Gewirtz, S. (1996) 'School choice, social class and distinction: the realization of social advantage in education', *Journal of Education Policy,* 11(1), pp. 89-112.

Ball, S. J. and Exley, S. (2010) 'Making policy with 'good ideas': policy networks and the 'intellectuals' of New Labour', *Journal of Education Policy,* 25(2), pp. 151-169.

Ball, S. J. and Exley, S. (2011) Something old, something new: understanding Conservative education policy. In Bochel, H. (ed.) *The Conservative Party and social policy*, pp. 97-118. Bristol: Policy Press.

Ball, S. J. and Junemann, C. (2012) *Networks, new governance and education.* London: Policy Press.

Ball, S. J., Maguire, M. and Braun, A. (2012) *How Schools Do Policy.* Florence: Routledge.

Baltodano, M. (2012) 'Neoliberalism and the demise of public education: the corporatization of schools of education', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education,* 25(4), pp. 487-507.

Banks, O. (1955) *Parity and prestige in English secondary education. The sociology of education* London: Routledge.

Barnes, S.-A., Lyonette, C., Atfield, G. and Owen, D. (2016) *Teachers' pay and equality: a literature review (Longitudinal research into the impact of changes to teachers' pay on equality in schools in England)*: NASUWT. Available at: https://explore.openaire.eu/search/other?orpId=core_ac_uk__::e283d14599562866a7b467eb5d63ac55 (Accessed: 2018 March 01).

Barr, R. D. (1973) 'Whatever Happened to the Free School Movement?', *The Phi Delta Kappan,* 54(7), pp. 454-457.

Barrett, D. (2018) 'The effective design, implementation and enforcement of socio-economic equality duties: lessons from the pupil premium', *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law,* 40(1), pp. 57-77.

Bartlett, L., Frederick, M., Gulbrandsen, T. and Murillo, E. (2002) 'The marketization of education: Public schools for private ends', *Anthropology & Education Quarterly,* 33(1), pp. 5-29.

Basit, T. (2010) 'Manual or electronic? The role of coding in qualitative data analysis', *Educational Research,* 45(2), pp. 143-154.

Bates, T. R. (1975) 'Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony', *Journal of the History of Ideas,* 36(2), pp. 351-366.

Bathmaker, A.-M., Ingram, N. and Waller, R. (2013) 'Higher education, social class and the mobilisation of capitals: recognising and playing the game', *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 34(5-6), pp. 723-743.

Bazeley, P. and Jackson, K. (2013) *Qualitative data analysis with NVivo (Second edition).* London: SAGE.

BBC (1973) *Bermondsey lamp post school*. Nationwide, BBC. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ckLNTTr4spw (Accessed: June 17 2017).

BBC (1992) *Lessons In Freedom: The Scotland Road Free School*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nUEjHvy_XpI (Accessed: June 17 2017).

BBC (2009) *Ministers and 'troublesome priests'*. Available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/8017388.stm (Accessed: May 18 2020).

BBC (2010) *What do we know about free schools?* BBC News. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/10350661 (Accessed: June 17 2021).

BBC (2013) *Academy group expense 'extravagance'*. BBC News. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/education-22571711 (Accessed: May 20 2020).

BBC (2014) *The anarchic experimental schools of the 1970s*. BBC News. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-29518319 (Accessed: June 17.

BBC (2015) *What is the rationale behind free schools?* Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-13266290 (Accessed: November 6 2019).

Bechhofer, F. and Paterson, L. (2012) *Principles of research design in the social sciences.* Routledge.

Beck, J. (2008) 'Governmental professionalism: re-professionalising or de-professionalising teachers in England?', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 56(2), pp. 119-143.

Beck, J. (2009) 'Appropriating professionalism: restructuring the official knowledge base of England's 'modernised' teaching profession', *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 30(1), pp. 3-14.

Beck, J. (2012) 'Reinstating knowledge: diagnoses and prescriptions for England's curriculum ills', *International Studies in Sociology of Education,* 22(1), pp. 1-18.

Beckett, K. (2018) 'John Dewey’s conception of education: Finding common ground with R. S. Peters and Paulo Freire', *Educational Philosophy and Theory,* 50(4), pp. 380-389.

Begley, P. (2020) 'Education; The making of Thatcherism'. Manchester, England: Manchester University Press.

Benn, C. and Simon, B. (1970) *Half Way There: Report on the British Comprehensive School Reform.* London: McGraw-Hill.

Benn, M. (2020) ''Drill and kill' for England's state schools while private sector goes progressive', *The Guardian*. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/aug/18/drill-and-kill-for-englands-state-schools-while-private-sector-goes-progressive (Accessed: April 10 2020).

Benn, M. and Downs, J. (2016) *The Truth About Our Schools: Exposing the myths, exploring the evidence.* London: Routledge.

Benn, M. and Martin, J. (2017) 'The 'Patron Saint' of Comprehensive Education: an interview with Clyde Chitty. Part One', *Forum,* 59 (3).

Bennett, N., Jordan, J., Long, G. and Wade, B. (1976) 'Teaching styles and pupil progress'. Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press.

Bennett, T., Grossberg, L. and Morris, M. (2005) 'Originals, Remakes, Assemblages: A Retrospect on "New Keywords"', *Criticism,* 47(4), pp. 567-571.

BERA (2018) *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, fourth edition*: British Educational Research Association. Available at: https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018-online (Accessed: December 18 2022).

Berg, L. (1968) *Risinghill: Death of a Comprehensive.* London: Penguin.

Bernstein, B. (1971a) *Class, codes and control. Primary socialization, language and education* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Bernstein, B. (1971b) *‘On the Classification and Framing of Educational Knowledge’. Knowledge and Control: New Directions for the Sociology of Education,* London: Collier-Macmillan.

Bernstein, B. (2001) 'Symbolic control: Issues of empirical description of agencies and agents', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology,* 4(1), pp. 21-33.

Bernstein, B. (2010) 'Class and Pedagogies: Visible and Invisible', *Educational Studies,* 1(1), pp. 23-41.

Bettinger, E. P. (2005) 'The effect of charter schools on charter students and public schools', *Economics of Education Review,* 24(2), pp. 133-147.

Biesta, G. (2014) 'Pragmatising the curriculum: bringing knowledge back into the curriculum conversation, but via pragmatism', *The Curriculum Journal,* 25(1), pp. 29-49.

Birmingham School Board (1875) *Free schools: report of a debate in the Birmingham School Board held on Friday, June 18th, 1875*. Birmingham (Accessed: May 19 2018).

Bitler, M., Domina, T., Penner, E. and Hoynes, H. (2015) 'Distributional Analysis in Educational Evaluation: A Case Study from the New York City Voucher Program', *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness,* 8(3), pp. 419-450.

Björklund, A., Clark, M. A., Edin, P.-A., Fredriksson, P. and Krueger, A. B. (2005) *The Market Comes to Education in Sweden; An Evaluation of Sweden's Surprising School Reforms.* Russell Sage Foundation.

Björklund, Anders, et al. The Market Comes to Education in Sweden: An Evaluation of Sweden’s Surprising School Reforms (2005). Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/9781610440554. Accessed 18 Apr. 2022.

Blake, R. (2012) 'How we started up our own free school.', *Management Today*, pp. 38-42.

Bleazby, J. (2015) 'Why some school subjects have a higher status than others: The epistemology of the traditional curriculum hierarchy', *Oxford Review of Education,* 41(5), pp. 671-689.

Board of Education (1904) *Regulations for Secondary Schools*. Available at: http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/boardofed/1904-secondary-regulations.html (Accessed: March 22 2022).

Bochel, H. (2011) *The Conservative Party and social policy.* Bristol: Policy Press.

Bodine, A. (2003) 'School Uniforms and Discourses on Childhood', *Childhood,* 10(1), pp. 43-63.

Bogner, A. L., Beate Menz, Wolfgang (2018) 'The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Collection', [Online]. Version. Available at: https://sk.Sagepub.com/reference/the-Sage-handbook-of-qualitative-data-collection.

Boliver, V. and Swift, A. (2011) 'Do comprehensive schools reduce social mobility?', *The British Journal of Sociology,* 62(1), pp. 89-110.

Bottero, W. and Crossley, N. (2011) 'Worlds, fields and networks: Becker, Bourdieu and the structures of social relations', *Cultural Sociology,* 5(1), pp. 99-119.

Boudon, R. (1974) *Education, opportunity, and social inequality: changing prospects in Western society.* New York; London: Wiley-Interscience.

Bourdieu, P. (1989) *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste.* London: Routledge.

Bourdieu, P. (1990a) *In other words: Essays toward a reflexive sociology.* California: Stanford University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1990b) *The logic of practice.* California: Stanford University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1991) *Language and Symbolic Power.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard.

Bourdieu, P. (1993a) *Sociology in question.* New York: Sage.

Bourdieu, P. (1993b) *The field of cultural production.* New York: Columbia Univ. Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1998) *Acts of resistance.* New York: New Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1999) *The Weight of the World.* Cambridge: Polity Press

Bourdieu, P. and Passeron, J.C. (1990) *Reproduction in education, society and culture.* London: Sage Publ.

Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L. (1992) *An invitation to reflexive sociology.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourke, T. and Lidstone, J. (2015) 'What is Plan B? Using Foucault's archaeology to enhance policy analysis', *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education,* 36(6), pp. 833-853.

Bowe, R., Ball, S. J. and Gold, A. (1992) *Reforming education and changing schools.* London: Routledge.

Bowe, R., Ball, S. J. and Gewirtz, S. (1994) ''Parental Choice', Consumption and Social Theory: The Operation of Micro-Markets in Education', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 42, pp. 38-52.

Bowe, R., Gewirtz, S. and Ball, S. J. (1994) 'Captured by the Discourse? Issues and concerns in researching parental choice', *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 15(1), pp. 63-78.

Bowles, S. and Gintis, H. (1976) *Schooling in capitalist America: educational reform and the contradictions of economic life.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Boyask, R. (2018) 'Primary school autonomy in the context of the expanding academies programme', *Educational Management Administration & Leadership,* 46(1), pp. 107-123.

Boyatzis, R. E. (1998) *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development.* New York: Sage.

Bradley, S. and Taylor, J. (1998) 'The Effect of School Size on Exam Performance in Secondary Schools', *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics,* 60(3), pp. 291-324.

Braithwaite, R. J. (1992) 'School Choice as a Means of Attaining Excellence in Education', *Cambridge Journal of Education,* 22(1), pp. 43-53.

Braun, A., Maguire, M. and Ball, S. J. (2010) 'Policy enactments in the UK secondary school: examining policy, practice and school positioning', *Journal of Education Policy,* 25(4), pp. 547-560.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology,* 3(2), pp. 77-101.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2014) 'What can “thematic analysis” offer health and wellbeing researchers?', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being,* 9(1), pp. 26152.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2019) 'Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis', *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health,* 11(4), pp. 589-597.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2021) 'One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis?', *Qualitative Research in Psychology,* 18(3), pp. 328-352.

Braun, V., Clarke, V. and Weate, P. (2016) 'Using thematic analysis in sport and exercise research', *Routledge Handbook of Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise*. London: Routledge.

Bray, D (2019) 'The tragic inequality we inherited'. *BERA Annual Conference*, University of Manchester: BERA.

Bray, D. (2022) 'What are free schools, and what are they free from?', *Forum,* 64 (3).

Bray, D (2023) ‘Free schools and entry to England’s post-2010 field of school-supply’ *AERA Annual Conference,* Chicago: AERA i-poster available at: https://aera23-aera.ipostersessions.com/?s=32-42-CF-BC-7A-4C-60-D1-66-B4-4C-9B-24-02-72-56

Breakwell, G. M., Fife-Schaw, C. and Hammond, S. (2000) *Research methods in psychology.* 2nd edn. London: Sage.

Brehony, K. J. (1997) 'An ‘Undeniable’ and ‘Disastrous’ Influence? Dewey and English Education (1895-1939)', *Oxford Review of Education,* 23(4), pp. 427-445.

Brehony, K. J. (2001a) 'From the particular to the general, the continuous to the discontinuous', *History of Education,* 30(5), pp. 413-432.

Brehony, K. J. (2004) 'Education as a 'social function': Sociology, and social theory in the histories of Brian Simon', *History of Education (Tavistock),* 33(5), pp. 545-558.

Briggs, A., Burgess, S., McConnell, B. and Slater, H. (2006) *School Choice in England: Background Facts*. The Centre for Market and Public Organisation. Available at: http://econpapers.repec.org/paper/bricmpowp/06_2f159.htm (Accessed: July 12 2019).

Briggs, D. (2009) 'NEPC Review: Charter Schools in Eight States: Effects on Achievement, Attainment, Integration and Competition'. Available at: https://scholar.colorado.edu/concern/defaults/rv042v01t (Accessed: April 10 2021)

Brighouse, H. (2000) *School choice and social justice.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brighouse, T. (2020) *Education system design: foundations, policy options and consequences.* London: Routledge.

British listed buildings (2022) *Eveline Lowe School*. Available at: https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101391693-eveline-lowe-school-south-bermondsey-ward/photos/25988#.Y8rifq1_phF (Accessed: December 19 2022).

Britton, J. and Propper, C. (2016) 'Teacher pay and school productivity: Exploiting wage regulation', *Journal of Public Economics,* 133, pp. 75-89.

Broadbent, J. and Laughlin, R. (1997) 'Contracts and competition? A reflection on the nature and effects of recent legislation on modes of control in schools', *Cambridge Journal of Economics,* 21(2), pp. 277-290.

Brown, A. and Danaher, P. A. (2019) 'CHE Principles: facilitating authentic and dialogical semi-structured interviews in educational research', *International Journal of Research & Method in Education,* 42(1), pp. 76-90.

Brown, H., Henig, J., Lacireno-Paquet, N. and Holyoke, T. T. (2004) 'Scale of Operations and Locus of Control in Market- Versus Mission-Oriented Charter Schools', *Social Science Quarterly,* 85(5), pp. 1035-1051.

Bryant, A. and Charmaz, K. (2019) *The SAGE handbook of current developments in grounded theory.* London: Sage.

Bryman, A. (2015) *Social research methods* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Buchanan, J. (2010) 'May I be excused? Why teachers leave the profession', *Asia Pacific Journal of Education,* 30(2), pp. 199-211.

Bulkley, K. and Fisler, J. (2003) 'A Decade of Charter Schools: From Theory to Practice', *Educational Policy,* 17(3), pp. 317-342.

Bunar, N. (2008) 'The Free Schools “Riddle”: Between traditional social democratic, neo-liberal and multicultural tenets', *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research,* 52(4), pp. 423-438.

Bunar, N. (2010a) 'Choosing for quality or inequality: current perspectives on the implementation of school choice policy in Sweden', *Journal of Education Policy,* 25(1), pp. 1-18.

Bunar, N. (2010b) 'The Controlled School Market and Urban Schools in Sweden', *Journal of School Choice,* 4(1), pp. 47-73.

Burgess, S., Greaves, E. and Murphy, R. (2022) 'Deregulating Teacher Labor Markets', *Economics of Education Review,* 88, pp. 102253.

Burgess, S., Greaves, E. and Vignoles, A. (2019) 'School choice in England: evidence from national administrative data', *Oxford Review of Education,* 45(5), pp. 690-710.

Burgess, S., Greaves, E., Vignoles, A. and Wilson, D. (2011) 'Parental choice of primary school in England: what types of school do different types of family really have available to them?', *Policy Studies,* 32(5), pp. 531-547.

Burgess, S., Greaves, E., Vignoles, A. and Wilson, D. (2015) 'What Parents Want: School Preferences and School Choice', *The Economic Journal,* 125(587), pp. 1262-1289.

Burt, C. (1917) *The Distribution and Relations of Educational Abilities*. London: London County Council. Available at: https://openlibrary.org/works/OL1366524W/The_distribution_and_relations_of_educational_abilities?edition=distributionrela00burtrich (Accessed: April 18 2019).

Burt, C. (1948) *The young delinquent.* London: University of London Press.

Byrne, B. (2009) 'Not just class: towards an understanding of the whiteness of middle-class schooling choice', *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* 32(3), pp. 424-441.

Caillier, J. (2010) 'Paying Teachers According To Student Achievement: Questions Regarding Pay-For-Performance Models in Public Education', *The Clearing House,* 83(2), pp. 58-61.

Callaghan, J. (1976). ‘A rational debate based on the facts’, Ruskin College, 18th October. Available at: http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/speeches/1976ruskin.html (Accessed April 17 2022).

Cameron, D. (2007) *Raising the bar closing the gap*. Available at: https://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/599738 (Accessed: June 18 2020).

Cameron, D. (2011a) *Free Schools Conference: Address by Prime Minister*. Available at: https://www.tes.com/en-us/teaching-resource/free-schools-conference-address-by-prime-minister-6367463 (Accessed: May 11 2020).

Cameron, D. (2011b) *Speech on the Big Society*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/speech-on-the-big-society (Accessed: April 9 2020).

Cameron, D. (2015) *Prime Minister: we will not waver in free schools pledge*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-we-will-not-waver-in-free-schools-pledge (Accessed: April 15 2021).

Cannata, M. (2011) 'Charter Schools and the Teacher Job Search', *Journal of School Choice,* 5(1), pp. 111-133.

Carnevale, A. P. and Smith, N. (2013) 'Workplace basics: the skills employees need and employers want', *Human Resources Development International,* 16(5), pp. 491-501.

Carr, D. (1998) 'Traditionalism and Progressivism: a perennial problematic of educational theory and policy', *Westminster Studies in Education,* 21(1), pp. 47-55.

Carrasco, A., Hernández, M., Honey, N. and Oyarzún, J. d. D. (2021) 'School admission in Chile, new rules of the game, and the devaluation of Middle-class capitals', *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 42(2), pp. 179-195.

Caslin, M. (2021) '‘They have just given up on me’ How pupils labelled with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) experience the process of exclusion from school', *Support for Learning,* 36(1), pp. 116-132.

Castleberry, A. and Nolen, A. (2018) 'Thematic analysis of qualitative research data: Is it as easy as it sounds?', *Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning,* 10(6), pp. 807-815.

Chamberlin, R., Wragg, T., Haynes, G. and Wragg, C. (2002) 'Performance-related pay and the teaching profession: a review of the literature', *Research Papers in Education,* 17(1), pp. 31-49.

Chapman, C. (2013) 'Academy Federations, Chains, and Teaching Schools in England: Reflections on Leadership, Policy, and Practice', *Journal of School Choice,* 7(3), pp. 334-352.

Chapman, C. and Salokangas, M. (2012) 'Independent state-funded schools: some reflections on recent developments', *School Leadership & Management,* 32(5), pp. 473-486.

Charteris-Black, J. (2018) *Analysing political speeches.* Second edn. Oxford: Macmillan Education.

Chilcoat, G. W. and Ligon, J. A. (1998) '“We Talk Here. This Is a School for Talking.” Participatory Democracy from the Classroom out into the Community: How

Discussion Was Used in the Mississippi Freedom Schools', *Curriculum Inquiry,* 28(2), pp. 165-193.

Child, H. A. T. (1962) *The Independent Progressive School.* London: Hutchinson.

Chilton, P. (2004) *Analysing Political Discourse.* First edn. London: Routledge.

Chilton, P. and Schäffner, C. (2002) *Politics as Text and Talk: Analytic approaches to political discourse. Discourse Approaches to Politics, Society and Culture*. Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Chilvers, D. (2020) 'Our ‘non negotiables'', *Early Years Educator,* 21(12), pp. 32-34.

Chitty, C. (1989) *Towards a new education system: The victory of the new right?* First edn. London: Falmer.

Chitty, C. (1998) 'The ‘Moment of 1976’ Revisited', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 46(3), pp. 318-323.

Chitty, C. (2002) *The Right to a Comprehensive Education*. Available at: https://socedassoc.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/cbml_2002.pdf (Accessed: May 20 2021).

Chitty, C. (2005) 'The Challenges Facing Comprehensive Schools', *Forum for Comprehensive Education,* 47(2).

Chitty, C. (2013) *New Labour and Secondary Education, 1994-2010. Secondary Education in a Changing World* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Chomsky, N. (2011) *The Essential Chomsky.* New Press/ORIM.

Chubb, J. E. and Moe, T. M. (1988) 'Politics, Markets, and the Organization of Schools', *American Political Science Review,* 82(4), pp. 1065-1087.

Chubb, J. E. and Moe, T. M. (1990a) 'America's Public Schools: Choice Is a Panacea', *The Brookings Review,* 8(3), pp. 4-12.

Chubb, J. E. and Moe, T. M. (1990b) *Politics, markets, and America's schools.* Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.

Clark, C. (1998) 'Discipline in Schools', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 46(3), pp. 289-301.

Clarke, J., Newman, J. and Westmarland, L., 2007. Creating citizen-consumers? Public service reform and (un) willing selves. In: *On willing selves: Neoliberal politics vis-á-vis the neuroscientific challenge* (pp. 125-145). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Clarke, V. B. and Braun, C. (2017) Thematic analysis: a practical guide. In: *APA handbook of research methods in psychology. quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, pp. 57-71.

Cobb, C. D. and Glass, G. V. (1999) 'Ethnic Segregation in Arizona Charter Schools', *Education Policy Analysis Archives,* 7, pp. 1.

Cobb, C. J. R. (2011) 'Freedom's Struggle and Freedom Schools', *Monthly Review,* (no. 3), pp. 104-113.

Cobban, J. M. (1969) 'The Direct-Grant School', *Critical Survey,* 4(1), pp. 39-42.

Cochran-Smith, M. and Fries, M. K. (2001) 'Sticks, stones, and ideology: The discourse of reform in teacher education', *Educational Researcher,* 30(8), pp. 3-15.

Codd, J. A. (1988) 'The construction and deconstruction of educational policy documents', *Journal of Education Policy,* 3(3), pp. 235-247.

Coffey, A. and Atkinson, P. (1996) *Making sense of qualitative data: complementary research strategies.* London: Thousand Oaks; Sage.

Cohen, J. (1960) 'A Coefficient of Agreement for Nominal Scales', *Educational and Psychological Measurement,* 20(1), pp. 37-46.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (1993) *Research Methods in Education.* London: Taylor & Francis Group.

Coldron, J. and Boulton, P. (1991) ''Happiness' as a criterion of parents' choice of school', *Journal of Education Policy,* 6(2), pp. 169-178.

Coldron, J., Willis, B. and Wolstenholme, C. (2009) 'Selection by attainment and apitude in English secondary schools', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 57(3), pp. 245-264.

Cole, M. (1998) 'Globalisation, modernisation and competitiveness: A critique of the new labour project in education', *International Studies in the Sociology of Education,* 8(3), pp. 315-333.

Coles, J. (2013) ''Every child's birthright'? Democratic entitlement and the role of canonical literature in the English National Curriculum', *Curriculum Journal,* 24(1), pp. 50-66.

Connerton, P. (2008) 'Seven types of forgetting', *Memory Studies,* 1(1), pp. 59-71.

Connolly, V. (2021) 'Can less be more? Instruction time and attainment in English secondary schools: Evidence from panel data', *London Review of Education,* 19(1).

Conquest, R. (1969) 'Undotheboys Hall', *Critical Survey,* 4(1), pp. 17-20.

Constantinides, M. (2021) 'Instructional reform and multiple institutional logics: insights from executive leadership in English Multi-Academy Trusts', *Educational Review*, pp. 1-18.

Conway, D. (2010) *Liberal education and the national curriculum*. London: Civitas. Available at: https://www.civitas.org.uk/content/files/LiberalEducation.pdf (Accessed: May 10 2021).

Corrigan, P. and Sayer, D. (1985) *The Great Arch. English state formation as cultural revolution.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Coulthard, M. (2014) *An introduction to discourse analysis.* Oxfordshire, England: Routledge.

Courtney, S. J. (2015) 'Mapping school types in England', *Oxford Review of Education,* 41(6), pp. 799-818.

Courtney, S. J. (2017) 'Corporatising school leadership through hysteresis', *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 38(7), pp. 1054-1067.

Courtney, S.J. and McGinity, R., 2022. System leadership as depoliticisation: Reconceptualising educational leadership in a new multi-academy trust. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 50(6), pp.893-910.

Cowen, N. (2008) *Swedish Lessons How Schools With More Freedom Can Deliver Better Education.* London: Civitas.

Cox, C. B. (1969) 'In Praise of Examinations', *Critical Survey,* 4(1), pp. 36-56.

Cox, C. B. (1975) *Black paper 1975: The fight for education.* London: Dent.

Cox, C. B. and Dyson, A. E. (1969) 'Comment', *Critical Survey,* 4(1), pp. 1-6.

Cox, C. B. and Dyson, A. E. (1971) *The Black Papers on Education - collection.* London: Davis-Poynter.

Crawford, C. E. (2019) 'The one-in-ten: quantitative Critical Race Theory and the education of the ‘new (white) oppressed’', *Journal of Education Policy,* 34(3), pp. 423-444.

Cribb, A. and Gewirtz, S. (2007) 'Unpacking Autonomy and Control in Education: Some Conceptual and Normative Groundwork for a Comparative Analysis', *European Educational Research Journal,* 6(3), pp. 203-213.

Crockett, D. and Wallendorf, M. (1998) 'Sociological Perspectives on Imposed School Dress Codes: Consumption as Attempted Suppression of Class and Group Symbolism', *Journal of Macromarketing,* 18(2), pp. 115-131.

Cummings, D. (2011) 'My essay on an ‘Odyssean’ Education', *Dominic Cummings's Blog*. Available at: https://dominiccummings.com/the-odyssean-project-2/ (Accessed: May 10 2021)

Curtis, A. (2009) 'Academies and school diversity', *Management in Education,* 23(3), pp. 113-117.

Curtis, A., Exley, S., Sasia, A., Tough, S. and Whitty, G. (2008) *The Academies programme: Progress, problems and possibilities*. London: Sutton Trust. Available at: https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/30364/1/AcademiesReportFinal2-1.pdf (Accessed: April 14 2019).

D'Amico, D. (2016) 'Teachers' Rights Versus Students' Rights: Race and Professional Authority in the New York City Public Schools, 1960—1986', *American Educational Research Journal,* 53(3), pp. 541-572.

Daily Mail (2014) *Teachers lazy and often turn up late says 'superhead'*. Available at: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2816819/Teachers-lazy-turn-late-t-bothered-set-homework-says-superhead-sent-failing-school.html (Accessed: May 10 2020).

Daily Mail (2021) *Parents blast new headteacher's strict school rules*. Available at: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9749869/Parents-blast-new-headteachers-strict-school-rules-include-smiling.html May 10 2019).

Dale, R. (1989) 'The Thatcherite project in education: the case of the City Technology Colleges', *Critical Social Policy,* 9(27), pp. 4-19.

Dale, R. (1997). Educational Markets and School Choice. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 18(3), 451–468. https://doi.org/10.1080/0142569970180310

Danaher, G., Schirato, T. and Webb, J. (2001) *Understanding Bourdieu. Understanding Bourdieu* London: Sage

Danish Folk High Schools (2017) *The free Danish school tradition*. Available at: https://www.danishfolkhighschools.com/media/14286/faelles_international_web.pdf (Accessed: May 9 2021).

Darling, J. (1986) 'Child-centred, Gender-centred: a criticism of progressive curriculum theory from Rousseau to Plowden', *Oxford Review of Education,* 12(1), pp. 31-40.

Davies, P., Diamond, C. and Perry, T. (2021) 'Implications of autonomy and networks for costs and inclusion: Comparing patterns of school spending under different governance systems', *Educational Management Administration & Leadership,* 49(1), pp. 128-144.

Davies, S., Forsey, M. and Walford, G. (2008) *The globalisation of school choice? Oxford studies in comparative education* Oxford: Symposium Books.

Davis, J. (2002) 'The Inner London Education Authority and the William Tyndale Junior School Affair, 1974-1976', *Oxford Review of Education,* 28(2-3), pp. 275-298.

Deakin, J., Taylor, E. and Kupchik, A. eds., 2018. *The Palgrave international handbook of school discipline, surveillance, and social control*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Dean, D. (1998) 'Circular 10/65 Revisited: The Labour Government and the “Comprehensive Revolution” in 1964-1965', *Pedagogica Historia,* 34(1), pp. 63-91.

DeBray-Pelot, E. H., Lubienski, C. A. and Scott, J. T. (2007) 'The Institutional Landscape of Interest Group Politics and School Choice', *Peabody Journal of Education,* 82(2-3), pp. 204-230.

De St Croix, T. (2017). Research and policy in education: evidence, ideology and impact. By Geoff Whitty with Jake Anders, Annette Hayton, Sarah Tang and Emma Wisby. British Journal of Educational Studies, 65(3), 408–410. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2017.1353303

Deem, R. and Davies, M. (1991) 'Opting Out of Local Authority Control -Using the Education Reform Act to Defend the Comprehensive Ideal: a case study in educational policy implementation', *International Studies in Sociology of Education,* 1(1-2), pp. 153-172.

Dennison, G. (1969) *The lives of children.* London: Random.

Denscombe, M. (2017) *The good research guide: for small-scale social research projects.* Maidenhead, United Kingdom: McGraw-Hill Education.

Department for Business Innovation and Skills (2009) *Science and Mathematics Secondary* Available at: https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/492/7/Science-and-Learning-Expert-Group-Report-Annexes-31_Redacted.pdf (Accessed: January 14 2021

Department for Education (2010a) *Free schools*. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20101016041059/http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools (Accessed: July 9 2020).

Department for Education (2010b) *Free Schools FAQs*. Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/freeschoolsfaqs (Accessed: March 10 2019).

Department for Education (2010c) *Free Schools FAQs - Accountability*. Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/freeschoolsfaqs/a0063496/free-schools-faqs-accountability/ (Accessed: March 10 2019).

Department for Education (2010d) *Free Schools FAQs - Admissions*. Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/freeschoolsfaqs/a0063489/free-schools-faqs-admissions/ (Accessed: March 10 2019).

Department for Education (2010e) *Free Schools FAQs - Funding and premises*. Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/freeschoolsfaqs/a0063481/free-schools-faqs-funding-and-premises/ (Accessed: March 10 2019).

Department for Education (2010f) *Free Schools FAQs - General*. Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/freeschoolsfaqs/a0063473/free-schools-faqs-general/ (Accessed: March 10 2019).

Department for Education (2010g) *Free Schools FAQs - Requirements*. Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/freeschoolsfaqs/a0061433/free-schools-faqs-requirements/ (Accessed: March 10 2019).

Department for Education (2010h) *Free Schools FAQs - Support*. Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/freeschoolsfaqs/a0063480/free-schools-faqs-support/ (Accessed: March 10 2019).

Department for Education (2010i) *‘Free Schools will enable excellent teachers to create new schools and improve standards for all children.’*. Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/pressnotices/a0061429/gove-free-schools-will-enable-excellent-teachers-to-create-new-schools-and-improve-standards-for-all-children (Accessed: May 16 2021).

Department for Education (2010j) *Letter from the Secretary of State to LAs introducing Free Schools*. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20101016041650/http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/l/letter%20from%20the%20secretary%20of%20state%20to%20las%20introducing%20free%20schools.pdf (Accessed: March 10 2019).

Department for Education (2010k) *Michael Gove outlines process for setting up free schools*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/michael-gove-outlines-process-for-setting-up-free-schools (Accessed: May 3 2020).

Department for Education (2010l) *Michael Gove's written ministerial statement relating to new Free School proposals*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/michael-goves-written-ministerial-statement-relating-to-new-free-school-proposals (Accessed: July 16 2020).

Department for Education (2010m) *National pupil projections: June 2010* (Accessed: March 10 2019).

Department for Education (2010n) *School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document 2010 and Guidance on School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions*. London: Department for Education. Available at: https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130321074055/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/2010%20PandC%20All%20sections.pdf (Accessed: June 10 2020).

Department for Education (2010o) *The case for change: The importance of teaching*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/526946/The_case_for_change_The_importance_of_teaching.pdf (Accessed: May16 2019).

Department for Education (2010p) *The Importance of Teaching: The Schools White Paper, 2010*. London: Department for Education. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175429/CM-7980.pdf (Accessed: May 16 2019).

Department for Education (2010q) *What are free schools?* Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/a0061428/what-are-free-schools (Accessed: March 18 2019).

Department for Education (2010r) *Written Ministerial Statement from Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove*. Available at: http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/f/written%20ministerial%20statement%20relating%20to%20new%20free%20school%20proposals.pdf (Accessed: March 10 2019).

Department for Education (2011a) *Eight free schools have business plans approved*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/eight-free-schools-have-business-plans-approved (Accessed: June 16 2020).

Department for Education (2011b) *Free school launch event 2011 - videos and speeches*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/user/educationgovuk (Accessed: June 21 2018).

Department for Education (2011c) *Free Schools Conference: The class of 2011*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XBn7K_Xw790&feature=emb_logo (Accessed: June 15 2020).

Department for Education (2011d) *Free Schools FAQs - Safeguarding, SEN and exclusions*. Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/freeschoolsfaqs/a0063493/free-schools-faqs-safeguarding-sen-and-exclusions/ (Accessed: March 10 2019).

Department for Education (2011e) *How to apply to open a Free School*. Available at: https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20120209133256/http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/a0074965/apply (Accessed: June 08 2019).

Department for Education (2011f) *Kempston Academy*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qgf53eRRrm0 (Accessed: June 15 2020).

Department for Education (2011g) *Michael Gove on Free Schools*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1MLWv6NUK0g (Accessed: June 15 2020).

Department for Education (2011h) *Review of vocational education: the Wolf report*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-vocational-education-the-wolf-report (Accessed: July 13 2021).

Department for Education (2011i) *Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2011*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2011 (Accessed: May 18 2019).

Department for Education (2011j) *Stour Valley Community School*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgiAPawQz9Y (Accessed: June 15 2020).

Department for Education (2011k) *Teachers' Standards*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards (Accessed: June 15 2020).

Department for Education (2011l) *The Free School Norwich*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NT4RIuiUhF0 (Accessed: June 15 2020).

Department for Education (2011m) *US charter schools experts to speak at free schools conference*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/us-charter-schools-experts-to-speak-at-free-schools-conference (Accessed: June 16 2020).

Department for Education (2012) *End for GCSE modules and spelling, punctuation and grammar marks restored to exams*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/end-for-gcse-modules-and-spelling-punctuation-and-grammar-marks-restored-to-exams (Accessed: June 16 2021).

Department for Education (2013a) *Evaluation of pupil premium*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/243919/DFE-RR282.pdf (Accessed: June 27 2021).

Department for Education (2013b) *Guidance on opening a free school (2013)*. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20130126141036/http://education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/a0074965/apply (Accessed: June 17 2020).

Department for Education (2013c) *National curriculum in England: primary curriculum*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-primary-curriculum (Accessed: June 17 2020).

Department for Education (2013d) *National curriculum in England: secondary curriculum*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-secondary-curriculum (Accessed: June 17 2021).

Department for Education (2014a) *Are free schools using innovative approaches?* Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/401458/DFE-RR286_-_Are_free_schools_using_innovative_approaches.pdf (Accessed: August 16 2021).

Department for Education (2014b) *Free school application form*. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20120904183850/https:/media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/h/how%20to%20apply%20guidance%20mainstream%20free%20school%20%20%20updated%203%20august%202012.pdf (Accessed: June 17 2020).

Department for Education (2014c) *Free schools: Ofsted inspection grades*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/357764/Free_schools_-_Ofsted_grades_v3.pdf (Accessed: June 17.

Department for Education (2014d) *Letters to successful free school applicants: wave 1*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letters-sent-to-successful-free-school-applicants-wave-1 (Accessed: June 17 2020).

Department for Education (2016a) *Free school applications*

*Applicants proposing to open a free school along with their applications forms, impact assessments and pre-registration inspections notes.* Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/free-school-applications (Accessed: March 15 2019).

Department for Education (2016b) *What academies, free schools and colleges should publish online*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-academies-free-schools-and-colleges-should-publish-online (Accessed: June 17 2020).

Department for Education (2018a) *School workload reduction toolkit*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-workload-reduction-toolkit (Accessed: May 10 2021).

Department for Education (2018b) *What academies, free schools and colleges should publish online*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-academies-free-schools-and-colleges-should-publish-online (Accessed: June 17 2020).

Department for Education (2019a) *Establishing a new school: free school presumption*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/establishing-a-new-school-free-school-presumption (Accessed: November 18 2019).

Department for Education (2019b) *Find and compare schools in England*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/school-performance-tables (Accessed: June 19 2020).

Department for Education (2019c) *Guidance English Baccalaureate (EBacc)* (Accessed: May 18 2020).

Department for Education (2019d) *How to apply to set up a mainstream free school*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/830148/How_to_apply_guide_W14_v3.pdf (Accessed: June 19 2020).

Department for Education (2019e) *Introduction to free schools and New Schools Network*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3QmkPjc0kW8 (Accessed: June 19 2020).

Department for Education (2019f) *Open academies, free schools, studio schools and UTCs*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-academies-and-academy-projects-in-development (Accessed: June 17 2019).

Department for Education (2019g) *PM pledges thousands more good school places*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-pledges-thousands-more-good-school-places (Accessed: June 19 2021).

Department for Education (2019h) *School teachers' pay and conditions document 2019 and guidance on school teachers' pay and conditions*. London: DfE. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/832634/School_teachers_pay_and_conditions_2019.pdf (Accessed: June 19 2020).

Department for Education (2020a) *Completing the mainstream and 16 to 19 free school 2020 to 2021 financial template*. London. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/887151/Completing_the_mainstream_and_16-19_free_school_2020_financial_template.pdf (Accessed: May 6 2020).

Department for Education (2020b) *Development Matters: Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/914443/Development_Matters_-_Non-statutory_curriculum_guidance_for_the_early_years_foundation_stage__1_.pdf (Accessed: June 25 2020).

Department for Education (2020c) *Early years foundation stage profile handbook*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-handbook (Accessed: June 25 2020).

Department for Education (2020d) *Free school applications*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/free-school-applications (Accessed: January 25 2020).

Department for Education (2020e) *Free school pre-opening guide*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-school-pre-opening-guide/free-school-pre-opening-guide#staffing-education-plans-and-policies (Accessed: May 6 2020).

Department for Education (2020f) *Reducing school workload*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/reducing-school-workload (Accessed: May 6 2020).

Department for Education (2020g) *School design and construction*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/school-design-and-construction (Accessed: May 24 2020).

Department for Education (2020h) *School teachers' pay and conditions document 2020 and guidance on school teachers' pay and conditions*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/920904/2020_STPCD_FINAL_230920.pdf (Accessed: May 6 2020).

Department for Education (2020i) *School workforce in England*. Available at: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england (Accessed: May 10 2021).

Department for Education (2020j) *Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage: Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five EYFS reforms*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/896810/EYFS_Early_Adopter_Framework.pdf (Accessed: June 25 2021).

Department for Education (2020k) *What maintained schools must publish online*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online (Accessed: June 25 2020).

Department for Education (2021a) *Free school applications*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/free-school-applications (Accessed: May 24 2021).

Department for Education (2021b) *School Admissions Code* Mandatory requirements and statutory guidance for admission authorities, governing bodies, local authorities, schools adjudicators and admission appeals panels. London. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1001050/School_admissions_code_2021.pdf (Accessed: October 17 2021).

Department for Education (2022a) *Free school applications*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/free-school-applications#approved-free-school-application-forms (Accessed: December 30 2022.

Department for Education (2022b) *How to apply to set up a mainstream free school*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-school-application-guide/how-to-apply-to-set-up-a-mainstream-free-school#who-can-apply (Accessed: December 15 2022).

Department for Education (2022c) *Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/opportunity-for-all-strong-schools-with-great-teachers-for-your-child (Accessed: August 21 2022).

Department for Education (2022d) *What is a free school? Everything you need to know*. Available at: https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2022/06/10/what-is-a-free-school-everything-you-need-to-know/ (Accessed: May 17 2021).

Department for Children Schools and Families (2009) School Teachers' Review Body Eighteenth report part two – 2009. London: DCSF. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/238592/7652.pdf (Accessed: June 10 2019).

Department for Education and Employment (1998) *Teachers: meeting the challenge of change*. Available at: http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/gp1998/teachers-change.html (Accessed: July 15 2021).

Department of Education and Science (1965a) Circular 10/65 The organisation of secondary education. Available at: http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/des/circular10-65.html (Accessed: November 17 2020).

Department of Education and Science (1985b) The Curriculum from 5 to 16. Available at: http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/hmi-curricmatters/curriculum.html (Accessed: November 17 2020).

Department of Education and Science (1989) Discipline in schools Report of the committee of enquiry chaired by Lord Elton. Available at: http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/elton/elton1989.html (Accessed: June 10 2019).

Dewey, J. (1923) *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education.* London: Macmillan.

Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of to-morrow.* New York: E. P. Dutton and Company.

Diane, K.A. (2014) *Inspection at Summerhill: did OFSTED inspection result in improvement?* Available at: https://leicester.figshare.com/articles/thesis/Inspection_at_Summerhill_did_OFSTED_inspection_result_in_improvement_/10135454 (Accessed: May 24 2021).

Dijk, T. A. v. (1993) *Elite discourse and racism. Sage series on race and ethnic relations.* Newbury Park: Sage.

Dilnot, C. (2018) 'The relationship between A-level subject choice and league table score of university attended: the ‘facilitating’, the ‘less suitable’, and the counter-intuitive', *Oxford Review of Education,* 44(1), pp. 118-137.

DiMaggio, P. J. and Powell, W. W. (1983) 'The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields', *American Sociological Review,* 48(2), pp. 147-160.

Dimmock, C. (2011) 'Diversifying Schools and Leveraging School Improvement: a Comparative Analysis of The English Radical, and Singapore Conservative, Specialist Schools' Policies', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 59(4), pp. 439-458.

Dixon, R. (1991) 'Local management of schools', *Public Money and Management,* 11(3), pp. 47-52.

Dolton, P. and Marcenaro-Gutierrez, O. (2011) 'If you pay peanuts do you get monkeys? A cross-country analysis of teacher pay and pupil performance', *Economic Policy,* 26(65), pp. 5-55.

Douglas, H. (2012) 'Michael Gove: Don’t let Labour be enemies of promise', *Daily Express.* Available at: https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/301568/Michael-Gove-Don-t-let-Labour-be-enemies-of-promise (Accessed: February 03 2021).

Downes, G.A., 2018. *The construction of new moral spaces in the development of an English free school* (Doctoral dissertation, Bath Spa University). Available at: https://researchspace.bathspa.ac.uk/11573/1/11573.pdf (Accessed May 10 2022)

Dronkers, J. and Robert, P. (2008) 'School Choice in the Light of the Effectiveness Differences of Various Types of Public and Private Schools in 19 OECD Countries', *Journal of School Choice,* 2(3), pp. 260-301.

Du Gay, P. (1996) *Consumption and identity at work.* London: Sage.

Dumais, S. A. (2002) 'Cultural Capital, Gender, and School Success: The Role of Habitus', *Sociology of Education,* 75(1), pp. 44-68.

Dyson, A. E. (1969) 'The Sleep of Reason', *Critical Survey,* 4(1), pp. 78-79.

Education Policy Institute (2017) *Free Schools in England*. Available at: https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Free_schools_EPI_Report_.pdf (Accessed: May 17 2019).

Education Policy Institute (2019) *Free schools in England*. Available at: https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/free-schools-2019-report/ (Accessed: June 24 2020).

Edwards, T. and Whitty, G. (1992) 'Parental choice and educational reform in Britain and the United States', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 40(2), pp. 101-117.

Edwards, T. and Whitty, G. (1997) 'Specialisation and Selection in Secondary Education', *Oxford Review of Education,* 23(1), pp. 5-15.

Egalite, A. J. and Wolf, P. J. (2016) 'A Review of the Empirical Research on Private School Choice', *Peabody Journal of Education,* 91(4), pp. 441-454.

Eggleston, J. (1977) *The sociology of the school curriculum.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Eggleston, J. (2018) *School-based curriculum development in Britain: A collection of case studies.* London: Routledge.

Elliott, J. (2018) 'Teach First organisational discourse: What are Teach First teachers really being trained for?', *Power and Education,* 10(3), pp. 264-274.

Elwood, S. A. and Martin, D. G. (2000) '"Placing" Interviews: Location and Scales of Power in Qualitative Research', *The Professional Geographer,* 52(4), pp. 649-657.

Emirbayer, M. and Johnson, V. (2008) 'Bourdieu and organizational analysis', *Theory and Society,* 37(1), pp. 1-44.

English, F. W. (2012) 'Bourdieu's misrecognition: why educational leadership standards will not reform schools or leadership', *Journal of Educational Administration and History,* 44(2), pp. 155-170.

Esper, T. (2023) 'Quasi-markets, accountability, and innovation: analyzing the case of Free Schools in England through teachers' perspectives', *Revista Española de Educación Comparada,* (42), pp. 193-220. Available at: https://redined.educacion.gob.es/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11162/242504/Quasimarkets.pdf?sequence=1 (Accessed: May 10 2022)

Evans, L. (2011) 'The ‘shape’ of teacher professionalism in England: Professional standards, performance management, professional development and the changes proposed in the 2010 White Paper', *British Educational Research Journal,* 37(5), pp. 851-870.

Exley, S. (2013) 'Making working-class parents think more like middle-class parents: Choice Advisers in English education', *Journal of Education Policy,* 28(1), pp. 77-94.

Exley, S. (2014) 'Are Quasi-markets in Education what the British Public Wants?', *Social Policy & Administration,* 48(1), pp. 24-43.

Exley, S. (2019) '‘Opening up’ Education Policy Making in England – Space for Ordinary Citizens’ Participation?', *Representation*, pp. 1-17.

Eyles, A., Hupkau, C. and Machin, S. (2016) 'Academies, charter and free schools: do new school types deliver better outcomes?', *Economic Policy,* 31(87), pp. 453-501.

Fairclough, N. (1995) *Critical discourse analysis.* First edn. London: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (2000) *New Labour, New Language?* London: Routledge.

Fairclough, N. (2003) *Analysing Discourse.* London: Routledge.

Fairclough, N. (2013) 'Critical discourse analysis and critical policy studies', *Critical Policy Studies,* 7(2), pp. 177-197.

Fairclough, N. (2015) *Language and power.* Third edn. London: Routledge.

Fantini, M. (1971) 'Options for Students, Parents, and Teachers: Public Schools of Choice', *The Phi Delta Kappan,* 52(9), pp. 541-543.

Fantini, M. (1976) *Alternative education: a source book for parents, teachers, students and administrators.* New York: Anchor Books.

Fantini, M. and Gittell, M. (1969) 'The Ocean Hill: Brownsville Experiment', *The Phi Delta Kappan,* 50(8), pp. 442-445.

Farrell, C. and Morris, J. (2009) 'Still Searching for the Evidence? Evidence-based Policy, Performance Pay and Teachers', *Journal of Industrial Relations,* 51(1), pp. 75-94.

Farrell, F., Duckworth, V., Reece, M. and Rigby, P. (2016) 'The moral frontiers of English education policy: governmentality and ethics within an alternative provision free school', *Educational Review,* 69(3), pp. 349-365.

Fensham-Smith, A. J. (2021) 'Invisible pedagogies in home education: Freedom, power and control', *Journal of Pedagogy,* 12(1), pp. 5-27.

Ferrare, J. J. and Apple, M. W. (2015) 'Field theory and educational practice: Bourdieu and the pedagogic qualities of local field positions in educational contexts', *Cambridge Journal of Education,* 45(1), pp. 43-59.

Fitz, J., Gorard, S. and Taylor, C. (2003) *Schools, markets and choice policies.* London: Routledge.

Fitz, J., Halpin, D. and Power, S. (1993) *Grant maintained schools.* First edn. London: Kogan Page.

Fitz, J., Halpin, D. and Power, S. (1997) ''Between a Rock and a Hard Place': diversity, institutional identity and grant-maintained schools', *Oxford Review of Education,* 23(1), pp. 17-30.

Fjellman, A.-M., Yang Hansen, K. and Beach, D. (2019) 'School choice and implications for equity: the new political geography of the Swedish upper secondary school market', *Educational Review,* 71(4), pp. 518-539.

Flick, U. (2014) *An introduction to qualitative research.* Sage.

Foucault, M. (1979) *Discipline and punish.* New York: Vintage Books.

Fox, J. L. (2002) 'Organizational structures and perceived cultures of community-charter schools in Ohio', *Phi Delta Kappan,* 83(7), pp. 525-531.

Francis, B. and Mills, M. (2012) 'Schools as damaging organisations: instigating a dialogue concerning alternative models of schooling', *Pedagogy, Culture & Society,* 20(2), pp. 251-271.

Freedman, S., Lipson, B. and Hargreaves, D. H. (2008) *More good teachers*: Policy Exchange London. Available at: https://policyexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/more-good-teachers-apr-08.pdf (Accessed: April 15 2021)

Freire, P. (1970) *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York: Bloomsbury Academic & Professional.

Friedman, M. (1962) *Capitalism and freedom* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Friedrich, J. and Shanks, R. (2023) ''The prison of the body': school uniforms between discipline and governmentality', *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education,* 44(1), pp. 16-29.

Furlong, J. (2005) 'New Labour and teacher education', *Oxford Review of Education,* 31(1), pp. 119-134.

Fusarelli, L. D. (1999) 'Reinventing Urban Education in Texas: Charter Schools, Smaller Schools, and the New Institutionalism', *Education and Urban Society,* 31(2), pp. 214-224.

Gale, T. (1999) 'Fair contest or elite sponsorship? Entry settlements in Australian higher education', *Higher Education Policy,* 12, pp. 69-91.

Gale, T. (2001) 'Critical policy sociology: historiography, archaeology and genealogy as methods of policy analysis', *Journal of Education Policy,* 16(5), pp. 379-393.

Gardiner, J. B. (2015) *Social Class and Educational Achievement in Modern Britain*. ResearchGate. Available at: https://explore.openaire.eu/search/other?orpId=datacite____::c03964e4096209f5185336adb3e5ee44 (Accessed: February 10 2021).

Garry, J., Rush, C., Hillary, J., Cullinane, C. and Montacute, R. (2018) *Free for All? Analysing free schools in England, 2018*: NFER and The Sutton Trust. Available at: https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/2734/free.pdf (Accessed: April 06 2021).

Gauri, V. (1999) *School choice in Chile: two decades of education reform.* USA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Gee, J. P. (2014) *An introduction to discourse analysis: theory and method.* Fourth edn. Oxfordshire, England: Routledge.

Geertz, C. (1973) *The interpretation of cultures.* New York: Basic books.

Gerrard, J. (2014) 'Counter-narratives of educational excellence: free schools, success, and community-based schooling', *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 35(6), pp. 876-894.

Gerring, J. (2012) 'Mere Description', *British Journal of Political Science,* 42(4), pp. 721-746.

Gewirtz, S. (1998) 'Can All Schools be Successful? An exploration of the determinants of school ‘success’', *Oxford Review of Education,* 24(4), pp. 439-457.

Gewirtz, S. (2003) *The managerial school: Post-welfarism and social justice in education.* London: Routledge.

Gewirtz, S., Ball, S. J. and Bowe, R. (1994) 'Parents, privilege and the education market-place', *Research Papers in Education,* 9(1), pp. 3-29.

Gewirtz, S., Maguire, M., Neumann, E. and Towers, E. (2021) 'What's wrong with 'deliverology'? Performance measurement, accountability and quality improvement in English secondary education', *Journal of Education Policy,* 36(4), pp. 504-529.

Gewirtz, S., Miller, H. and Walford, G. (1991) 'Parents’ individualist and collectivist strategies at the City Technology College, Kingshurst', *International Studies in Sociology of Education,* 1(1-2), pp. 173-191.

Gewirtz, S. and Ozga, J. (1990) 'Partnership, pluralism and education policy: a reassessment', *Journal of Education Policy,* 5(1), pp. 37-48.

Gewirtz, S., Whitty, G. and Edwards, T. (1992) 'City Technology Colleges: Schooling for the Thatcher Generation?', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 40(3), pp. 207-217.

Gibb, N. (2010a) *A vision for education*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/nick-gibb-to-the-grammar-schools-heads-associations-national-conference (Accessed: Web Page 2020).

Gibb, N. (2010b) *The Academies Bill*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/nick-gibb-to-the-reform-conference (Accessed: Web Page 2020).

Gibb, N. (2011a) *Education Bill receives Royal Assent*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/education-bill-receives-royal-assent (Accessed: Web Page 2020).

Gibb, N. (2011b) *Nick Gibb to the Association of Teachers and Lecturers 2011 Conference*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/nick-gibb-to-the-association-of-teachers-and-lecturers-2011-conference (Accessed: Web Page 2020).

Gibb, N. (2011c) *Nick Gibb to the north of England education conference*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/nick-gibb-to-the-north-of-england-education-conference (Accessed: Web Page 2020).

Gibb, N. (2011d) *Schools given freedom from bureaucratic rules to have control over school day*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/schools-given-freedom-from-bureaucratic-rules-to-have-control-over-school-day (Accessed: Web Page 2020).

Gibb, N. (2011e) *Standards in English schools*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/nick-gibb-to-the-100-group (Accessed: Web Page 2020).

Gibb, N. (2019) *Free schools leading the way with top primary school results*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/free-schools-leading-the-way-with-top-primary-school-results (Accessed: February 8 2020).

Giddens, A. (1999) *The Third Way.* Chichester: Polity Press.

Giersch, J. (2019) ''Desperately afraid of losing white parents': charter schools and segregation', *Race Ethnicity and Education*, pp. 1-22.

Gill, O. and Janmaat, J. G. (2019) 'The 'schools revolution' in England: a configurational comparative analysis of academisation across local authorities', *Cambridge Journal of Education,* 49(5), pp. 575-604.

Gillborn, D. (1997) 'Racism and Reform: new ethnicities/old inequalities?', *British Educational Research Journal,* 23(3), pp. 345-360.

Gillborn, D. (2010) 'The White Working Class, Racism and Respectability: Victims, Degenerates and Interest-Convergence', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 58(1), pp. 3-25.

Gillborn, D. (2014) 'Racism as Policy: A Critical Race Analysis of Education Reforms in the United States and England', *The Educational Forum,* 78(1), pp. 26-41.

Gillborn, D. (2020) *Is dangerous thinking about race and IQ at the heart of UK government?* Available at: https://theconversation.com/is-dangerous-thinking-about-race-and-iq-at-the-heart-of-uk-government-132379 (Accessed: May 22 2021).

Giroux, H. A. (1999) 'Chapter Two: Dialectics and the Development of Curriculum Theory', *Counterpoints,* 70, pp. 7-23.

Giroux, H. A. (2010) 'Rethinking education as the practice of freedom: Paulo Freire and the promise of critical pedagogy', *Policy Futures in Education,* 8(6), pp. 715-721.

Glatter, R. (2009) 'Let's look at Academies systemically', *Management in Education,* 23(3), pp. 104-107.

Glatter, R. (2012) 'Persistent Preoccupations: The Rise and Rise of School Autonomy and Accountability In England', *Educational Management Administration & Leadership,* 40(5), pp. 559-575.

Goldring, E. B. and Phillips, K. J. R. (2008) 'Parent preferences and parent choices: the public–private decision about school choice', *Journal of Education Policy,* 23(3), pp. 209-230.

Goodman, P. (1971) *Compulsory Miseducation.* London: Penguin.

Goodson, I. (1988) *The making of curriculum: collected essays.* London: Falmer Press.

Goodwin, M. (2011) 'English Education Policy after New Labour: Big Society or Back to Basics?', *The Political Quarterly (London. 1930),* 82(3), pp. 407-424.

Goodwin, M. (2015) 'Schools Policy, Governance and Politics under New Labour', *Political Studies Review,* 13(4), pp. 534-545.

Gorard, S. (1999) ''Well. That about wraps it up for school choice research': A state of the art review', *School Leadership & Management,* 19(1), pp. 25-47.

Gorard, S. (2009) 'What are Academies the answer to?', *Journal of Education Policy,* 24(1), pp. 101-113.

Gorard, S. (2010) 'Serious doubts about school effectiveness', *British Educational Research Journal,* 36(5), pp. 745-766.

Gorard, S. (2014) 'The link between Academies in England, pupil outcomes and local patterns of socio-economic segregation between schools', *Research Papers in Education,* 29(3), pp. 268-284.

Gorard, S. (2019) *School choice in an established market.* London: Routledge.

Gorard, S. and Fitz, J. (2000) 'Investigating the determinants of segregation between schools', *Research Papers in Education,* 15(2), pp. 115-132.

Gorard, S., Fitz, J. and Taylor, C. (2001) 'School Choice Impacts: What Do We Know?', *Educational Researcher,* 30(7), pp. 18-23.

Gorard, S. and Siddiqui, N. (2018) 'Grammar schools in England: a new analysis of social segregation and academic outcomes', *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 39(7), pp. 909-924.

Gorard, S., Siddiqui, N. and See, B. H. (2021) 'The difficulties of judging what difference the Pupil Premium has made to school intakes and outcomes in England', *Research Papers in Education,* 36(3), pp. 355-379.

Gordon, L. and Whitty, G. (1997) 'Giving the 'hidden hand' a helping hand? The rhetoric and reality of neoliberal education reform in England and New Zealand', *Comparative Education,* 33(3), pp. 453-467.

Gorski, P. S. (2013) *Bourdieu and historical analysis.* Durham USA: Duke University Press.

Gove, M. (2007a) *Brown is hanging on to power for its own sake*. Available at: http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/599753 (Accessed: Web Page 2020).

Gove, M. (2007b) *It's time for modern compassionate Conservative education policy*. Available at: http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/599789 (Accessed: Web Page 2020).

Gove, M. (2008a) *Making Opportunity More Equal*. Available at: http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/599674 (Accessed: Web Page 2020).

Gove, M. (2008b) *Why Conservative social policy delivers progressive ends*. Available at: http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/599624 (Accessed: Web Page 2020).

Gove, M. (2009a) *A comprehensive programme for state education*. Available at: http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601248 (Accessed: May 20 2020).

Gove, M. (2009b) *Enhancing the status of teaching*. Available at: http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601408 (Accessed: May 20 2020).

Gove, M. (2009c) *Failing schools need new leadership*. Available at: http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601288 (Accessed: May 20 2020).

Gove, M. (2009d) *Residential academies could help disadvantaged children*. Available at: http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601393 (Accessed: Web Page 2020).

Gove, M. (2009e) *Schools are the front line in the economic war*. Available at: http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601401 (Accessed: Web Page 2020).

Gove, M. (2010a) *All pupils will learn our island story*. Available at: http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601441 (Accessed: May 20 2020).

Gove, M. (2010b) *Charlie Whelan's new militant tendency*. Available at: http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601506 (Accessed: May 20 2020).

Gove, M. (2010c) *We will end the political control of A levels*. Available at: http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601516 (Accessed: May 20 2020).

Grace, G. (1989) 'Education: Commodity or public good?', *British journal of educational studies,* 37(3), pp. 207-221.

Gramsci, A. (1971) *Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci.* New York, NY: International Publishers.

Graubard, A. (1972) 'The Free School Movement', *Harvard Educational Review,* 42(3), pp. 351-373.

Gray, J. and Satterly, D. (1976) 'A Chapter of Errors: Teaching Styles and Pupil Progress in Retrospect', *Educational Research,* 19(1), pp. 45-56.

Gray, S. L. (2007) 'Teacher as Technician: Semi-Professionalism after the 1988 Education Reform Act and its Effect on Conceptions of Pupil Identity', *Policy Futures in Education,* 5(2), pp. 194-203.

Greany, T. and McGinity, R. (2021) 'Leadership and School Improvement in Multi-Academy Trusts', *School Leadership and Education System Reform*, pp. 197.

Green, A. (1994) 'Education and state formation revisited', *Historical Studies in Education,* 6(3), pp. 1.

Green, A. (2013) English Education and the Liberal State. In: Green, A. (ed.) *Education and State Formation: Europe, East Asia and the USA*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, pp. 204-296.

Green, A. and Whitty, G. 'The legacy of the new sociology of education: a view from the Institute of Education'. *American Education Research Association conference, New Orleans, LA*.

Green, B. (2018) 'The Contours for Researching Religion and School Choice', *Journal of School Choice,* 12(4), pp. 528-545.

Green, E. (2014) 'The negotiation and articulation of identity, position and ethos in joint church academies', *Research Papers in Education,* 29(3), pp. 285-299.

Green, F. (2021) 'British teachers’ declining job quality: evidence from the Skills and Employment Survey', *Oxford Review of Education,* 47(3), pp. 386-403.

Green, F., Allen, R. and Jenkins, A. (2015) 'Are English free schools socially selective? A quantitative analysis', *British Educational Research Journal,* 41(6), pp. 907-924.

Greene, J. D. (1996) 'How Much Privatization? A Research Note Examining the Use of Privatization by Cities in 1982 and 1992', *Policy Studies Journal,* 24(4), pp. 632-640.

Greener, I. and Powell, M. (2009) 'The Evolution of Choice Policies in UK Housing, Education and Health Policy', *Journal of Social Policy,* 38(1), pp. 63-81.

Gregory, P. (1997) 'David Cameron's radical idea', *Review (Institute of Public Affairs),* 64(4), pp. 28-29.

Grenfell, M. (1996) 'Bourdieu and Initial Teacher Education-a post-structuralist approach', *British Educational Research Journal,* 22(3), pp. 287-303.

Grenfell, M. (2014) *Pierre Bourdieu: key concepts.* Second edn.: Oxfordshire, England; New York, New York: Routledge, 2014.

Grissmer, D. W., Kirby, S. N., Schlegel, P. M. and Young, R. (1991) *Patterns of attrition among Indiana teachers* 1965. Available at: https://www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R4076.html (Accessed: June 10 2020).

Gross, B. and DeArmond, M. (2010) 'How Do Charter Schools Compete for Teachers? A Local Perspective', *Journal of School Choice,* 4(3), pp. 254-277.

Gross, J. (1969) 'University Unrest', *Critical Survey,* 4(1), pp. 63-64.

Gruber, K. H. (1998) 'So-called, Real and Ideal Comprehensive Schools', *Oxford Review of Education,* 24(2), pp. 245-248.

Gunter, H. M. (2001) *Leaders and leadership in education.* London: Sage.

Gunter, H.M. (2002) 'Purposes and positions in the field of education management: putting Bourdieu to work', *Educational Management & Administration,* 30(1), pp. 7-26.

Gunter, H. M. (2003) 'Intellectual histories in the field of education management in the UK', *International Journal of Leadership in Education,* 6(4), pp. 335-349.

Gunter, H. M. (2006) 'Knowledge production in the field of educational leadership: a place for intellectual histories', *Journal of Educational Administration and History,* 38(2), pp. 201-215.

Gunter, H. M. (2008) 'Policy and Workforce Reform in England', *Educational Management Administration & Leadership,* 36(2), pp. 253-270.

Gunter, H. M. (2011) *The state and education policy.* London: Continuum.

Gunter, H. M. (2015) 'The politics of education policy in England', *International Journal of Inclusive Education,* 19(11), pp. 1206-1212.

Gunter, H. M. (2018) *The politics of public education.* First edn. Bristol: Policy Press.

Gunter, H. M. and Forrester, G. (2009) 'School leadership and education policy-making in England', *Policy Studies,* 30(5), pp. 495-511.

Gunter, H. M., Hall, D. and Mills, C. (2015) 'Consultants, consultancy and consultocracy in education policymaking in England', *Journal of Education Policy,* 30(4), pp. 518-539.

Gunter, H. M. and McGinity, R. (2014) 'The politics of the Academies Programme: natality and pluralism in education policy-making', *Research Papers in Education,* 29(3), pp. 300-314.

Gunter, H. M. and Ribbins, P. (2003) 'The Field of Educational Leadership: Studying Maps and Mapping Studies', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 51(3), pp. 254-281.

Gunter, H. M. and Thomson, P. (2009) 'The makeover: a new logic in leadership development in England', *Educational Review,* 61(4), pp. 469-483.

Gunter, H. M, Woods, P. and Woods, G. (2008) 'Researching academies in England', *Management in Education,* 22(4), pp. 3-7.

Hall, R. (2022) 'Happier teachers and higher grades: the London school that shortened the week', *Guardian, The*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/jan/16/happier-teachers-and-higher-grades-the-london-school-that-shortened-the-week?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Other.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1978) *Language as social semiotic.* First edn. London: Arnold.

Halpin, D. (2010) 'National curriculum reform in China and England: Origins, character and comparison', *Frontiers of Education in China,* 5(2), pp. 258-269.

Halpin, D. and Fitz, J. (1990) 'Researching grant-maintained schools', *Journal of Education Policy,* 5(2), pp. 167-180.

Halpin, D., Power, S. and Fitz, J. (1991) 'Grant-Maintained Schools: Making a Difference without Being Really Different', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 39(4), pp. 409-424.

Halpin, D., Power, S. and Fitz, J. (1993) 'Opting into State Control? Headteachers and the Paradoxes of Grant-maintained Status', *International Studies in Sociology of Education,* 3(1), pp. 3-23.

Halpin, D., Power, S. and Fitz, J. (1997) 'In the grip of the past? Tradition, traditionalism and contemporary schooling', *International Studies in Sociology of Education,* 7(1), pp. 3-20.

Halpin, D. and Troyna, B. (1995) 'The politics of education policy borrowing', *Comparative Education,* 31(3), pp. 303-310.

Hammersley, M. (2008) *Questioning qualitative inquiry: critical essays.* London: Sage.

Hammersley, M. and Woods, P. (1977) *School experience: explorations in the sociology of education.* London: Croom Helm.

Hansard (1978) *Schools (Parental Choice)*. Available at: https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1978/may/16/schools-parental-choice (Accessed: November 10 2020).

Hanushek, E. A. (2015) 'Time in Education: Introduction', *The Economic Journal,* 125(588), pp. F394-F396.

Hanushek, E. A. and Rivkin, S. G. (2007) 'Pay, Working Conditions, and Teacher Quality', *The Future of Children,* 17(1), pp. 69-86.

Hardie, A. M. (1969) 'Let's Return to Sanity', *Critical Survey,* 4(1), pp. 57-59.

Hargreaves, A. (1982) 'The Rhetoric of School-Centred Innovation', *Journal of Curriculum Studies,* 14(3), pp. 251-266.

Hargreaves, D. H. (1967) *Social relations in a secondary school.* First edn. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Hargreaves, D. H. (1996) 'Diversity and Choice in School Education: a modified libertarian approach', *Oxford Review of Education,* 22(2), pp. 131-141.

Harris, A. and Ranson, S. (2005) 'The contradictions of education policy: disadvantage and achievement', *British Educational Research Journal,* 31(5), pp. 571-587.

Harris, N. S. (1991) 'Discipline in Schools: The Elton Report', *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law,* 13(2), pp. 110-127.

Harvey-Beavis, O. (2002) *Performance-Based Rewards for Teachers*. Athens. Available at: https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.126.5122&rep=rep1&type=pdf (Accessed: 2020 December 16).

Hastings, A. and Matthews, P. (2015) 'Bourdieu and the Big Society: empowering the powerful in public service provision?', *Policy and Politics,* 43(4), pp. 545-560.

Hatcher, R. (1994) 'Market Relationships and the Management of Teachers', *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 15(1), pp. 41-61.

Hatcher, R. (2001) *Getting down to business: schooling in the globalised economy.* London: Trentham Books.

Hatcher, R. (2006) 'Privatization and sponsorship: the re-agenting of the school system in England', *Journal of Education Policy,* 21(5), pp. 599-619.

Hatcher, R. (2011) 'The Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition government's "free schools" in England', *Educational Review,* 63(4), pp. 485-503.

Hauge, R., Harrop, M. and Breslin, S. (1992) *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction.* London: MacMillan.

Hausman, T. (1998) *A history of the free school movement.* Boston: Brown University.

Hay, A. L. (2021) *The formation of a cross-town Multi-Academy Trust: A case of policy enactment in the local organisation of education.* Keele: Keele University.

Hay McBer (2000) *Research into teacher effectiveness*. London: Department for Education and Employment. Available at: https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/4566/1/RR216.pdf (Accessed: December 16 2020).

Hayden, M. (2013) 'A review of curriculum in the UK: internationalising in a changing context', *The Curriculum Journal,* 24(1), pp. 8-26.

Haydn, T. (2004) 'The strange death of the comprehensive school in England and Wales, 1965-2002', *Research Papers in Education,* 19(4), pp. 415-432.

Head, D. (1973) *Freeway to learning.* London: Penguin.

Hearnshaw, L. S. (1979) *Cyril Burt psychologist.* London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Heath, A. (1984) 'In Defence of Comprehensive Schools', *Oxford Review of Education,* 10(1), pp. 115-123.

Heath, A. (2000) 'The Political Arithmetic Tradition in the Sociology of Education', *Oxford Review of Education,* 26(3-4), pp. 313-331.

Heath, A., Sullivan, A., Boliver, V. and Zimdars, A. (2013) 'Education under New Labour, 1997-2010', *Oxford Review of Economic Policy,* 29(1), pp. 227-247.

Hechinger Report (2018) *The Hellerup School: Lessons from a school without walls*. Available at: https://hechingerreport.org/lessons-from-a-school-without-walls/ (Accessed: October 12 2020).

Heilbronn, R. (2016) 'Freedoms and Perils: Academy Schools in England', *Journal of Philosophy of Education,* 50(3), pp. 306-318.

Helgetun, J. B. and Dumay, X. (2021) 'From scholar to craftsperson? Constructing an accountable teacher education environment in England 1976-2019', *European Journal of Teacher Education,* 44(1), pp. 80-95.

Helgøy, I., Homme, A. and Gewirtz, S. (2007) 'Local Autonomy or State Control? Exploring the Effects of New Forms of Regulation in Education', *European Educational Research Journal,* 6(3), pp. 198-202.

Henderson, M., Sullivan, A., Anders, J. and Moulton, V. (2018) 'Social Class, Gender and Ethnic Differences in Subjects Taken at Age 14', *The Curriculum Journal,* 29(3), pp. 298-318.

Henig, J. R. (1994) *Rethinking school choice: limits of the market metaphor.* Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.

Henry, M. (1993) 'What is policy? A response to Stephen Ball', *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education,* 14(1), pp. 102-105.

Hess, F. M. (2008) 'The Supply Side of School Reform', *Phi Delta Kappan,* 90(3), pp. 211-217.

Higham, R. (2014a) 'Free schools in the Big Society: the motivations, aims and demography of free school proposers', *Journal of Education Policy,* 29(1), pp. 122-139.

Higham, R. (2014b) ''Who owns our schools?' An analysis of the governance of free schools in England', *Educational Management Administration & Leadership,* 42(3), pp. 404-422.

Higham, R. (2017) The usual suspects? Free schools in England and the influence of corporate elites. In: Gunter, H.M. and Hall, D. eds., 2017. *Corporate elites and the reform of public education*, (pp. 203-218). Bristol: Policy Press.

Higham, R. and Earley, P. (2013) 'School Autonomy and Government Control', *Educational Management Administration & Leadership,* 41(6), pp. 701-717.

Hilgers, M. a. M. É. (2015) *Introduction to Pierre Bourdieu's social fields.*

Hill, D. (2005) 'Globalisation and Its Educational Discontents: Neoliberalisation and its impacts on education workers' rights, pay and conditions', *International Studies in Sociology of Education,* 15(3), pp. 257-288.

Hilton, A. (2015) *Free schools: the role of Conservative and Liberal political thought in shaping the policy.* PhD, University of Oxford, Oxford [Online] Available at: http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.713975 (Accessed.

Hilton, A. (2018) *Academies and Free Schools in England.* London: Routledge.

Hirsch, E. D. (2016) *Why knowledge matters: rescuing our children from failed educational theories.* Boston: Harvard Educational Publishing Group.

Hodge, B. (2012) 'Ideology, Identity, Interaction: Contradictions and Challenges for Critical Discourse Analysis', *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines,* 5(2).

Hodgson, A. and Spours, K. (2010) 'Vocational qualifications and progression to higher education: the case of the 14–19 Diplomas in the English system', *Journal of Education and Work,* 23(2), pp. 95-110.

Hogwood, B. W. and Gunn, L. A. (1984) *Policy analysis for the real world.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hollway, W. (1989) *Subjectivity and method in psychology: gender, meaning and science.* London: Sage.

Holmes Erickson, H. (2017) 'How do parents choose schools, and what schools do they choose? A literature review of private school choice programs in the United States', *Journal of School Choice,* 11(4), pp. 491-506.

Holt, J. (1982) *How children fail.* Cambridge, MA.: Da Capo Press.

Honig, M. I. (2009) '"External" Organizations and the Politics of Urban Educational Leadership: The Case of New Small Autonomous Schools Initiatives', *Peabody Journal of Education,* 84(3), pp. 394-413.

Honour, M. S. (2016) *Government education reform 2010-15; 'supply-side/demand-side'.* PHD thesis University of Southampton. Available at: https://eprints.soton.ac.uk/422155/ Accessed May 14 2022.

Hope, M. A. (2018) *Reclaiming Freedom in Education Theories and Practices of Radical Free School Education.* London: Routledge.

House of Lords (2019) *Free Schools: Contribution to Improving Educational Standards: Debate on 10 January 2019. House of Lords: Library Briefing*. Available at: https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/32720/1/LLN-2019-0001.pdf (Accessed: May 10 2020 2020).

Howarth, D. (2010) 'Power, discourse, and policy: articulating a hegemony approach to critical policy studies', *Critical Policy Studies,* 3(3-4), pp. 309-335.

Hoxby, C. M. (2003) 'School choice and school productivity. Could school choice be a tide that lifts all boats?', *The economics of school choice*: University of Chicago Press, pp. 287-342.

Hoyle, E. (1982) 'Micropolitics of Educational Organisations', *Educational Management & Administration,* 10(2), pp. 87-98.

Hudson, G. F. (1969) 'The Berkeley Fashion', *Critical Survey,* 4(1), pp. 21-26.

Hughes, B. C. (2022) 'Investigating the realist networks of the Chief Executive Officer of a multi-academy trust', *Educational Review,* 74(2), pp. 243-262.

Hughes, G. D. (2012) 'Teacher Retention: Teacher Characteristics, School Characteristics, Organizational Characteristics, and Teacher Efficacy', *The Journal of Educational Research,* 105(4), pp. 245-255.

Hyatt, D. (2013) 'The critical policy discourse analysis frame: helping doctoral students engage with the educational policy analysis', *Teaching in Higher Education,* 18(8), pp. 833-845.

Ignatow, G. and Robinson, L. (2017) 'Pierre Bourdieu: theorizing the digital', *Information, Communication & Society,* 20(7), pp. 950-966.

Illich, I. (1971) *Deschooling Society.* New York: Harper & Row.

Ingersoll, R. M. (1997) *Teacher professionalization and teacher commitment: A multilevel analysis*. Available at: https://nces.ed.gov/pubs/97069.pdf (Accessed: June 20 2020).

Inglis, F. (2004) *Education and the good society.* New York: Springer.

Innes, M. (2021) 'The micro-politics of policy enactment in a multi-academy trust', *School Leadership & Management,* 41(4-5), pp. 334-351.

Innes, M. (2022) 'The micro-politics of the enactment of a school literacy policy', *Oxford Review of Education,* 48(1), pp. 63-77.

Irani, E. (2019) 'The Use of Videoconferencing for Qualitative Interviewing: Opportunities, Challenges, and Considerations', *Clinical Nursing Research,* 28(1), pp. 3-8.

Isabel Sheridan, P. L., Lynn Brady, Alan Foxall, John Bailey and Yvonne Fisher (2019) *Risinghill Revisited: The killing of a comprehensive school.* London: The Risinghill Research Group.

Issel, W. H. (1967) 'Teachers and Educational Reform During the Progressive Era: A Case Study of the Pittsburgh Teachers Association', *History of Education Quarterly,* 7(2), pp. 220-233.

ITV (1971) *Liverpool Free School. Should education be compulsory?* This week. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8tOnZpLgYY. (Accessed February 08 2021)

Jabbar, H. (2013) 'The case of ‘payment-by-results’: re-examining the effects of an incentive programme in nineteenth-century English schools', *Journal of Educational Administration and History,* 45(3), pp. 220-243.

James, D. (2015) 'How Bourdieu bites back: recognising misrecognition in education and educational research', *Cambridge Journal of Education,* 45(1), pp. 97-112.

James, M. and McCormick, R. (2018) *Curriculum evaluation in schools.* London: Routledge.

James, T. (1990) 'Kurt Hahn and the aims of education', *Journal of Experiential Education,* 13(1), pp. 6-13.

Jamieson, I. (1993) 'TVEI and the work related curriculum', *Evaluation & Research in Education,* 7(2), pp. 51-64.

Jencks, C. (1972) *Inequality.* New York: Basic Books, Inc.

Jenks, C. (2018) 'The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Data Collection', [Online]. Version. Available at: https://sk.Sagepub.com/reference/the-Sage-handbook-of-qualitative-data-collection. (Accessed June 15 2023)

Jessop, B. (2010) 'Cultural political economy and critical policy studies', *Critical Policy Studies,* 3(3-4), pp. 336-356.

Johnson, C. M. (1968) *Freedom in junior schools.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Johnstone, B. (2018) *Discourse analysis.* Third edn. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley Blackwell.

John Levi Martin (2003) 'What Is Field Theory?', *American Journal of Sociology,* 109(1), pp. 1-49.

Jones, K. (1989) *Right Turn. The Conservative revolution in education.* London: Hutchinson Radius.

Jones, K. (2003) *Education in Britain.* First edn. Cambridge: Polity.

Jones, K. (2014) 'Conservatism and educational crisis: the case of England', *Education Inquiry,* 5(1), pp. 24046.

Jones, P. (2006) 'Thirty years of keywords', *Sociology,* 40(6), pp. 1209-1215.

JØRGENSEN, C. R. and Allan, J. (2021) 'Free and comprehensive? Admissions and mixed attainment teaching in an English free school', *FORUM,* 63(1), pp. 29-38.

Kafka, J. (2005) 'Free Schools, Free People: Education and Democracy after the 1960s/Sixties Legacy: A History of the Public Alternative Schools Movement, 1967-2000', *History of Education Quarterly,* 45(1), pp. 134-138.

Kahne, J. E., Sporte, S. E., de la Torre, M. and Easton, J. Q. (2008) 'Small High Schools on a Larger Scale: The Impact of School Conversions in Chicago', *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis,* 30(3), pp. 281-315.

Kamienski, A. (2011) 'Competition: Charter and Public Elementary Schools in Chicago', *Journal of School Choice,* 5(2), pp. 161-181.

Kamin, L. (1974) 'The Science and Politics of I.Q', *Social Research,* 41(3), pp. 387.

Katz, M. B. (1968) *The irony of early school reform: educational innovation in mid-nineteenth century Massachusetts.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Kauko, J. and Salokangas, M. (2015) 'The evaluation and steering of English academy schools through inspection and examinations: national visions and local practices', *British Educational Research Journal,* 41(6), pp. 1108-1124.

Kavner, L. (2013) *At Brooklyn Free School, A movement reborn with liberty and no testing for all*. Available at: https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/brooklyn-free-school-_n_2214263?ri18n=true&guccounter=1 (Accessed: April 15 2020).

Kelley, C. (1997) 'Teacher Compensation and Organization', *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis,* 19(1), pp. 15-28.

Kiger, M. E. and Varpio, L. (2020) 'Thematic analysis of qualitative data: AMEE Guide No. 131', *Medical Teacher,* 42(8), pp. 846-854.

Kitchener, D. (2013) 'What Price Free Schools? The Continued Insidious Privatisation of UK State Education', *FORUM: for promoting 3-19 comprehensive education,* 55(3), pp. 407-414.

Kitchener, D. A. (2016) 'How much longer can we afford the free school debacle? State sponsored Neoliberalism and the myths of choice', *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies,* (Volume 14, Number 1).

Klein, J. (2011) *Joel Klein speech Free Schools Conference 29 January 2011*. Available at: https://www.coursehero.com/file/74997000/Joel-Klein-speech-290111-Finaldoc/ (Accessed: May 16 2021).

Kliebard, H. (2004) *The struggle for the American curriculum 1893 to 1958.* London: Routledge Falmer.

Knight, J., Lingard, B. and Porter, P. (1993) *Schooling reform in hard times.* London: Falmer.

Kogan, M. (1987) 'The Plowden Report Twenty Years on', *Oxford Review of Education,* 13(1), pp. 13-21.

Korsgaard, O. and Wiborg, S. (2006) 'Grundtvig—the Key to Danish Education?', *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research,* 50(3), pp. 361-382.

Kozol, J. (1967) *Death at an Early Age.* Boston: Harvard University Press.

Kozol, J. (1972) *Free Schools.* New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Krais, B. (1993) 'Gender and symbolic violence: Female oppression in the light of Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of social practice', *Bourdieu: critical perspectives*, pp. 156-177.

Kramsch, C. (2020) *Language as Symbolic Power. Key Topics in Applied Linguistics* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kress, G. R. and Van Leeuwen, T. (2006) *Reading images.* Second edn. London: Routledge.

Kulz, C. (2020) 'Everyday erosions: neoliberal political rationality, democratic decline and the Multi-Academy Trust', *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 42(1), pp. 66-81.

Labaree, D. (2005) 'Progressivism, schools and schools of education: An American romance', *Paedagogica Historica,* 41(1-2), pp. 275-288.

Labour Party (2010) *Labour Party manifesto A future fair for all* Available at: https://manifesto.deryn.co.uk/labour-manifesto-2010-a-future-fair-for-all (Accessed: May 21 2020).

Lakatos, I. (1969) 'A letter to the director of the London School of Economics', *Critical Survey,* 4(1), pp. 27-31.

Lamont, M. and Lareau, A. (1988) 'Cultural Capital: Allusions, Gaps and Glissandos in Recent Theoretical Developments', *Sociological Theory,* 6(2), pp. 153-168.

Lauder, H. and Hughes, D. (1999) *Trading in futures: Why markets in education don't work.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Lawton, D. (1975) *Class, culture and the curriculum.* London: Routledge and Kegan.

Lawton, D. (1979) *The end of the secret garden?* London: University of London Institute of Education.

Lawton, D. (2011) *The Politics of the School Curriculum.* London: Taylor & Francis Group.

Le Grand, J. and Bartlett, W. (1993) *Quasi-Markets and Social Policy.* London: Macmillan Education, Limited.

Leaton Gray, S. and Whitty, G. (2010) 'Social trajectories or disrupted identities? Changing and competing models of teacher professionalism under New Labour', *Cambridge Journal of Education,* 40(1), pp. 5-23.

Leeder, A. and Mabbett, D. (2011) 'Free Schools: Big Society or Small Interests?', *The Political Quarterly (London. 1930),* 82, pp. 133-144.

Lees, H. E. and Peim, N. (2013) '“Prelude to the School to Come…” Introduction to the Special Issue', *Studies in Philosophy and Education,* 32(2), pp. 113-122.

Lefebvre, E. E. and Thomas, M. A. M. (2017) '‘Shit shows’ or ‘like-minded schools’: charter schools and the neoliberal logic of Teach For America', *Journal of Education Policy,* 32(3), pp. 357-371.

Leigh, A. (2012) 'Teacher pay and teacher aptitude', *Economics of Education Review,* 31(3), pp. 41-53.

Leihy, P., Arancibia Martini, H., Castillo Armijo, P. and Saldaña Fernandez, J. (2017) 'Evolution in Freedom? The Meanings of ‘Free School’ in Chile', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 65(3), pp. 369-384.

Levačić, R. (1995) Local management of schools. First edn. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Levačić, R. (1998) 'Local management of schools in England: Results after six years', Journal of Education Policy, 13(3), pp. 331-350.

Levačić, R. and Hardman, J. (1999) 'The performance of grant maintained schools in England: an experiment in autonomy', *Journal of Education Policy,* 14(2), pp. 185-212.

Levin, B. (1997) 'The lessons of international education reform', *Journal of Education Policy,* 12(4), pp. 253-266.

Levin, B. (1998) 'An epidemic of education policy', *Comparative Education,* 34(2), pp. 131-141.

Liberal Democratic Party (2010) *Liberal Democrat Manifesto 2010* Available at: https://general-election-2010.co.uk/2010-general-election-manifestos/Liberal-Democrat-Party-Manifesto-2010.pdf (Accessed: May 21 2020).

Lilleker, D. G. (2003) 'Interviewing the Political Elite: Navigating a Potential Minefield', *Politics,* 23(3), pp. 207-214.

Lindbom, A. (2010) 'School Choice in Sweden: Effects on Student Performance, School Costs, and Segregation', *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research,* 54(6), pp. 615-630.

Lindell, J. (2017) 'Bringing Field Theory to Social Media, and Vice-Versa: Network-Crawling an Economy of Recognition on Facebook', *Social Media and Society,* 3(4).

Linden, D. (2011) *The Black Papers and the debate about standards*. Available at: http://conservativehistory2.blogspot.com/2011/09/black-papers-and-debate-about-standards.html (Accessed: June 16 2020).

Lingard, B. (2021) 'Multiple temporalities in critical policy sociology in education', *Critical Studies in Education,* 62(3), pp. 338-353.

Lingard, B. and Ozga, J. (2007) *The Routledge Falmer reader in education policy and politics.* London: Routledge.

Lipsey, R. G. and Lancaster, K. (1956) 'The General Theory of Second Best', *The Review of Economic Studies,* 24(1), pp. 11-32.

Lisa, B. and Lauren, S. (2017) 'The expansion of high school choice in Chicago public schools', *Economic Perspectives (1989),* 41(5), pp. 1.

Loeb, S., Valant, J. and Kasman, M. (2011) 'Increasing choice in the market for schools: Recent reforms and their effects on student achievement', *National Tax Journal,* 64(1), pp. 141-163.

Long, J. C. (1972) *The Free School Movement.* PhD thesis, Oklahoma State University., Oklahoma. Available at: https://core.ac.uk/reader/215239320 (Accessed: July 14 2021)

Louis, M. R., & Bartunek, J. M. (1992). Insider/Outsider Research Teams: Collaboration Across Diverse Perspectives. Journal of Management Inquiry, 1(2), 101-110. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/105649269212002

Lubienski, C. (2003a) 'Innovation in education markets: Theory and evidence on the impact of competition and choice in charter schools', *American Educational Research Journal,* 40(2), pp. 395-443.

Lubienski, C. (2003b) 'School Competition and Promotion: Substantive and Symbolic Differentiation in Local Education Markets', *Occasional Paper No. 80, National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education*.

Lubienski, C. (2005) 'Public Schools in Marketized Environments: Shifting Incentives and Unintended Consequences of Competition-Based Educational Reforms', *American Journal of Education,* 111(4), pp. 464-486.

Lubienski, C. (2006a) 'Incentives for School Diversification', *Journal of School Choice,* 1(2), pp. 1-31.

Lubienski, C. (2006b) 'School Diversification in Second-Best Education Markets: International Evidence and Conflicting Theories of Change', *Educational Policy (Los Altos, Calif.),* 20(2), pp. 323-344.

Lubienski, C. (2007a) 'Marketing Schools', *Education and Urban Society,* 40(1), pp. 118-141.

Lubienski, C. (2007b) 'School competition and the emergence of symbolism in a market environment', *To educate a nation: Federal and national strategies of school reform*, pp. 257-280.

Lubienski, C. (2009) *Do Quasi-markets Foster Innovation in Education?* OECD Education Working Papers: OECD Publishing. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/221583463325 (Accessed: May 16 2022).

Lubienski, C. and Lubienski, S. (2013) *The Public School Advantage.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lubienski, C. and Yoon, E.-S. (2017) 'Introduction to the Special Issue: Studying School Choice in Canada.', *Education Policy Analysis Archives,* 25(36).

Lundahl, L., Arreman, I. E., Holm, A.-S. and Lundström, U. (2013) 'Educational marketization the Swedish way', *Education Inquiry,* 4(3), pp. 22620.

Lyke, A. (2017) 'Habitus, doxa, and saga: applications of Bourdieu’s theory of practice to organizational history', *Management & Organizational History,* 12(2), pp. 163-173.

MacCulloch, G. (1989) 'City technology colleges', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 37(1), pp. 30-43.

Machin, D. and Mayr, A. (2012) *How to Do Critical Discourse Analysis.* London: SAGE Publications.

Maguire, M., Braun, A. and Ball, S. (2015) '‘Where you stand depends on where you sit’: the social construction of policy enactments in the (English) secondary school', *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education,* 36(4), pp. 485-499.

Maguire, M., Perryman, J., Ball, S. and Braun, A. (2011) 'The ordinary school – what is it?', *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 32(1), pp. 1-16.

Maher, C., Hadfield, M., Hutchings, M. and De Eyto, A. (2018) 'Ensuring Rigor in Qualitative Data Analysis', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods,* 17(1), pp. 160940691878636.

Mahony, P., Menter, I. and Hextall, I. (2004) 'The Emotional Impact of Performance-Related Pay on Teachers in England', *British Educational Research Journal,* 30(3), pp. 435-456.

Malcolm, A. (2018) 'Exclusions and alternative provision: piecing together the picture', *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties,* 23(1), pp. 69-80.

Malkus, N. (2016) 'Seeing Charters Differently: A New Approach to National Comparisons of Charter and Traditional Public Schools', *Journal of School Choice,* 10(4), pp. 479-494.

Malloy, C. L. and Wohlstetter, P. (2003) 'Working Conditions In Charter Schools: What's the Appeal for Teachers?', *Education and Urban Society,* 35(2), pp. 219-241.

Mangez, E. and Hilgers, M. (2012) 'The Field of Knowledge and the Policy Field in Education: PISA and the Production of Knowledge for Policy', *European Educational Research Journal,* 11(2), pp. 189-205.

Marshall, C. (2017) 'Montessori education: a review of the evidence base', *Science of Learning,* 2(1), pp. 11.

Martin, J. (2015) 'Building Comprehensive Education: Caroline Benn and Holland Park School', *FORUM,* 57 (3).

Martin, J. and Dunlop, L. (2019) 'For-profit schools in England: the state of a nation', *Journal of Education Policy,* 34(5), pp. 726-741.

Martin, John L. (2003) 'What Is Field Theory?', *American Journal of Sociology,* 109(1), pp. 1-49.

Martindale, N. (2019) 'Does outsourcing school systems degrade education workforces? Evidence from 18,000 English state schools', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, pp. 1-20.

Martinez, S. (2009). A System Gone Berserk: How Are Zero-Tolerance Policies Really Affecting Schools? *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, *53*(3), 153–158. https://doi.org/10.3200/PSFL.53.3.153-158

Mason, J. (2002) *Qualitative researching.* Second edn. London: Sage.

Mathou, C., Sarazin, M. A. C. and Dumay, X. (2022) 'Whither employment protections? Deregulation and the flexibilisation of the teaching workforce in the state-funded sector', *Journal of Education Policy,* 37(2), pp. 285-307.

Matthews, B. (2010) *Research methods: a practical guide for the social sciences*. Harlow, England: Pearson,

Maude, A. (1969) 'The Egalitarian Threat', *Critical Survey,* 4(1), pp. 7-9.

May, T. (2011) *Social research: issues, methods and process.* 4th edn. Maidenhead, England: McGraw Hill.

Mayes, E. (2019) 'Radical reform and reforming radicals in Australian schooling', *History of Education Review*.

McCulloch, G. (1989) 'City Technology Colleges: An Old Choice of School?', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 37(1), pp. 30-43.

McCulloch, G. (1997) 'Privatising the Past? History and Education Policy in the 1990s', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 45(1), pp. 69-82.

McCulloch, G. (2008) 'Parity and Prestige in English Secondary Education Revisited', *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 29(4), pp. 381-389.

McCulloch, G. (2016) 'British Labour Party education policy and comprehensive education: from Learning to Live to Circular 10/65', *History of Education,* 45(2), pp. 225-245.

McCulloch, G. and Sobell, L. (1994) 'Towards a social history of the secondary modern schools', *History of Education,* 23(3), pp. 275-286.

McLachlan, D. (1969) 'Newsom Fiasco Helps the Public Schools', *Critical Survey,* 4(1), pp. 43-44.

McLeod, J. (2001) 'Qualitative Research in Counselling and Psychotherapy', [Online]. Version. Available at: https://methods.Sagepub.com/book/qualitative-research-in-counselling-and-psychotherapy. (Accessed: June 22 2021)

McMillan, C. B. (1971) 'The Way it Really Spozed to be', *Education and Urban Society,* 4(1), pp. 61-84.

Mcrobbie, A. (2002) 'A Mixed Bag of Misfortunes?', *Theory, Culture & Society,* 19(3), pp. 129-138.

Merrifield, J. (2008) 'The Twelve Policy Approaches to Increased School Choice', *Journal of School Choice,* 2(1), pp. 4-19.

Meyer, J. W., Kamens, D. and Benavot, A. (2017) *School knowledge for the masses: World models and national primary curricular categories in the twentieth century.* London: Routledge.

Midgley, H. (2016) 'Payment by Results in Nineteenth-Century British Education: A Study in How Priorities Change', *Journal of Policy History,* 28(4), pp. 680-706.

Midwinter, E. (1971) *Priority Education.* London: Penguin.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M. and Saldana, J. (2013) *Qualitative data analysis: a methods sourcebook.* Third edn. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE.

Miller, P., Craven, B. and Tooley, J. (2014) 'Setting up a free school: successful proposers' experiences', *Research Papers in Education,* 29(3), pp. 351-371.

Miller, R. (2002) *Free schools, free people: Education and democracy after the 1960s.* Albany: Suny Press.

Miller, R. (2008) *The self-organizing revolution: Common principles of the educational alternatives movement.* New York: Holistic Education Press.

Mills, C. and Gale, T. (2007) 'Researching social inequalities in education: towards a Bourdieuian methodology', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education,* 20(4), pp. 433-447.

Misra, K., Grimes, P. W. and Rogers, K. E. (2012) 'Does competition improve public school efficiency? A spatial analysis', *Economics of Education Review,* 31(6), pp. 1177-1190.

Mockler, N. (2011) 'Beyond 'what works': understanding teacher identity as a practical and political tool', *Teachers and Teaching,* 17(5), pp. 517-528.

Moore, R. (1996) 'Back to the Future: The Problem of Change and the Possibilities of Advance in the Sociology of Education', *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 17(2), pp. 145-161.

Moore, R. (2000) 'For Knowledge: Tradition, progressivism and progress in education-reconstructing the curriculum debate', *Cambridge Journal of Education,* 30(1), pp. 17-36.

Morgan, H. (2014a) 'Review of Research: The Education System in Finland: A Success Story Other Countries Can Emulate', *Childhood Education,* 90(6), pp. 453-457.

Morgan, J. (2014b) 'Michael Young and the Politics of the School Curriculum', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 63(1), pp. 5-22.

Morgan, J. (2015) 'Michael Young and the Politics of the School Curriculum', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 63(1), pp. 5-22.

Morris, E. W. (2005) '"Tuck in that Shirt!" Race, Class, Gender, and Discipline in an Urban School', *Sociological Perspectives,* 48(1), pp. 25-48.

Morris, R. (2014) 'The admissions criteria of secondary Free Schools', *Oxford Review of Education,* 40(3), pp. 389-409.

Morris, R. (2015) 'Free Schools and disadvantaged intakes', *British Educational Research Journal,* 41(4), pp. 535-552.

Morris, R. (2016) *Free schools in England: choice, admissions and social segregation.* PhD thesis. University of Birmingham. Available at: https://etheses.bham.ac.uk/id/eprint/6695/1/Morris16PhD.pdf (Accessed: August 08 2021)

Morris, R. and Perry, T. (2017) 'Reframing the English grammar schools debate', *Educational Review,* 69(1), pp. 1-24.

Morris, R. and Perry, T. (2019) 'Private schools for free? Parents' reasons for choosing a new Free School for their child', *Cambridge Journal of Education,* 49(5), pp. 535-552.

Morris, Z. S. (2009) 'The Truth about Interviewing Elites', *Politics,* 29(3), pp. 209-217.

Mortimore, P. (1993) 'School Effectiveness and the Management of Effective Learning and Teaching', *School Effectiveness and School Improvement,* 4(4), pp. 290-310.

Mosier, R. D. (1952) 'Progressivism in education', *Peabody Journal of Education,* 29(5), pp. 274-281.

Mowat, C. L. (1969) ''A Community of Scholars'', *Critical Survey,* 4(1), pp. 11-13.

Muller, J. and Young, M. (2019) 'Knowledge, power and powerful knowledge re-visited', *The Curriculum Journal,* 30(2), pp. 196-214.

Murnane, R. J. (1991) *Who will teach?* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Murphy, J. (2020) 'The Five Essential Reasons for the Failure of School Reforms', *Journal of Human Resource and Sustainability Studies,* 8(1), pp. 1-17.

Müller, D. K., Ringer, F. K. and Simon, B. (1987) *The rise of the modern educational system: structural change and social reproduction 1870-1920.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nairz-Wirth, E. and Feldmann, K. (2019) 'Teacher professionalism in a double field structure', *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 40(6), pp. 795-808.

Nash, R. (1990) 'Bourdieu on Education and Social and Cultural Reproduction', *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 11(4), pp. 431-447.

Nash, R. (1999) 'Bourdieu,'habitus', and educational research: Is it all worth the candle?', *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 20(2), pp. 175-187.

Neill, A. S. (1961) *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing.* Third edn. New York: Hart.

Neumann, E., Gewirtz, S., Maguire, M. and Towers, E. (2020) 'Neoconservative education policy and the case of the English Baccalaureate', *Journal of Curriculum Studies,* 52(5), pp. 702-719.

New Schools Exchange *New Schools Exchange Records (MS 889). Manuscripts and Archives,Yale University Library.* Available at: https://archives.yale.edu/repositories/12/resources/4477 (Accessed: February 07, 2022.

New Schools Network (2010a) *Frequently asked questions*. Available at: http://www.newschoolsnetwork.org/faqs.html (Accessed: March 09 2019).

New Schools Network (2010b) *How to set up a school - first steps*. Available at: http://www.newschoolsnetwork.org/imgs/New%20Schools%20Network%20-%20how%20to%20set%20up%20a%20school%20first%20steps.pdf (Accessed: March 09 2019).

New Schools Network (2010c) *Model application form based on Sweden*. Available at: http://www.newschoolsnetwork.org/assets/files/swedish%20app%20form.doc (Accessed: March 09 2019).

New Schools Network (2010d) *New Charter School Application Kit*. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20100613173004/http://www.newyorkcharters.org/documents/ApplicationKit6thEdition.pdf.

New Schools Network (2018) *Free schools outstrip council-run schools in parental popularity*. Available at: https://www.newschoolsnetwork.org/what-are-free-schools/free-school-news/open-schools?page=48 (Accessed: October 11 2019).

New Schools Network (2020a) *Find a free school*. Available at: https://www.newschoolsnetwork.org/what-are-free-schools/find-a-free-school (Accessed: October 10 2020).

New Schools Network (2020b) *Mythbusting*. Available at: https://www.newschoolsnetwork.org/what-are-free-schools/free-schools-the-basics/mythbusting (Accessed: October 10 2020).

Newman, J. (2005) 'Enter the Transformational Leader: Network Governance and the micro-politics of modernization', *Sociology,* 39(4), pp. 717-734.

NFER (2021) *Free Schools: The Formative First Ten Years An Analysis of the Impact of Free Schools Since 2010*, London: National Foundation for Education Research. Available at: https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/4347/free_schools_the_formative_first_ten_years_an_analysis_of_the_impact_of_free_schools_since_2010.pdf (Accessed: December 11 2021).

Nordholm, D., Arnqvist, A. and Nihlfors, E. (2021) 'Sense-making of autonomy and control: Comparing school leaders in public and independent schools in a Swedish case', *Journal of Educational Change* 23 pp 497 - 519. https://doi.org10.1007/s10833-021-09429-z

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E. and Moules, N. J. (2017) 'Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods,* 16(1).

Nursery World (2013) *Failing Montessori free school to close*. Available at: https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/news/article/failing-montessori-free-school-to-close (Accessed: February 06 2022).

OECD (2007) *PISA 2006*. Available at: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/content/publication/9789264040014-en (Accessed: August 10 2021).

OECD (2012) *Does Performance-Based Pay Improve Teaching?* PISA in Focus 1. Paris: OECD Publishing. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5k98q27r2stb-en (Accessed: May 25 2019.

OECD (2018) *Oslo manual 2018: guidelines for collecting, reporting and using data on innovation*. The measurement of scientific, technological and innovation activities. Paris: OECD publishing (Accessed: May 20 2020).

Ofsted (2012) *School inspection handbook from September 2012*. Available at: http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/school-inspection-handbook-september-2012 (Accessed: May 8 2022).

Oftedal Telhaug, A., Asbjørn Mediås, O. and Aasen, P. (2006) 'The Nordic Model in Education: Education as part of the political system in the last 50 years', *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research,* 50(3), pp. 245-283.

Olsen, T. V. (2015) 'The Danish free school tradition under pressure', *Comparative Education,* 51(1), pp. 22-37.

Ong, A. (2006) *Neoliberalism as exception: Mutations in citizenship and sovereignty.* New York: Duke University Press.

Oplatka, I. (2004) 'The characteristics of the school organization and the constraints on market ideology in education: an institutional view', *Journal of Education Policy,* 19(2), pp. 143-161.

Oppenheim, A. N. (1992) *Questionnaire design, interviewing and attitude measurement.* London: Continuum.

Osberg, D. and Biesta, G. (2021) 'Beyond curriculum: Groundwork for a non-instrumental theory of education', *Educational Philosophy and Theory,* 53(1), pp. 57-70.

Oxley, D. and Luers, K. W. (2010) 'How Small Schools Grew Up and Got Serious (But Didn't Lose Their Spunk)', *The Phi Delta Kappan,* 92(4), pp. 62-66.

Ozga, J. (1987) *Studying education policy through the lives of policy makers. Changing policies. Changing teachers* Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Ozga, J. (1990) 'Policy Research and Policy Theory: a comment on Fitz and Halpin', *Journal of Education Policy,* 5(4), pp. 359-362.

Ozga, J. (1999) *Policy research in educational settings: Contested terrain.* London: McGraw-Hill Education.

Ozga, J. (2021) 'Problematising policy: the development of (critical) policy sociology', *Critical Studies in Education,* 62(3), pp. 290-305.

O’Neill, O. (2013) 'Intelligent accountability in education', *Oxford Review of Education,* 39(1), pp. 4-16.

Parameshwaran, M. and Thomson, D. J. (2015) 'The impact of accountability reforms on the Key Stage 4 curriculum: How have changes to school and college Performance Tables affected pupil access to qualifications and subjects in secondary schools in England?', *London Review of Education,* 13(2), pp. 157.

Parents and Teachers for Education (2019) *The Question of Knowledge practicalities of a knowledge-based curriculum*. Available at: https://parentsandteachers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/The_Question_of_Knowledge_FINAL.pdf (Accessed: June 15 2020).

Parliament (1993) *The Education (Teachers) Regulations 1993,*. Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1993/543/made (Accessed: March 12 2021).

Parliament (2012) *Public Accounts Committee - Forty-First Report Department for Education: Managing the expansion of the Academies Programme*. Available at: https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmpubacc/787/78702.htm (Accessed: May 16 2020).

Parliament (2014) *Public Accounts Committee - Fifty-Sixth Report Establishing free schools*. Available at: https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmpubacc/941/94102.htm (Accessed: May 16 2020).

Pearson, R. S. A. (2013) *Unleashing the greatness in you*. London: Pearson RSA. Available at: https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/unleashing-greatness-getting-the-best-from-an-academised-system (Accessed: October 10 2020).

Pedley, R. R. (1969) 'Comprehensive Disaster', *Critical Survey,* 4(1), pp. 45-48.

Peim, N. (2001) 'The history of the present: towards a contemporary phenomenology of the school', *History of Education,* 30(2), pp. 177-190.

Penney, D. (2004) 'Policy tensions being played out in practice. The Specialist Schools initiative in England', *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies,* 2(1), pp. 227-246.

Perera, K. (2021) 'Interviewing academic elites: a discourse analysis of shifting power relations', *Qualitative Research,* 21(2), pp. 215-233.

Perryman, J. and Calvert, G. (2020) 'What motivates people to teach, and why do they leave? Accountability, performativity and teacher retention'. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 68(1), 3–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2019.1589417

Petre, J. (2012) 'Compulsory Latin, suspension for a skinhead haircut and prizes for coming first! It’s not Eton or Harrow, but it may just be the strictest state school in Britain', *The Daily Mail*. Available at: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-

2220516/West-London-Free-Is-strictest-state-school-Britain.html (Accessed: December 18 2021).

Pettigrew, M. and MacLure, M. (1997) 'The press, public knowledge and the grant maintained schools policy', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 45(4), pp. 392-405.

Phillips, D. and Ochs, K. (2003) 'Processes of policy borrowing in education: some explanatory and analytical devices', *Comparative Education,* 39(4), pp. 451-461.

Philo, G. (2007) 'Can discourse analysis successfully explain the content of media and journalistic practice?', *Journalism Studies,* 8(2), pp. 175-196.

Pierre, J. and Peters, B. G. (2020) *Governance, Politics and the State. Political analysis* London: Macmillan Education UK.

Policy Exchange (2009) *A guide to school choice reforms*. Available at: https://policyexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/a-guide-to-school-choice-reforms-mar-09.pdf (Accessed: May 16 2019.

Policy Exchange (2010) *Blocking the Best: Obstacles to new, independent state schools*. London: Policy Exchange. Available at: https://policyexchange.org.uk/publication/blocking-the-best-obstacles-to-new-independent-state-schools/ (Accessed: June 15 2021.

Policy Exchange (2015) *A Rising Tide: The Competitive Benefits of Free Schools*. Available at: https://policyexchange.org.uk/publication/a-rising-tide-the-competitive-benefits-of-free-schools/ (Accessed: May 5 2020).

Ponterotto, J. G. (2006) 'Brief note on the origins, evolution, and meaning of the qualitative research concept thick description', *The Qualitative Report,* 11(3), pp. 538-549.

Potter, D. G. (1978) *A Study of Britain's Free Schools, 1970-1977.* PhD, University of Sheffield. Available at: https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/10208 (Accessed September 10 2021)

Potter, J., Wetherell, M. and in Bryman, A. (2016) *Social research methods.* Fifth edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pountney, R. and Mcphail, G. (2017) 'Researching the interdisciplinary curriculum: The need for ‘translation devices'', *British Educational Research Journal,* 43(6), pp. 1068-1082.

Power, E. M. (1999) 'An Introduction to Pierre Bourdieu's Key Theoretical Concepts', *Journal for the Study of Food and Society,* 3(1), pp. 48-52.

Power, M. (1997) *The audit society: Rituals of verification.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Power, S. (2012) 'From redistribution to recognition to representation: social injustice and the changing politics of education', *Globalisation, Societies and Education,* 10(4), pp. 473-492.

Power, S. and Whitty, G. (1999) 'New Labour's education policy: first, second or third way?', *Journal of Education Policy,* 14(5), pp. 535-546.

Powney, J. (1987) *Interviewing in educational research.* New York: Routledge.

Pratchett, L. (2004) 'Local Autonomy, Local Democracy and the ‘New Localism'', *Political Studies,* 52(2), pp. 358-375.

Preston, C., Goldring, E., Berends, M. and Cannata, M. (2012) 'School innovation in district context: Comparing traditional public schools and charter schools', *Economics of Education Review,* 31(2), pp. 318-330.

Pring, R. (2005) 'Labour government policy 14-19', *Oxford Review of Education,* 31(1), pp. 71-85.

Prosser, H. (2020) 'Provoking elite schools' defences: an antistrophon', *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education,* 41(4), pp. 532-544.

Purdam, K. and Elliot, M. (2015) 'The changing social science data landscape', *Innovations in Digital Research Methods*, pp. 25-58.

Quicke, J. (1988) 'The 'New Right' and Education', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 36(1), pp. 5-20.

Rancière, J. (2004) *The philosopher and his poor.* New York: Duke University Press.

Ranson, S. (1995) 'Theorising Education Policy', *Journal of Education Policy,* 10(4), pp. 427-448.

Ranson, S. (2008) 'The Changing Governance of Education', *Educational Management Administration and Leadership,* 36(2), pp. 201-219.

Rasmussen, P., Larson, A., Rönnberg, L. and Tsatsaroni, A. (2015) 'Policies of ‘modernisation' in European education: Enactments and consequences', *European Educational Research Journal,* 14(6), pp. 479-486.

Rawls, J. (2005) *A theory of justice.* Cambridge, Mass; London: Harvard University Press.

Rawolle, S. and Lingard, B. (2008) 'The sociology of Pierre Bourdieu and researching education policy', *Journal of Education Policy,* 23(6), pp. 729-741.

Rawolle, S. and Lingard, B. (2015) 'Bourdieu and doing policy sociology in education', *Education Policy and Contemporary Theory*: Routledge, pp. 15-26.

Rayner, S. M., Courtney, S. J. and Gunter, H. M. (2018) 'Theorising systemic change: learning from the academisation project in England', *Journal of Education Policy,* 33(1), pp. 143-162.

Razzell, P. (1977) 'The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: A Natural Scientific Critique', *The British Journal of Sociology,* 28(1), pp. 17-37.

Reay, D. (1995) ''They employ cleaners to do that': Habitus in the primary classroom', *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 16(3), pp. 353-371.

Reay, D. (1997) 'Feminist theory, habitus, and social class: Disrupting notions of classlessness'. *Women's Studies International Forum* (Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 225-233).

Reay, D. (2002) 'Shaun's story: troubling discourses of white working-class masculinities', *Gender and Education,* 14(3), pp. 221-234.

Reay, D. (2004) ''It's all becoming a habitus': beyond the habitual use of habitus in educational research', *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 25(4), pp. 431-444.

Reay, D. (2006) 'The zombie stalking English schools: social class and educational inequality', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 54(3), pp. 288-307.

Reay, D. (2008) 'Tony Blair, the promotion of the 'active' educational citizen, and middle-class hegemony', *Oxford Review of Education,* 34(6), pp. 639-650.

Reay, D. (2012) 'What would a socially just education system look like?: saving the minnows from the pike', *Journal of Education Policy,* 27(5), pp. 587-599.

Reay, D. (2017) *Miseducation. 21st century standpoints* Bristol: Policy Press.

Reay, D., Crozier, G., James, D., Hollingworth, S., Williams, K., Jamieson, F. and Beedell, P. (2008) 'Re-Invigorating Democracy?: White Middle Class Identities and Comprehensive Schooling', *The Sociological Review (Keele),* 56(2), pp. 238-255.

Reese, W. J. (2001) 'The Origins of Progressive Education', *History of Education Quarterly,* 41(1), pp. 1-24.

Reese, W. J. (2013) 'In search of American progressives and teachers', *History of Education,* 42(3), pp. 320-334.

Regmi, K. D. (2019) 'Critical policy sociology: key underlying assumptions and their implications for educational policy research', *International Journal of Research and Method in Education,* 42(1), pp. 59-75.

Renzulli, L. A. and Evans, L. (2014) 'School Choice, Charter Schools, and White Flight', *Social problems,* 52(3), pp. 398-418.

Reyes, A. (2011) 'Strategies of legitimization in political discourse: From words to actions', *Discourse and Society,* 22(6), pp. 781-807.

Reynolds, D. (1988) 'British school improvement research: the contribution of qualitative studies', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education,* 1(2), pp. 143-154.

Richard, A. (2021) *What Happened to the Free Schools?: The Free Schools Movement in the United States 1967-1972.* MEd thesis. University of Washington.

Available at: https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/handle/1773/47452 (Accessed December 21 2021)

Richards, L. (1999) *Using NVIVO in Qualitative Research.* London: Sage Publications.

Richards, L. (2014) *Handling qualitative data: a practical guide.* Third edn. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Ritchie, J. and Spencer, L. (2002) 'Qualitative data analysis for applied policy research', *Analyzing qualitative data*: London: Routledge, pp. 187-208.

Robson, C. (2016) *Real world research: a resource for users of social research methods in applied settings.* Fourth edn. Hoboken: Wiley.

Robson, J., Randhawa, A. and Keep, E. (2022) 'Employability skills in mainstream education: Innovations in schooling and institutional isomorphism', *British Educational Research Journal,* 48(1), pp. 120-136.

Roch, C. H. and Sai, N. (2017) 'Charter School Teacher Job Satisfaction', *Educational Policy,* 31(7), pp. 951-991.

Rofes, E., Stulberg, L. M. and Gintis, H. (2004) *The Emancipatory Promise of Charter Schools.* Ithaca: State University of New York Press.

Rose, D. C. and Rochester, J. M. (2009) 'Why Continuous Improvement is a Poor Substitute for School Choice', *Journal of School Choice,* 2(4), pp. 440-454.

Ross, A. (2003) *Curriculum: Construction and critique.* London: Routledge.

Rothschild, M. A. (1982) 'The Volunteers and the Freedom Schools: Education for Social Change in Mississippi', *History of Education Quarterly,* 22(4), pp. 401-420.

Roulston, K. C., Myungweon (2018) 'The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Collection', [Online]. Version. Available at: https://sk.Sagepub.com/reference/the-Sage-handbook-of-qualitative-data-collection. (Accessed January 22 2022)

Rubinstein, D. and Simon, B. (2007) *The Evolution of the Comprehensive School: 1926-1972.* London: Routledge.

Rönnberg, L. (2007) 'A Recent Swedish Attempt to Weaken State Control and Strengthen School Autonomy: The Experiment with Local Time Schedules', *European Educational Research Journal,* 6(3), pp. 214-231.

Rönnberg, L. (2017) 'From national policy-making to global edu-business: Swedish edu-preneurs on the move', *Journal of Education Policy,* 32(2), pp. 234-249.

Sachs, J. (2016) 'Teacher professionalism: why are we still talking about it?', *Teachers and Teaching,* 22(4), pp. 413-425.

Sahlberg, P. (2007) 'Education policies for raising student learning: the Finnish approach', *Journal of Education Policy,* 22(2), pp. 147-171.

Sahlberg, P. (2011) 'The Fourth Way of Finland', *Journal of Educational Change,* 12(2), pp. 173-185.

Sahlberg, P. (2012) *How GERM is infecting schools around the world*. Available at: https://pasisahlberg.com (Accessed: July 15 2021.

Sahlberg, P., 2014. *Finnish lessons: What can the world learn from educational change in Finland?* New York: Teachers College Press.

Salokangas, M. and Chapman, C. (2014) 'Exploring governance in two chains of academy schools', *Educational Management Administration and Leadership,* 42(3), pp. 372-386.

Sammons, P., Hillman, J. and Mortimore, P. (1995) *Key Characteristics of Effective Schools: A Review of School Effectiveness Research.* London: Institute of Education.

Samuel, R. (1991) 'Reading the Signs', *History Workshop,* (32), pp. 88-109.

Samuel, R. (2012) *Theatres of Memory: Past and present in contemporary culture.* London: Verso.

Sass, T. R. (2006) 'Charter Schools and Student Achievement in Florida', *Education Finance and Policy,* 1(1), pp. 91-122.

Savage, G. C. (2021) 'The evolving state of policy sociology', *Critical Studies in Education,* 62(3), pp. 275-289.

Schatzki, T. R. (1987) 'Overdue analysis of Bourdieu's theory of practice', *Inquiry,* 30(1-2), pp. 113-135.

Scheurich, J. J. (1994) 'Policy archaeology: a new policy studies methodology', *Journal of Education Policy,* 9(4), pp. 297-316.

Schneider, M. and Buckley, J. (2002) 'What Do Parents Want From Schools? Evidence From the Internet', *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis,* 24(2), pp. 133-144.

Schulman, S. (2013) 'Rise of a Free School', *The Weekly Standard,* (no. 38), pp. 24-30. Available at: https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/magazine/601654/rise-of-a-free-school (Accessed: March 12 2022)

Schulte, B. (2018) 'Envisioned and enacted practices: educational policies and the ‘politics of use’ in schools', *Journal of Curriculum Studies,* 50(5), pp. 624-637.

Scott, J. (2014) *A matter of record: Documentary sources in social research.* London: John Wiley and Sons.

Scruton, R. (1980) *The meaning of conservatism.* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Searby, P. (1989) 'The New School and the New Life: Cecil Reddie (1858-1932) and the early years of Abbotsholme School', *History of Education,* 18(1), pp. 1-21.

SecEd (2013) *The pros and cons of academy conversion*. Available at: https://www.sec-ed.co.uk/best-practice/the-pros-and-cons-of-academy-conversion/ (Accessed: October 29 2021.

Sedgwick, M. and Spiers, J. (2009) 'The Use of Videoconferencing as a Medium for the Qualitative Interview', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods,* 8(1), pp. 1-11.

Seitz, S. (2016) 'Pixilated partnerships, overcoming obstacles in qualitative interviews via Skype: a research note', *Qualitative Research,* 16(2), pp. 229-235.

Shotton, J. (1993) *No master high or low.* Bristol: Libertarian Education.

Shusterman, R. (1999) *Bourdieu: a critical reader.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Sidelsky, R. (1994) 'The state of education', *The Observer Magazine*, March 27, pp. 34 - 36.

Silverman, D. (2015) *Interpreting qualitative data.* London: Sage.

Silverman, D. (2017) 'How was it for you? The Interview Society and the irresistible rise of the (poorly analyzed) interview', *Qualitative Research,* 17(2), pp. 144-158.

Simkins, T. (2012) 'Understanding School Leadership and Management Development in England: Retrospect and Prospect', *Educational Management Administration and Leadership,* 40(5), pp. 621-640.

Simkins, T. (2015) 'School restructuring in England: New school configurations and new challenges', *Management in Education,* 29(1), pp. 4-8.

Simon, B. (1972) *The Radical tradition in education in Britain: a compilation of writings.* London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Simon, B. (1991) *Education and the social order, 1940-1990.* London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Simon, B. (1992a) 'Curriculum Organisation and Classroom Practice in Primary Schools: a discussion paper', *Curriculum Journal (London, England),* 3(1), pp. 91.

Simon, B. (1992b) 'The politics of comprehensive reorganization: a retrospective analysis', *History of Education,* 21(4), pp. 355-362.

Simon, B. (1994) *The state and educational change.* London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Simpson, P. and Mayr, A. (2010) *Language and power.* London: Routledge.

Singer, J. (2021) 'Power to the People? Populism and the Politics of School Choice in the United States', *Journal of School Choice*, pp. 1-25.

Smithers, A. and Robinson, P. (2008) *HMC school a Quantitative Analysis*. Buckingham: Carmichael Press. Available at: https://www.buckingham.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/HMC_Schools.pdf (Accessed: May 26 2020.

Sparrow, J. (1969) 'Egalitarianism and an Academic Élite', *Critical Survey,* 4(1), pp. 64-66.

Steer, R., Spours, K., Hodgson, A., Finlay, I., Coffield, F., Edward, S. and Gregson, M. (2007) ''Modernisation' and the role of policy levers in the learning and skills sector', *Journal of Vocational Education and Training,* 59(2), pp. 175-192.

Steers, J. (2014) 'Reforming the School Curriculum and Assessment in England to Match the Best in the World – A Cautionary Tale', *International Journal of Art and Design Education,* 33(1), pp. 6-18.

Stewart, W. A. C. and McCann, W. P. (1967) *JH Badley and Bedales*, *The Educational Innovators 1750 –1880* London: Palgrave Macmillan pp. 268-281.

Stiefel, L., Schwartz, A. E. and Wiswall, M. (2015) 'Does Small High School Reform Lift Urban Districts? Evidence From New York City', *Educational Researcher,* 44(3), pp. 161-172.

Stobart, G. and Gipps, R. (1997) *Assessment: a teacher's guide to the issues.* Third edn. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Stokes, E., Wlaker, E., Rees, E., Sultana, F., Casertano, M. and Nea, B. (2012) *Inclusive Schools: The Free Schools Monitoring Project*. Available at: https://www.rota.org.uk/sites/default/files/webfm/inclusive_schools_the_free_schools_monitoring_project.pdf (Accessed: November 6 2021).

Strike, Kenneth A. (2008) 'Small Schools: Size or Community?', *American Journal of Education,* 114(3), pp. 169-190.

Sturkey, W. (2010) '"I want to become A part of history": Freedom summer, freedom schools, and the freedom news', *The Journal of African American History,* 95(3-4), pp. 348-368.

Sullivan, A., Henderson, M., Anders, J. and Moulton, V. (2018) 'Inequalities and the curriculum', *Oxford Review of Education,* 44(1), pp. 1-5.

Swartz, D. L. (2008) 'Bringing Bourdieu's master concepts into organizational analysis', *Theory and Society*, (37(1)), pp. pp. 45–52.

Swidler, A. (1976) 'What Free Schools Teach', *Social problems,* 24(2), pp. 214-227.

Tannen, D., Hamilton, H. E., Schiffrin, D. and Adger, C. T. (2015) *The handbook of discourse analysis.* Second edn. Chichester, England: Wiley Blackwell.

Tanner, D. (2017) 'Margaret Thatcher: Iron Lady of Charter Schools', *Kappa Delta Pi Record,* 53(2), pp. 66-69.

Tawney, R. H. (1922) *Secondary Education For All.* London: Bloomsbury.

Taylor, S. (1997a) 'Critical Policy Analysis: exploring contexts, texts and consequences', *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education,* 18(1), pp. 23-35.

Taylor, S. (1997b) *Educational policy and the politics of change.* London: Routledge.

Taylor, S. (2013) *What is discourse analysis?* London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Taylor, S. and Singh, P. (2005) 'The logic of equity practice in Queensland state education—2010', *Journal of Education Policy,* 20(6), pp. 725-740.

Teelken, C. (1999) 'Market Mechanisms in Education: School Choice in the Netherlands, England and Scotland in a Comparative Perspective', *Comparative Education,* 35(3), pp. 283-302.

The Conservative Party (2007) *Raising the bar, closing the gap.* Available at: http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/pdfs/2007-conservative-policy.pdf (Accessed: March 18 2019).

The Conservative Party (2010) *Conservative manifesto 2010 Invitation to join the government of Britain*. Available at: https://conservativehome.blogs.com/files/conservative-manifesto-2010.pdf (Accessed: May 15 2020).

*The Danish free school tradition* (2018). Available at: https://www.friskolerne.dk/fileadmin/filer/Dansk_Friskoleforening/Billeder_og_video/Eng_version/faelles_international_hefte_18_small.pdf. (Accessed: July 23 2022)

The Guardian (2008) *'She deserves an education': outcry as academy excludes 41% of pupils*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/aug/31/english-school-outwood-academy-fixed-term-exclusions-pupils (Accessed: May 11 2021).

The Guardian (2010a) 'Can Gove's American dream work here?', *The Guardian*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2010/oct/18/kipp-free-charter-schools (Accessed: July 14 2018).

The Guardian (2010b) '£500,000 free schools grant given to Gove's former adviser, aged 25', *The Guardian*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2010/oct/27/michael-gove-adviser-free-schools-contract (Accessed: June 18 2020).

The Guardian (2014a) 'David Green of Civitas: 'The state should run hardly any schools itself''. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/apr/08/david-green-civitas-state-should-not-run-schools (Accessed: June 18 2019).

The Guardian (2014b) *Free schools – what can America teach Britain?* Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/may/06/free-schools-what-can-america-teach-us-charter-schools (Accessed: June 12 2020).

The Guardian (2016a) 'Government drops plan to make all schools in England academies', *The Guardian*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/may/06/government-backs-down-over-plan-to-make-all-schools-academies (Accessed: June 18 2022).

The Guardian (2016b) 'How the Tories picked free schools: chaotic, inconsistent and incompetent', *The Guardian*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/mar/15/legal-battle-why-free-schools-succeed-and-fail (Accessed: May 23 2021).

The Guardian (2018) 'Dozens of secondary schools exclude at least 20% of pupils', *The Guardian*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/aug/31/dozens-of-secondary-schools-exclude-at-least-20-of-pupils (Accessed: June 18 2019).

The Guardian (2021a) 'DfE considering return of Sats at 14 and axing teaching hours limits', *The Guardian*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/oct/01/dfe-considering-return-of-sats-at-14-and-axing-teaching-hours-limits (Accessed: May 12 2021).

The Guardian (2021b) *Ofsted investigates rise in primary-age children in alternative provision*. Manchester. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/nov/05/ofsted-investigates-rise-in-primary-age-children-in-alternative-provision?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Other (Accessed: November 09 2021).

The Guardian (2021c) *'Written off – at five': children in England dumped in unfit 'schools'*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/nov/05/written-off-at-five-children-in-england-dumped-in-unfit-schools?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Other (Accessed: November 09 2021).

The Guardian (2022) 'MPs accuse DfE of failing to control academy leaders' excessive salaries', *The Guardian*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/mar/25/academy-leaders-excessive-salaries-dfe-mps-committee (Accessed: March 26 2022).

The School Run (2021) *What is a free school?* Available at: https://www.theschoolrun.com/what-is-a-free-school (Accessed: October 10 2021).

The Times Educational Supplement (2017a) *'I don't want to be education secretary again,' says Michael Gove*. TES. London. Available at: https://www.tes.com/news/exclusive-i-dont-want-be-education-secretary-again-says-michael-gove (Accessed: May 10 2019.

The Times Educational Supplement (2017b) *'Scandal' of £75m 'wasted' on temporary free schools: Use of short-term buildings for flagship policy threatens standards, Labour warns*. Available at: http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eax&AN=125220698&site=ehost-live (Accessed: April 28 2020).

The Times Educational Supplement (2017c) *Some are going to be totally brilliant... and some are going to be set up by mad people*. Available at: http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eax&AN=127020238&site=ehost-live (Accessed: October 10 2020).

The Times Educational Supplement (2018) *Whatever happened to parent-led free schools?* Available at: http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eax&AN=129885661&site=ehost-live (Accessed: April 28 2021).

The Times Educational Supplement (2020a) *Teacher of Spanish, Bedford - TES Jobs*. Available at: https://www.tes.com/jobs/vacancy/teacher-of-spanish-bedford-1351412 (Accessed: April 28 2020).

The Times Educational Supplement (2020b) *Why is the national curriculum Ofsted's gold standard?* Available at: https://www.tes.com/news/why-national-curriculum-ofsteds-gold-standard (Accessed: April 28 2020).

Thomas, G. (2009) *How to do Your Research Project.* London: Sage Publications.

Thomas, G. (2011) 'A Typology for the Case Study in Social Science Following a Review of Definition, Discourse, and Structure', *Qualitative Inquiry,* 17(6), pp. 511-521.

Thomas, M. D., Blacksmith, J. and Reno, J. (2000) 'Utilizing Insider-Outsider Research Teams in Qualitative Research', *Qualitative Health Research,* 10(6), pp. 819-828.

Thomson, P. (2005) 'Bringing Bourdieu to policy sociology: codification, misrecognition and exchange value in the UK context', *Journal of Education Policy,* 20(6), pp. 741-758.

Thomson, P. (2008) 'Answering back to policy? Headteachers' stress and the logic of the sympathetic interview', *Journal of Education Policy,* 23(6), pp. 649-667.

Thomson, P. (2010) 'Headteacher autonomy: a sketch of a Bourdieuian field analysis of position and practice', *Critical Studies in Education,* 51(1), pp. 5-20.

Thomson, P. (2014a) 'Field', *Pierre Bourdieu*: Routledge, pp. 77-92.

Thomson, P. (2014b) ''Scaling up' educational change: some musings on misrecognition and doxic challenges', *Critical Studies in Education,* 55(2), pp. 87-103.

Thomson, P. (2017) *Educational leadership and Pierre Bourdieu.* London; New York: Routledge.

Thomson, P. (2020) *School Scandals.* Bristol: Policy Press.

Time Magazine (2018) *A Day at Britain's Strictest School*. Available at: https://time.com/5232857/michaela-britains-strictest-school/ (Accessed: May 24 2020).

Tirri, K. (2014) 'The last 40 years in Finnish teacher education', *Journal of Education for Teaching,* 40(5), pp. 600-609.

Tomlinson, H. (2000) 'Proposals for Performance Related Pay for Teachers in English Schools', *School Leadership and Management,* 20(3), pp. 281-298.

Tomlinson, S. (2001) 'Education Policy, 1997-2000: The effects on top, bottom and middle England', *International Studies in Sociology of Education,* 11(3), pp. 261-278.

Tomlinson, S. (2005) *Education in a post-welfare society.* London: McGraw-Hill Education.

Tooley, J. (1997) 'Choice and Diversity in Education: a defence', *Oxford Review of Education,* 23(1), pp. 103-116.

Tooley, J. (2004) 'Private education and 'education for all'', *Economic Affairs,* 24(4), pp. 4-7.

Tooley, J. (2005) *Reclaiming education.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Tooley, J. and Darby, D. (1998) *Educational research: a critique: a survey of published educational research: report presented to OFSTED.* London: Office for Standards in Education.

Tracy, S. C. (1992) 'Charter Schools: Choices for Parents, Chances for Children', *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas,* 66(2), pp. 90-91.

Traxler, C. R. (2015) 'Why the Sudbury Model of Education Should Be Taken Seriously; The Most Democratic School of Them All', *Studies in Education,* 12(2), pp. 271-296.

Turner, C. M. (1969) 'An Organisational Analysis of a Secondary Modern School', *The Sociological Review,* 17(1), pp. 67-86.

Tyack, D. (1974) *The one best system: a history of American urban education.* Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Tyack, D. and Cuban, L. (1995) *Tinkering toward utopia: a century of public school reform.* Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Tyack, D. and Tobin, W. (1994) 'The "Grammar" of Schooling: Why Has it Been so Hard to Change?', *American educational research journal,* 31(3), pp. 453-479.

University of Birmingham (2020) *Research ethics*. Available at: https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/rss/ethics-and-governance/research-ethics/index.aspx (Accessed: September 22 2020).

Van Dijk, T. A. (2008) *Discourse and Power.* London: Macmillan Education UK.

Van Leeuwen, T. (2016) 'Legitimation in discourse and communication', *Discourse and communication,* 1(1), pp. 91-112.

Van Ryzin, M. J. (2008) 'A Call for an Empirical Taxonomy of Schools', *Journal of School Choice,* 2(2), pp. 206-211.

Van Wynsberghe, R. and Khan, S. (2007) 'Redefining Case Study', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods,* 6(2), pp. 80-94.

Verdugo, R. R. (2014) *Educational reform in Europe. Cross National research* Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Vidler, E. and Clarke, J. (2005) 'Creating citizen-consumers: New Labour and the remaking of public services', *Public policy and Administration,* 20(2), pp. 19-37.

Vinall, C. (2021) 'Like a puppet on a string… exploring Headteachers' perceived demise of Local Governing Bodies within an English Multi-Academy Trust', *Management in Education*, pp. 08920206211051474.

Vinson, K. D. (1999) 'National Curriculum Standards and Social Studies Education: Dewey, Freire, Foucault, and the Construction of a Radical Critique', *Theory and Research in Social Education,* 27(3), pp. 296-328.

Waite, S., Bølling, M. and Bentsen, P. (2016) 'Comparing apples and pears?: a conceptual framework for understanding forms of outdoor learning through comparison of English Forest Schools and Danish udeskole', *Environmental Education Research,* 22(6), pp. 868-892.

Walford, G. (1990) *Privatization and privilege in education.* London: Routledge.

Walford, G. (1992) 'Educational Choice and Equity in Great Britain', *Educational Policy,* 6(2), pp. 123-138.

Walford, G. (1993) 'The Real Lessons in School Reform from Britain', *Educational Policy,* 7(2), pp. 212-222.

Walford, G. (1995) 'The Christian Schools Campaign—a successful educational pressure group?', *British Educational Research Journal,* 21(4), pp. 451-464.

Walford, G. (1996) 'Diversity and Choice in School Education: an alternative view', *Oxford Review of Education,* 22(2), pp. 143-154.

Walford, G. (1997) 'Diversity, Choice, and Selection in England and Wales', *Educational Administration Quarterly,* 33(2), pp. 158-169.

Walford, G. (2000) 'A Policy Adventure: Sponsored grant-maintained schools', *Educational Studies,* 26(2), pp. 247-262.

Walford, G. (2002) *Researching the city technology college, Kingshurst, Doing educational research*, pp. 94-112. London: Routledge.

Walford, G. (2013) *Researching the powerful in education.* London: Routledge.

Walford, G. (2014a) 'Academies, free schools and social justice', *Research Papers in Education,* 29(3), pp. 263-267.

Walford, G. (2014b) 'From city technology colleges to free schools: sponsoring new schools in England', *Research Papers in Education,* 29(3), pp. 315-329.

Walmsley, A. (2011) 'What the United Kingdom Can Teach the United States about School Uniforms', *Phi Delta Kappan,* 92(6), pp. 63-66.

Walsh, W. (1969) 'Dialogue and the Idea', *Critical Survey,* 4(1), pp. 67-69.

Walter, S. (1996) 'The ‘flawed parent’: A reconsideration of Rousseau's Emile and its significance for radical education in the United States', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 44(3), pp. 260-274.

Warner, C. (2019) *From Margins to Centre: The Experiences of Black Free School Proposers.* PhD thesis. Goldsmiths, University of London. Available at: https://research.gold.ac.uk/id/eprint/27645/1/EDU_thesis_WarnerC_2019.pdf (Accessed: June 04 2022)

Watson, C. A. M. (2017) *Independence as the constrained freedom to individuate: a study from an internal perspective of the aims and evaluation processes in early twenty-first century secondary schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) associations.* PhD thesis. UCL (University College London). Available at: https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10040759/1/Mannion%20Watson_10040759_thesis_REVISED.pdf (Accessed September 10 2022)

Watt, D. C. (1969) 'Expansion at the London School of Economics', *Critical Survey,* 4(1), pp. 32-35.

Watt, T. T. (2003) 'Are Small Schools and Private Schools Better for Adolescents' Emotional Adjustment?', *Sociology of Education,* 76(4), pp. 344-367.

Watts, J. (1977) *The Countesthorpe experience: the first five years.* London: George Allen and Unwin.

Weber, R. (2019) *Basic Content Analysis.* Second edn. California: Thousand Oaks.

Welsh, E. (2002) 'Dealing with Data: Using NVivo in the Qualitative Data Analysis Process', *FORUM: Qualitative social research,* Volume 3, number 2. DOI: https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-3.2.865

Wermke, W. and Salokangas, M. (2015) 'Autonomy in education: theoretical and empirical approaches to a contested concept', *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy,* 2015(2), pp. 28841.

West, A. (2014) 'Academies in England and independent schools (fristående skolor) in Sweden: policy, privatisation, access and segregation', *Research Papers in Education,* 29(3), pp. 330-350.

West, A. (2023) 'School Choice (And Diversity) in the UK since 1944: Continuity, Change, Divergence and School Selectivity', *Journal of School Choice,* 17(1), pp. 15-34.

West, A. and Bailey, E. (2013a) 'The Development of the Academies Programme: 'Privatising' School-Based Education in England 1986-2013', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 61(2), pp. 137-159.

West, A. and Bailey, E. (2013b) 'The Development of the Academies Programme: ‘Privatising’ School-Based Education in England 1986–2013', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 61(2), pp. 137-159.

West, A., Hind, A. and Pennell, H. (2004) 'School admissions and 'selection' in comprehensive schools: policy and practice', *Oxford Review of Education,* 30(3), pp. 347-369.

West, A. and Pennell, H. (2002) 'How New is New Labour? The Quasi-market and English Schools 1997 to 2001', *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 50(2), pp. 206-224.

West, A., Pennell, H., and West, R. (2000) 'New Labour and School-Based Education in England: Changing the System of Funding?', *British Educational Research Journal,* 26(4), pp. 523–536.

West, A. and Wolfe, D. (2019a) 'Academies, autonomy, equality and democratic accountability: Reforming the fragmented publicly funded school system in England', *London Review of Education,* 17(1), pp. 70-86.

Westergaard, J. and Resler, H. (1975) *Class in a capitalist society: a study of contemporary Britain.* London: Heinemann Educational.

Wheelahan, L. (2009) 'The problem with CBT (and why constructivism makes things worse)', *Journal of Education and Work,* 22(3), pp. 227-242.

Wheeler-Bell, Q. (2017) 'Standing in need of justification: Michael Apple, R.S. Peters and Jürgen Habermas', *Journal of Curriculum Studies,* 49(4), pp. 561-578.

Whelan, R. (2007) *Corruption of the curriculum.* London: Civitas. Available at: https://www.civitas.org.uk/content/files/CorruptionoftheCurriculumMay07.pdf (Accessed: February 12 2021)

Whitty, G. (1985) *Sociology and school knowledge.* London: Methuen.

Whitty, G. (1989) 'The New Right and the national curriculum: State control or market forces?', *Journal of Education Policy,* 4(4), pp. 329-341.

Whitty, G. (1997) 'Creating Quasi-Markets in Education: A Review of Recent Research on Parental Choice and School Autonomy in Three Countries', *Review of Research in Education,* 22, pp. 3-47.

Whitty, G. (2000) 'Teacher professionalism in new times', *Journal of In-Service Education,* 26(2), pp. 281-295.

Whitty, G. (2008) 'Twenty Years of Progress?: English Education Policy 1988 to the Present', *Educational Management Administration and Leadership,* 36(2), pp. 165-184.

Whitty, G. (2014) 'Recent developments in teacher training and their consequences for the ‘University Project’ in education', *Oxford Review of Education,* 40(4), pp. 466-481.

Whitty, G. and Power, S. (1997) 'Quasi-Markets and Curriculum Control: Making Sense of Recent Education Reform in England and Wales', *Educational Administration Quarterly,* 33(2), pp. 219-240.

Whitty, G., Power, S. and Halpin, D. (1998) *Devolution and choice in education: the school, the state and the market.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Wiborg, S. (2004) 'Education and Social Integration: a comparative study of the comprehensive school system in Scandinavia', *London Review of Education,* 2(2), pp. 83-93.

Wiborg, S. (2010) 'Swedish free schools: Do they work', *LLAKES Research Paper,* 18. Available at: https://www.llakes.ac.uk/publication/swedish-free-schools-do-they-work (Accessed: April 10 2022)

Wiborg, S. (2013) 'Neo-liberalism and universal state education: the cases of Denmark, Norway and Sweden 1980–2011', *Comparative Education,* 49(4), pp. 407-423.

Wiborg, S. (2015) 'Privatizing Education: Free School Policy in Sweden and England', *Comparative Education Review,* 59(3), pp. 473-497.

Wiborg, S., Green, F., Taylor-Gooby, P. and Wilde, R. J. (2018) 'Free Schools in England: ‘Not Unlike other Schools’?', *Journal of Social Policy,* 47(1), pp. 119-137.

Wildavsky, A. B. (1980) *The art and craft of policy analysis.* London: Macmillan.

Wilkins, A. (2017) 'Rescaling the local: multi-academy trusts, private monopoly and statecraft in England', *Journal of Educational Administration and History,* 49(2), pp. 171-185.

Williams, R. (1961) *The Long Revolution.* London: Chatto and Windus.

Williams, R. (1976) *Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and society.* London: Fontana Paperbacks.

Willis, P. E. (1980) *Learning to labour: how working class kids get working class jobs.* Aldershot: Gower.

Willms, J. D. and Echols, F. (1992) 'Alert and inert clients: The Scottish experience of parental choice of schools', *Economics of Education Review,* 11(4), pp. 339-350.

Wilson, B. (1969) 'Youth Culture, the Universities and Student Unrest', *Critical Survey,* 4(1), pp. 70-80.

Wilson, D., Croxson, B. and Atkinson, A. (2006) '“What gets measured gets done”', *Policy Studies,* 27(2), pp. 153-171.

Wilson, J. (2015) 'Political Discourse'. In: Tannen, D., Hamilton, H.E. and Schiffrin, D. (eds.) *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, pp. 398-415.

Wilson, M. A. F. (2015) 'Radical democratic schooling on the ground: pedagogical ideals and realities in a Sudbury school', *Ethnography and Education,* 10(2), pp. 121-136.

Wilson, T. S. and Carlsen, R. L. (2016) 'School Marketing as a Sorting Mechanism: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Charter School Websites', *Peabody Journal of Education,* 91(1), pp. 24-46.

Winter, C. (2012) 'School curriculum, globalisation and the constitution of policy problems and solutions', *Journal of Education Policy,* 27(3), pp. 295-314.

Winther-Jensen, T. (2002) 'Tradition and transition in Danish education', *Education in transition. International perspectives on the politics and processes of change*, pp. 67-83.

Wodak, R. (1989) *Language, power and ideology: studies in political discourse.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Wodak, R. and Chilton, P. (2005) *New Agenda in (Critical) Discourse Analysis : Theory, methodology and interdisciplinarity.* Philadelphia, Netherlands: The John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Woods, P. and Simkins, T. (2014) 'Understanding the local: Themes and Issues in the Experience of Structural Reform in England', *Educational Management Administration and Leadership,* 42(3), pp. 324-340.

Woods, P. A. and Woods, G. J (2006). 'In harmony with the child: The Steiner teacher as co-Leader in a pedagogical community'. *FORUM: for promoting 3-19 comprehensive education*. Available at: https://journals.lwbooks.co.uk/forum/vol-48-issue-3/article-2903 (accessed: June 17 2022)

Woods, P. A., Woods, G. J. and Gunter, H. (2007) 'Academy schools and entrepreneurialism in education', *Journal of Education Policy,* 22(2), pp. 237-259.

Worth, J., Van den Brande, J. (2019) *Teacher Labour Market in England: Annual Report*: NFER. Available at: https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/3344/teacher_labour_market_in_england_2019.pdf (Accessed: March 10 2022).

Wragg, T., Haynes, G., Chamberlin, R. and Wragg, C. (2003) 'Performance-related pay: the views and experiences of 1,000 primary and secondary head teachers', *Research Papers in Education,* 18(1), pp. 3.

Wright, N. P. (1988) *Radicals in English education 1960-1980: A critical study.* MA, Open University. Milton Keynes Available at: http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.382730 (Accessed: July 10 2021).

Wylie, I. (2012) 'How we started up our own free school', *Management Today*, pp. 38-42,9.

Wyse, D., Hayward, L., Higgins, S. and Livingston, K. (2018) 'Traditional school subjects versus progressive pedagogy', *The Curriculum Journal,* 29(3), pp. 295-297.

Wyse, D., Hayward, L., Livingston, K. and Higgins, S. (2014) 'Creating curricula: aims, knowledge, and control a special edition of the Curriculum Journal', *The Curriculum Journal,* 25(1), pp. 2-6.

Xu, W. and Zammit, K. (2020) 'Applying Thematic Analysis to Education: A Hybrid Approach to Interpreting Data in Practitioner Research', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods,* 19.

Yanos, P. T. and Hopper, K. (2008) 'On ‘False, Collusive Objectification’: Becoming Attuned to Self-Censorship, Performance and Interviewer Biases in Qualitative Interviewing', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology,* 11(3), pp. 229-237.

Young, M. (1971) *Knowledge and control: new directions for the sociology of education.* London: Collier-Macmillan.

Young, M. (2013) 'Overcoming the crisis in curriculum theory: a knowledge-based approach', *Journal of curriculum studies,* 45(2), pp. 101-118.

Young, M. (2014) 'What is a curriculum and what can it do?', *The Curriculum Journal,* 25(1), pp. 7-13.

Young, T. (2014) *Prisoners of the blob*. London: Civitas. Available at: https://www.civitas.org.uk/pdf/PrisonersofTheBlob.pdf (Accessed: May 18 2021).

Yuan, K., Le, V.-N., McCaffrey, D. F., Marsh, J. A., Hamilton, L. S., Stecher, B. M. and Springer, M. G. (2013) 'Incentive pay programs do not affect teacher motivation or reported practices: Results from three randomized studies', *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis,* 35(1), pp. 3-22.

Yuhas, D. (2018) *The school without classrooms*. Toronto: The Globe and Mail. Available at: https://search.proquest.com/docview/1811376018 (Accessed: May 24 2020).

Zimmer, R. W. (2009) *Charter schools in eight states.* Santa Monica: RAND.

Zirkel, P. A. (1999) 'Grade inflation: A leadership opportunity for schools of education?', *Teachers College Record,* 101(2), pp. 247-260.

## Appendix 1 Example data set 1 sources

The sources used for data set 1 were designed to provide comprehensive information about the way free schools were positioned within official-discourse, especially the ideological framework which under-pinned policy. The sources include official policy documents, political speeches and statements, policy advocacy and press media, see figures AP 1.1 to 1.7

*a) Policy documents related to free schools produced by government*

*Figure AP 1.1 Example government policy documents related to free schools*

| **Rationale for inclusion** | These documents outlined what free schools were, how to make an application and provided examples of advocacy (free school proposers describing their experience within particular ways). |
|---|---|
| **How information was located** | Knowledge gained through working in the field.<br><br>Some searching required using terms 'free school', or through links followed. Mainly focused on early examples of policy documentation (via https://web.archive.org) or through information I collected at the time. |
| **References** | 1. Department for Business, I. a. S. (2009) *Science and Mathematics Secondary*<br>2. *Education for the 21st Century*. London. Available at: https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/492/7/Science-and-Learning-Expert-Group-Report-Annexes-31_Redacted.pdf (Accessed).<br>3. Department for Education *Free Schools FAQs - Safeguarding, SEN and exclusions*. Available at: |

http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/freeschoolsfaqs/a0063493/free-schools-faqs-safeguarding-sen-and-exclusions/ (Accessed: March 10 2019).

4. Department for Education (2010) *The case for change The importance of teaching*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/526946/The_case_for_change_The_importance_of_teaching.pdf (Accessed: May16 2019).
5. Department for Education (2010) *Free schools*. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20101016041059/http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools (Accessed: July 9 2020).
6. Department for Education (2010) *Free Schools FAQs*. Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/freeschoolsfaqs (Accessed: March 10 2019).
7. Department for Education (2010) *Free Schools FAQs - Accountability*. Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/freeschoolsfaqs/a0063496/free-schools-faqs-accountability/(Accessed: March 10 2019).
8. Department for Education (2010) *Free Schools FAQs - Admissions*. Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/freeschoolsfaqs/a0063489/free-schools-faqs-admissions/ (Accessed: March 10 2019).
9. Department for Education (2010) *Free Schools FAQs - Funding and premises*. Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/freeschoolsfaqs/a0063481/free-schools-faqs-funding-and-premises/ (Accessed: March 10 2019).
10. Department for Education (2010) *Free Schools FAQs - General*. Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/freeschoolsfaqs/a0063473/free-schools-faqs-general/ (Accessed: March 10 2019).
11. Department for Education (2010) *Free Schools FAQs - Requirements*. Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/freeschoolsfaqs/a0061433/free-schools-faqs-requirements/ (Accessed: March 10 2019).
12. Department for Education (2010) *Free Schools FAQs - Support*. Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/freeschoolsfaqs/a0063480/free-schools-faqs-support/ (Accessed: March 10 2019).

| | |
|---|---|
| | 13. Department for Education (2010) *The Importance of Teaching The Schools White Paper, 2010*. London: Department for Education. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175429/CM-7980.pdf (Accessed: May 16 2019).<br>14. Department for Education (2010) *Letter from the Secretary of State to LAs introducing Free Schools*. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20101016041650/http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/l/letter%20from%20the%20secretary%20of%20state%20to%20las%20introducing%20free%20schools.pdf (Accessed: March 10 2019).<br>15. Department for Education (2010) *Michael Gove outlines process for setting up free schools*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/michael-gove-outlines-process-for-setting-up-free-schools (Accessed: May 3 2020).<br>16. Department for Education (2010) *Michael Gove's written ministerial statement relating to new Free School proposals*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/michael-goves-written-ministerial-statement-relating-to-new-free-school-proposals (Accessed: July 16 2020).<br>17. Department for Education (2010) *National pupil projections: June 2010* (Accessed: March 10 2019).<br>18. Department for Education (2010) *School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2010 and Guidance on School Teachers' Pay and Conditions*. London: Department for Education. Available at: https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130321074055/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/2010%20PandC%20All%20sections.pdf (Accessed: Report).<br>19. Department for Education (2010) *What are free schools?* Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/a0061428/what-are-free-schools (Accessed: March 18 2019).<br>*20.* Department for Education (2010) *Written Ministerial Statement from Secretary of State for Education,*<br>21. *Michael Gove*. Available at: http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/f/written%20ministerial%20statement%20relating%20to%20new%20free%20school%20proposals.pdf (Accessed: March 10 2019).<br>22. Department for Education (2011) *Eight free schools have business plans approved*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/eight-free-schools-have-business-plans-approved (Accessed: June 16 2020). |

23. Department for Education (2011) *Free school launch event 2011 - videos and speeches*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/user/educationgovuk (Accessed: June 21 2018).
24. Department for Education (2011) *The Free School Norwich*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NT4RIuiUhF0 (Accessed: June 15 2020).
25. Department for Education (2011) *Free Schools Conference: The class of 2011*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XBn7K_Xw790&feature=emb_logo (Accessed: June 15 2020).
26. Department for Education (2011) *Kempston Academy*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qgf53eRRrm0 (Accessed: June 15 2020).
27. Department for Education (2011) *Michael Gove on Free Schools*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1MLWv6NUK0g (Accessed: June 15 2020).
28. Department for Education (2011) *Review of vocational education: the Wolf report*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-vocational-education-the-wolf-report (Accessed: July 13 2021).
29. Department for Education (2011) *Stour Valley Community School*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgiAPawQz9Y (Accessed: June 15 2020).
30. Department for Education (2011) *Teachers' Standards*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards (Accessed: June 15 2020).
31. Department for Education (2011) *US charter schools experts to speak at free schools conference*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/us-charter-schools-experts-to-speak-at-free-schools-conference (Accessed: June 16 2020).
32. Department for Education (2012) *End for GCSE modules and spelling, punctuation and grammar marks restored to exams*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/end-for-gcse-modules-and-spelling-punctuation-and-grammar-marks-restored-to-exams (Accessed: June 16 2021).
33. Department for Education (2012) *Free school application form*. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20120904183850/https:/media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/h/how%20to%20apply%20g

uidance%20mainstream%20free%20school%20%20%20updated%203%20august%202012.pdf (Accessed: June 17 2020).

34. Department for Education (2013) *Guidance on opening a free school (2013)*. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20130126141036/http://education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/a0074965/apply (Accessed: June 17 2020).
35. Department for Education (2013) *National curriculum in England: primary curriculum*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-primary-curriculum (Accessed: June 17 2020).
36. Department for Education (2013) *National curriculum in England: secondary curriculum*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-secondary-curriculum (Accessed: June 17 2021).
37. Department for Education (2014) *Are free schools using innovative approaches?* Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/401458/DFE-RR286_-_Are_free_schools_using_innovative_approaches.pdf (Accessed: August 16 2021).
38. Department for Education (2014) *Free schools: Ofsted inspection grades*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/357764/Free_schools_-_Ofsted_grades_v3.pdf (Accessed: June 17).
39. Department for Education (2014) *Letters to successful free school applicants: wave 1*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letters-sent-to-successful-free-school-applicants-wave-1 (Accessed: June 17 2020).
40. Department for Education (2016) *Free school applications*
41. *Applicants proposing to open a free school along with their applications forms, impact assessments and pre-registration inspections notes.* Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/free-school-applications (Accessed: March 15 2019).
42. Department for Education (2016) *What academies, free schools and colleges should publish online*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-academies-free-schools-and-colleges-should-publish-online (Accessed: June 17 2020).

43. Department for Education (2017) *FOI Request: Free School Costs*. Available at: FOI Request: Free School Costs (Accessed: May 16 2019).
44. Department for Education (2018) *What academies, free schools and colleges should publish online*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-academies-free-schools-and-colleges-should-publish-online (Accessed: June 17 2020).
45. Department for Education (2019) *Establishing a new school: free school presumption*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/establishing-a-new-school-free-school-presumption (Accessed: November 18 2019).
46. Department for Education (2019) *Find and compare schools in England*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/school-performance-tables (Accessed: June 19 2020).
47. Department for Education (2019) *Guidance English Baccalaureate (EBacc)* (Accessed: May 18 2020).
48. Department for Education (2019) *How to apply to set up a mainstream free school*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/830148/How_to_apply_guide_W14_v3.pdf (Accessed: June 19 2020).
49. Department for Education (2019) *Introduction to free schools and New Schools Network*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3QmkPjc0kW8 (Accessed: June 19 2020).
50. Department for Education (2019) *Open academies, free schools, studio schools and UTCs*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-academies-and-academy-projects-in-development (Accessed: June 17 2019).
51. Department for Education (2019) *PM pledges thousands more good school places*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-pledges-thousands-more-good-school-places (Accessed: June 19 2021).
52. Department for Education (2019) *School teachers' pay and conditions document 2019 and guidance on school teachers' pay and conditions*. London: DfE. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/832634/School_teachers_pay_and_conditions_2019.pdf (Accessed: June 19).
53. Department for Education (2020) *Completing the mainstream and 16 to 19 free school 2020 to 2021 financial template*. London. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/887151/Completing_the

_mainstream_and_16-19_free_school_2020_financial_template.pdf (Accessed: May 6 2020).

54. Department for Education (2020) *Development Matters Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/914443/Development_Matters_-_Non-statutory_curriculum_guidance_for_the_early_years_foundation_stage__1_.pdf (Accessed: June 25 2020).
55. Department for Education (2020) *Early years foundation stage profile handbook*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-handbook (Accessed: June 25 2020).
56. Department for Education (2020) *Free school applications*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/free-school-applications (Accessed: January 25 2020).
57. Department for Education (2020) *Free school pre-opening guide*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-school-pre-opening-guide/free-school-pre-opening-guide#staffing-education-plans-and-policies (Accessed: May 6 2020).
58. Department for Education (2020) *Reducing school workload*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/reducing-school-workload (Accessed: May 6 2020).
59. Department for Education (2020) *School design and construction*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/school-design-and-construction (Accessed: May 24 2020).
60. Department for Education (2020) *School teachers' pay and conditions document 2020 and guidance on school teachers' pay and conditions*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/920904/2020_STPCD_FINAL_230920.pdf (Accessed: May 6 2020).
61. Department for Education (2020) *School workforce in England*. Available at: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england (Accessed: May 10 2021).
62. Department for Education (2020) *Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five EYFS reforms early adopter version*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/

| | |
|---|---|
| | system/uploads/attachment_data/file/896810/EYFS_Early_Adopter_Framework.pdf (Accessed: June 25 2021).<br>63. Department for Education (2020) *What maintained schools must publish online*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online (Accessed: June 25 2020).<br>64. Department for Education (2021) *Free school applications*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/free-school-applications (Accessed: May 24 2021).<br>65. Department for Education (2022) *Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/opportunity-for-all-strong-schools-with-great-teachers-for-your-child (Accessed). |

*b) Example policy documents (other) produced by government and included broader aspects of school supply reform*

*Figure AP 1.2 Example other relevant government policy documents*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Rationale for inclusion** | These documents outlined wider elements of the field of school-supply, including tests, examinations, social equity, knowledge, curriculum and teacher training. This included elements which defined schools and schooling in a broader sense than post-2010 free schools. |
| **How information was located** | Knowledge gained through working in the field.<br><br>Some searching required using terms 'free school', or through links followed. Mainly focused on early examples of policy documentation (via https://web.archive.org) or through information I collected at the time. |
| **References** | 1. Department for Business, I. a. S. (2009) *Science and Mathematics Secondary*<br>2. *Education for the 21st Century*. London. Available at: https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/492/7/Science-and-Learning-Expert-Group-Report-Annexes-31_Redacted.pdf (Accessed).<br>3. Department for Education (2010) *The case for change The importance of teaching*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/526946/The_case_for_change_The_importance_of_teaching.pdf (Accessed: May16 2019).<br>4. Department for Education (2010) *Free schools*. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20101016041059/http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools (Accessed: July 9 2020).<br>5. Department for Education (2010) *Free Schools FAQs*. Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/freeschoolsfaqs (Accessed: March 10 2019). |

| | |
|---|---|
| | 6. Department for Education (2010) *Free Schools FAQs - Accountability*. Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/freeschoolsfaqs/a0063496/free-schools-faqs-accountability/(Accessed: March 10 2019).<br>7. Department for Education (2010) *Free Schools FAQs - Admissions*. Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/freeschoolsfaqs/a0063489/free-schools-faqs-admissions/ (Accessed: March 10 2019).<br>8. Department for Education (2010) *Free Schools FAQs - Funding and premises*. Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/freeschoolsfaqs/a0063481/free-schools-faqs-funding-and-premises/ (Accessed: March 10 2019).<br>9. Department for Education (2010) *Free Schools FAQs - General*. Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/freeschoolsfaqs/a0063473/free-schools-faqs-general/ (Accessed: March 10 2019).<br>10. Department for Education (2010) *Free Schools FAQs - Requirements*. Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/freeschoolsfaqs/a0061433/free-schools-faqs-requirements/ (Accessed: March 10 2019).<br>11. Department for Education (2010) *Free Schools FAQs - Support*. Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/freeschoolsfaqs/a0063480/free-schools-faqs-support/ (Accessed: March 10 2019).<br>12. Department for Education (2010) *The Importance of Teaching The Schools White Paper, 2010*. London: Department for Education. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175429/CM-7980.pdf (Accessed: May 16 2019).<br>13. Department for Education (2010) *Letter from the Secretary of State to LAs introducing Free Schools*. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20101016041650/http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/l/letter%20from%20the%20secretary%20of%20state%20to%20las%20introducing%20free%20schools.pdf (Accessed: March 10 2019).<br>14. Department for Education (2010) *Michael Gove outlines process for setting up free schools*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/michael-gove-outlines-process-for-setting-up-free-schools (Accessed: May 3 2020).<br>15. Department for Education (2010) *Michael Gove's written ministerial statement relating to new Free School proposals*. |

Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/michael-goves-written-ministerial-statement-relating-to-new-free-school-proposals (Accessed: July 16 2020).

16. Department for Education (2010) *National pupil projections: June 2010* (Accessed: March 10 2019).
17. Department for Education (2010) *School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2010 and Guidance on School Teachers' Pay and Conditions*. London: Department for Education. Available at: https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130321074055/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/2010%20PandC%20All%20sections.pdf (Accessed: Report).
18. Department for Education (2010) *What are free schools?* Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/a0061428/what-are-free-schools (Accessed: March 18 2019).
19. Department for Education (2010) *Written Ministerial Statement from Secretary of State for Education,*
20. *Michael Gove*. Available at: http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/f/written%20ministerial%20statement%20relating%20to%20new%20free%20school%20proposals.pdf (Accessed: March 10 2019).
21. Department for Education (2011) *Free school launch event 2011 - videos and speeches*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/user/educationgovuk (Accessed: June 21 2018).
22. Department for Education (2011) *Free Schools Conference: The class of 2011*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XBn7K_Xw790&feature=emb_logo (Accessed: June 15 2020).
23. Department for Education (2011) *Review of vocational education: the Wolf report*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-vocational-education-the-wolf-report (Accessed: July 13 2021).
24. The Department for Children Schools and Families (2009) *School Teachers' Review Body Eighteenth report part two – 2009*. London: DCSF. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/238592/7652.pdf (Accessed).
25. Cameron, D. (2007) *Raising the bar closing the gap,*. Available at: https://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/599738 (Accessed: June 18 2020).

| | |
|---|---|
| | 26. Cameron, D. (2011) *Free Schools Conference: Address by Prime Minister*. Available at: https://www.tes.com/en-us/teaching-resource/free-schools-conference-address-by-prime-minister-6367463 (Accessed: May 11 2020).<br>27. Cameron, D. (2011) *Speech on the 'Big Society'*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/speech-on-the-big-society (Accessed: April 9 2020).<br>28. Cameron, D. (2015) *Prime Minister: we will not waver in free schools pledge*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-we-will-not-waver-in-free-schools-pledge (Accessed: April 15 2021). |

*c) Example speeches Secretary of State for Education and School's Minister*

*Figure AP 1.3 Example speeches by key government figures*

| **Rationale for inclusion** | These documents provided insight into the ideological framework used to develop policy and its trajectory over time. Speeches were accessed through specific sites and focused on the Secretary of Stage for Education (Gove) and School's Minister (Gibb). Gove announced policy or highlighted specific policy aims while Gibb valorised the positive effects of policy changes, especially on test and examination results. |
|---|---|
| **How information was located** | https://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org<br>Google search for speeches by Nick Gibb (schools minister) from .gov.uk |
| **References** | 1. Gibb, N. (2010) *The Academies Bill*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/nick-gibb-to-the-reform-conference (Accessed: Web Page 2020).<br>2. Gibb, N. (2010) *A vision for education*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/nick-gibb-to-the-grammar-schools-heads-associations-national-conference (Accessed: Web Page 2020).<br>3. Gibb, N. (2011) *Education Bill receives Royal Assent*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/education-bill-receives-royal-assent (Accessed: Web Page 2020).<br>4. Gibb, N. (2011) *Nick Gibb to the Association of Teachers and Lecturers 2011 Conference*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/nick-gibb-to-the-association-of-teachers-and-lecturers-2011-conference (Accessed: Web Page 2020).<br>5. Gibb, N. (2011) *Nick Gibb to the north of England education conference*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/nick-gibb-to-the-north-of-england-education-conference (Accessed: Web Page 2020).<br>6. Gibb, N. (2011) *Schools given freedom from bureaucratic rules to have control over school day*. Available at: |

| | |
|---|---|
| | https://www.gov.uk/government/news/schools-given-freedom-from-bureaucratic-rules-to-have-control-over-school-day (Accessed: Web Page 2020).<br>7. Gibb, N. (2011) *Standards in English schools*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/nick-gibb-to-the-100-group (Accessed: Web Page 2020).<br><br>8. Gove, M. (2007) *Brown is hanging on to power for its own sake* Available at: http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/599753 (Accessed: Web Page 2020).<br>9. Gove, M. (2007) *It's time for modern compassionate Conservative education policy* Available at: http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/599789 (Accessed: Web Page 2020).<br>10. Gove, M. (2008a) *Making Opportunity More Equal*. Available at: http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/599674 (Accessed: Web Page 2020).<br>11. Gove, M. (2008b) *Why Conservative social policy delivers progressive ends* Available at: http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/599624 (Accessed: Web Page 2020).<br>12. Gove, M. (2009) *A comprehensive programme for state education*. Available at: http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601248 (Accessed: May 20 2020).<br>13. Gove, M. (2009) *Enhancing the status of teaching*. Available at: http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601408 (Accessed: May 20 2020).<br>14. Gove, M. (2009) *Failing schools need new leadership*. Available at: http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601288 (Accessed: May 20 2020).<br>15. Gove, M. (2009) *Residential academies could help disadvantaged children*. Available at: http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601393 (Accessed: Web Page 2020).<br>16. Gove, M. (2009) *Schools are the front line in the economic war*. Available at: http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601401 (Accessed: Web Page 2020).<br>17. Gove, M. (2010) *All pupils will learn our island story*. Available at: http://conservative- |

| | |
|---|---|
| | speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601441 (Accessed: May 20 2020).<br>18. Gove, M. (2010) *Charlie Whelan's new militant tendency*. Available at: http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601506 (Accessed: May 20 2020).<br>19. Gove, M. (2010) *We will end the political control of A levels*. Available at: http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601516 (Accessed: May 20 2020). |

### *d) Example other political parties' - policy documents from other political parties*

*Figure AP 1.4 Example policy documents from other political parties*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Rationale for inclusion** | Information about political priorities in 2010 was used to provide a context for free schools as part of GERM. |
| **How information was located** | Web search for specific 2010 election manifesto. |
| **References** | 1. Labour, P. (2010) *Labour Party manifesto A future fair for all* (Accessed: May 21 2020).<br>2. Liberal Democratic, P. (2010) *Liberal Democrat manifesto 2010* (Accessed: May 21 2020).<br>3. The Conservative Party (2007) *Raising the bar, closing the gap.* Available at: http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/pdfs/2007-conservative-policy.pdf (Accessed: March 18 2019).<br>4. The Conservative Party (2010) *Conservative manifesto 2010 Invitation to join the government of Britain* (Accessed: May 15 2020). |

*e) Example other policy - advocacy especially from NSN*

*Figure AP 1.5 Example documents produced by other policy advocates*

| **Rationale for inclusion** | These documents provided 'sponsored' advocacy for free schools, emphasising elements of distinctiveness, different, innovation and superiority. |
|---|---|
| **How information was located** | A mixture of prior knowledge and searching for some original source documents. |
| **References** | 1. New Schools Network (2010) *Frequently asked questions*. Available at: http://www.newschoolsnetwork.org/faqs.html (Accessed: March 09 2019).<br>2. New Schools Network (2010) *How to set up a school - first steps*. Available at: http://www.newschoolsnetwork.org/imgs/New%20Schools%20Network%20-%20how%20to%20set%20up%20a%20school%20first%20steps.pdf (Accessed: March 09 2019).<br>3. New Schools Network (2010) *Model application form based on Sweden*. Available at: http://www.newschoolsnetwork.org/assets/files/swedish%20app%20form.doc (Accessed: March 09 2019).<br>*4.* New Schools Network (2010) *New Charter School*<br>5. *Application Kit*. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20100613173004/http://www.newyorkcharters.org/documents/ApplicationKit6thEdition.pdf (Accessed).<br>6. New Schools Network (2018) *Free schools outstrip council-run schools in parental popularity*. Available at: https://www.newschoolsnetwork.org/what-are-free-schools/free-school-news/open-schools?page=48 (Accessed: October 11 2019).<br>7. New Schools Network (2020) *Find a free school*. Available at: https://www.newschoolsnetwork.org/what-are-free-schools/find-a-free-school (Accessed: October 10 2020).<br>8. New Schools Network (2020) *Mythbusting*. Available at: https://www.newschoolsnetwork.org/what-are-free-schools/free-schools-the-basics/mythbusting (Accessed: October 10 2020). |

### *f) Example policy advocates – thinktanks*

*Figure AP 1.6 Example think tank policy advocates*

| **Rationale for inclusion** | Evidence of the way policy-discourse themes were picked up by selected journals and pseudo-independent think tanks. |
|---|---|
| **How information was located** | Mainly through prior experience through my roles. |
| **References** | 1. Education Policy Institute (2019) *Free schools in England*. Available at: https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/free-schools-2019-report/ (Accessed: June 24 2020).<br>2. Policy Exchange (2010) *Blocking the Best: Obstacles to new, independent state schools*. London: Policy Exchange. Available at: https://policyexchange.org.uk/publication/blocking-the-best-obstacles-to-new-independent-state-schools/ (Accessed: June 15 2021).<br>3. Policy Exchange (2015) *A Rising Tide: The Competitive Benefits of Free Schools*. Available at: https://policyexchange.org.uk/publication/a-rising-tide-the-competitive-benefits-of-free-schools/ (Accessed: May 5 2020). |

*g) Example press media – range of sources mainly through structured searches*

*Figure AP 1.7 Example press media commenting on free schools*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Rationale for inclusion** | This information provided a public facing view of free schools. Some was expected to be positive, neutral or supportive (but this element was not important). This type of media was likely to be known by free school proposers. |
| **How information was located** | Specific searches according to types of publication (see below) and not behind a paywall. |
| **References** | 1. BBC (2015) *What is the rationale behind free schools?* Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-13266290 (Accessed: November 6 2019).<br>2. *The Guardian* (2008) *'She deserves an education': outcry as academy excludes 41% of pupils*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/aug/31/english-school-outwood-academy-fixed-term-exclusions-pupils (Accessed: May 11 2021).<br>3. *The Guardian* (2010) '£500,000 free schools grant given to Gove's former adviser, aged 25', *The Guardian*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2010/oct/27/michael-gove-adviser-free-schools-contract (Accessed: -10-28t00:17:00.000z).<br>4. *The Guardian* (2014) *Free schools – what can America teach Britain?* Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/may/06/free-schools-what-can-america-teach-us-charter-schools (Accessed: June 12 2020).<br>5. *The Guardian* (2016) 'How the Tories picked free schools: chaotic, inconsistent and incompetent', *The Guardian,* . Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/mar/15/legal-battle-why-free-schools-succeed-and-fail (Accessed: May 23 2021).<br>6. *The Guardian* (2018) 'Dozens of secondary schools exclude at least 20% of pupils', *The Guardian*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/aug/31/do |

zens-of-secondary-schools-exclude-at-least-20-of-pupils (Accessed: -08-31t17:07:15.000z).

7. *The Guardian* (2021) 'DfE considering return of Sats at 14 and axing teaching hours limits', *The Guardian*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/oct/01/DfE-considering-return-of-sats-at-14-and-axing-teaching-hours-limits (Accessed: May 12 2021).
8. *The Guardian* (2021) *Ofsted investigates rise in primary-age children in alternative provision*. Manchester. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/nov/05/ofsted-investigates-rise-in-primary-age-children-in-alternative-provision?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Other (Accessed: November 09 2021).
9. *The Guardian* (2021) *'Written off – at five': children in England dumped in unfit 'schools'*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/nov/05/written-off-at-five-children-in-england-dumped-in-unfit-schools?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Other (Accessed: November 09 2021).
10. *The Guardian* (2022) 'MPs accuse DfE of failing to control academy leaders' excessive salaries', *The Guardian* (Accessed: March 26 2022).
11. The School Run (2021) *What is a free school?* Available at: https://www.theschoolrun.com/what-is-a-free-school (Accessed: October 10 2021).
12. The Times Educational Supplement (2017) *'I don't want to be education secretary again,' says Michael Gove*. TES. London. Available at: https://www.tes.com/news/exclusive-i-dont-want-be-education-secretary-again-says-michael-gove (Accessed: May 10 2019).
13. The Times Educational Supplement (2017) *'Scandal' of £75m 'wasted' on temporary free schools: Use of short-term buildings for flagship policy threatens standards, Labour warns*. Available at: http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eax&AN=125220698&site=ehost-live (Accessed: April 28 2020).
14. The Times Educational Supplement (2017) *Some are going to be totally brilliant... and some are going to be set up by mad people*. Available at: http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eax&AN=127020238&site=ehost-live (Accessed: October 10 2020).
15. The Times Educational Supplement (2018) *Whatever happened to parent-led free schools?* Available at:

| | |
|---|---|
| | http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eax&AN=129885661&site=ehost-live (Accessed: April 28 2021).<br>16. The Times Educational Supplement (2020) *Teacher of Spanish, Bedford - Tes Jobs*. Available at: https://www.tes.com/jobs/vacancy/teacher-of-spanish-bedford-1351412 (Accessed: April 28 2020).<br>17. The Times Educational Supplement (2020) *Why is the national curriculum Ofsted's gold standard?* Available at: https://www.tes.com/news/why-national-curriculum-ofsteds-gold-standard (Accessed: April 28 2020).<br>18. Time Magazine (2018) *A Day at Britain's Strictest School*. Available at: https://time.com/5232857/michaela-britains-strictest-school/ (Accessed: May 24 2020).<br>19. Daily Mail (2014) 'Teachers lazy and often turn up late says 'superhead''. Available at: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2816819/Teachers-lazy-turn-late-t-bothered-set-homework-says-superhead-sent-failing-school.html.<br>20. Daily Mail (2021) 'Parents blast new headteacher's strict school rules'. Available at: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9749869/Parents-blast-new-headteachers-strict-school-rules-include-smiling.html (Accessed: -07-02t15:13:11.000z). |

These sources contributed to a form of official-discourse which confronted agents, provided clues about the rules of the game and reflected decisions about the government's approach to 'distribution of social goods' (Gee, 2014).

## Appendix 2 Criteria used for sentiment coding of application forms, websites and job adverts

*Figure AP 2.1 Criteria framework for NVivo sentiment coding of curriculum innovation and difference*

| Description | Definition of description |
|---|---|
| No references to a distinctive curriculum | No reference to distinctive curriculum found using (where available) a key word search (including synonyms). Information is consistent with what might be expected within other maintained schools. |
| Some limited reference to a distinctive curriculum | Some limited reference to distinctive curriculum found using a key word search (including synonyms). For example, a section which mentions the curriculum, but information appears to be similar to what might be expected within other maintained schools. |
| Clear, but not detailed reference to a distinctive curriculum | Reference to distinctive curriculum and one or more results using a key word search (including synonyms). Implication of difference, or states information about free school status. However, information is mostly consistent with what might be expected with maintained schools (suggesting difference is minimal, insignificant, or misrepresented). |

| | |
|---|---|
| Significant reference to a distinctive curriculum | Overt reference to distinctive curriculum found and one or more results using a key word search (including synonyms). Information appears show some difference from other maintained schools. |
| Consistent, detailed and compelling reference to a distinctive curriculum | Clear reference to distinctive curriculum found and one or more results using a key word search (including synonyms). Information specifically references the theme and highlights a distinct difference from other maintained schools. |

*Figure AP 2.2 Criteria framework for NVivo sentiment coding of difference in conditions of service and pay*

| Description | Definition of description |
|---|---|
| No references to changes in conditions of service or pay. | No reference to changes to conditions of service or pay found using (where available) a key word search (including synonyms). Information is consistent with what might be expected within other maintained schools. |
| Some limited reference to changes in conditions of service or pay. | Some limited reference to changes in conditions of service or pay found using a key word search (including synonyms). For example, a section which mentions the curriculum, but information appears to be |

| | |
|---|---|
| | similar to what might be expected within other maintained schools. |
| Clear, but not detailed reference to changes in conditions of service or pay. | Reference to changes in conditions of service or pay and one or more results using a key word search (including synonyms). Implication of difference, or states information about free school status. However, information is mostly consistent with what might be expected with maintained schools (suggesting difference is minimal, insignificant, or misrepresented). |
| Significant reference to changes in conditions of service or pay. | Overt reference to changes in conditions of service or pay found and one or more results using a key word search (including synonyms). Information appears to show some difference from other maintained schools. |
| Consistent, detailed and compelling reference to changes in conditions of service or pay. | Clear reference to changes in conditions of service or pay found and one or more results using a key word search (including synonyms). Information specifically references the theme and highlights a distinct difference from other maintained schools. |

# Appendix 3 Brief summary of sample school website and application form curriculum evaluations

*Figure 3.1 School A summary*

The website outlines a curriculum consistent with the national curriculum and examination options typical for all schools, including LAMS. The Key Stage 3 curriculum contains a broad range of subjects, including those typically found and there are no changes between year groups. The curriculum for Key Stage 4 reflects a broad range of subjects and promotes the EBacc. There are no key differences.

The school's free school status is acknowledged (website 2020), but not presented as a significant feature: '[name of school] is a Free School which takes funding from the Department for Education and operates as any other state school.'

> *'Following recent legislation, all new schools must now be either Academies or Free Schools. The Free School legislation allowed the parent proposers of [name of school] School to define a school that 'local people really want. We receive the same level of funding as other local schools, and in common with other local schools that have converted to Academy status we are funded directly by Government rather than by the Local Authority. Nevertheless we work in*

*partnership with the Local Authority to ensure that our school makes a positive contribution to the local family of schools'.*

The website does not provide detail about time allocated to subjects, particular approaches to assessment or teaching styles, suggesting a standard curriculum approach.

*Figure 3.2 School B summary*

This is a secondary school in Cambridgeshire that links itself to existing provision of village colleges:

> *'From the outset, our 'Village College' remit has been central to our ethos. We support an active adult education programme, and more than 30 community groups and organisations make use of the school's facilities'.*

Village Colleges are a type of school organisation introduced in Cambridgeshire by the local authority, part of Morris's vision for schools that provide a hub for a rural community. The curriculum is similar to most secondary school provision and covers the expectations of the national curriculum and government performance measures:

> *'We welcome the academic challenge posed by the EBacc measure, and our ethos and guidance processes mean that, whilst we do not insist that all students opt for History or Geography, a greater proportion of our students fulfil the EBacc measure than the national average'.*

The school does not highlight its status as a free school.

There is no information about the Key Stage 3 curriculum or about time allocations for subjects. This appears to be an omission rather than difference.

*Figure 3.3 School C summary*

This is a special school, catering for 'pupils aged between 8 and 18 who are of average or above average cognitive ability, usually with a diagnosis of language and communication difficulties and high functioning autism'.

The application form describes this as 'hybrid provision', meaning it covers more than one standard school age range. It also describes a facility for alternative provision for twenty pupils on a short term or part time basis to 'support them in overcoming barriers to their learning'.

A common feature of the curriculum for special schools is the way they are often individualised. This school, catering for just 50 pupils, includes Key Stages 2, 3, 4 and 5, leading to small numbers in each year group. The website states that the National Curriculum will be 'followed as appropriate, but with flexibility to meet diverse and individual needs, Multi-sensory approaches will be integrated into all learning and teaching to support all learners'. This approach is typical of special school provision and the website provides information about the Key Stage 3 curriculum across all national curriculum subject areas. Links with a local secondary, part of the same multi academy trust, provide opportunities for pupils to access lessons in mainstream provision, or receive specialist teaching on the special school site. This approach is relatively common where pupils are able to cope with this type of provision.

Although described as a special free school the website contains no references to the distinctive features of a free school.

*Figure 3.4 School D summary*

1. This school applied to become an all-through, Christian free school for primary pupils with secondary provision for girls, requiring a transfer into the state system of its existing independent school, open since 1875 and struggling to enrol sufficient pupils. The name includes the designation ‘grammar school’, reflecting the predecessor school, but admission does not require taking an eleven-plus examination, since this is not located in an area where grammar and secondary modern schools were retained by the local authority. The application form describes the curriculum as

> *‘a traditional model providing pupils with a broad and balanced base from which to launch themselves into their chosen specialised career paths. All subjects will be delivered through a challenging and relevant academic curriculum’.*

The school includes primary and secondary provision. The primary curriculum is unremarkable. The key Stage 4 curriculum includes the expectation that pupils will choose EBacc subjects.

The website includes several references to the school’s previous independent status but does not feature any information about its status as a free school. The website also notes an intention to close the sixth form due to low numbers.

*Figure 3.5 School E summary*

The school website describes its use of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (IBPY) as a framework for the curriculum. The International Baccalaureate is a reasonably common feature within independent schools in the UK and the curriculum is also used by some state schools, especially within the secondary sector. The IBPY is not a common feature of state primary schools in England, but any type of school could choose to use the programme providing they are willing to pay the associated costs.

> *'[name of school] academy teaches to the principles of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program whilst also paying attention to the requirement of the National Curriculum'.*

The application form provides a significant amount of detail about curriculum content and includes all the main subject areas of the national curriculum. However, the application form makes it clear that teachers will make reference to the national curriculum within planning because of the need to give sufficient attention to the national programme of tests

The website makes reference to the school's free school status.

> *'A free school or academy is funded directly from central government rather than a local authority. It sits outside of local authority control, meaning that decisions can be taken quickly and effectively by the Trust'.*

It is not clear exactly what decisions might need to be taken quickly, nor how a LAMS might be hampered by local authority control.

The website and application form promote the notion of a longer school day in order to generate additional teaching time. The detail of this is not clear.

> *'Our longer school day, 9-4pm, allows us to expose the children to a number of different activities throughout the year, whilst ensuring they are still able to meet all of their important educational milestones.*
>
> *As the school day is longer than the traditional 9am to 3.30pm time-frame, it allows us to blend high academic progress with a wide range of extra-curricular and beyond curricular activities'.*

*Figure 3.6 School F summary*

In the application reference is made to an integrated curriculum, where *'the National Curriculum will be directly referred to and used throughout the curriculum, supporting the planning and assessment process'*. This type of curriculum model, where pupils focus on topics, has been a relatively common feature in primary schools, where it is viewed as holistic and relevant for the skills and expertise of class teachers, rather than specialists. The application form highlights an intention to promote '*rigorous pursuit of academic achievement'*, as well as a focus on the teaching of the Jewish faith. The current website (2020) provides little detail about the coverage of subjects. However, the application form gives more detail of particular subject areas

The division of the curriculum is slightly different to that normally found, with a longer period (years 1 – 4) to extend the type of learning used within the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, this approach is fairly common amongst primary schools, especially where school leaders believe that formal learning should start later. It is not a distinctive feature of being a free school and not identified as such. An emphasis on the Jewish features of the curriculum are consistent with other Jewish faith schools.

The application and website include relatively little about specific subjects, suggesting a more integrated approach relatively common within primary schools. However in other respects it is a standard curriculum.

*Figure 3.7 School G summary*

The website (2020) shows a curriculum that initially appears different from the norm, perhaps reflecting the involvement of a land-based further education college, a rural location and the interests of local, agricultural industry employers. It is also influenced by its designation as a 13-19 school. Pupils arrive in Year 9 where they ‘begin to prepare for GCSEs or equivalent vocational subjects as soon as they start’. This has a significant effect on the design of the curriculum. However, the website indicates a school that is in the process of significant change, including a consultation to change from a 13-18 school to an 11-16 age range, losing its sixth form provision. The consultation notes the difficulties of recruiting pupils across local two and three tier systems of education, rationalisation intended to reduce pressure on a local school which is part a multi-academy trust the free school

joined, problems encountered when starting a curriculum in Year 9 and problems with sixth form provision.

Although the curriculum initially differed significantly from the norm, the main driver appears to be the constraints of transfer of pupils aged 13, coupled with the influence of the FE provider. The school appears to be in a state of transition and current information suggests little material difference to other schools. The description confirms that: *'A Free School is independently run and has the freedom to set its own curriculum and policies. Free Schools are free to attend. In law, Free Schools are the same as Academies'*.

There is relatively little information provided about time allocations or the additional statutory requirements for a school curriculum. The school is moving rapidly to a standard curriculum model.

*Figure 3.8 School H summary*

The current website describes a curriculum that matches expectations for all schools.

> *'We use the revised 2014 National Curriculum requirements for England as a strong foundation to deliver our own skills-based curriculum, which meets the needs of our learners'.*

Detailed information about each year group provides a framework that matches the national curriculum. The website includes reference to the teaching of religious education.

The application contains little detail about the curriculum, tending to focus on generalised statements.

*The curriculum encompasses all that goes on in the school. It will contain breadth and balance, continuity and coherence, and relevance and entitlement. It is through the curriculum that the school will be able to foster the confidence of pupils, enrich their experience, raise their attainment and celebrate their success.*

Strong emphasis is given to the importance of core skills, with pupils split by ability. A comment is made about including other subjects through themes and the creative curriculum, but no detail is provided. There is nothing about the application which indicates a school that is very different to other primary schools.

The website does not distinguish itself as a distinctive type of school, merely noting that it is a 'non-denominational state funded primary school of a new type called a Free School'.

There is no reference to the school's previous history as part of a different academy trust.

*Figure 3.9 School I summary*

The curriculum is in line with other state-funded schools.

Application form

*'There will be a 2-year skills-based Key Stage 3, establishing the core focus on english, maths and science, together with Design Technology, ICT, modern languages, humanities and sport. Other*

*subjects, including RE, drama, music and art will also form part of the curriculum.*

Key Stage 4 will comprise the four current pathways (foundation learning, general courses such as GCSE, apprenticeships and diplomas) in a 13-19 continuum. This will provide routes for Pupils to develop at their own pace, using a 'stage not age' model of progression. Partnerships with other schools and FE institutions will enable both the delivery of this breadth of opportunity and post-16 planning from the outset'.

There is no mention of free school status.

*Figure 3.10 School J summary*

School J is an alternative provision (AP) free school for pupils in years 9 – 11 with a 'Christian ethos based on our values of trust, respect, compassion and forgiveness which permeate every aspect of school life'. The school developed from a previous independent alternative provision provider, has a strong emphasis on the arts and works across several local authorities (who had commissioned places from the existing organisation). The curriculum outlined in the application form states that: '*We will operate a 7-day week arts-centred curriculum in a non conventional school buildings environment.'*

The application outlines an approach that has a great deal of flexibility, even for an AP school.

The organisation of the curriculum references government performance tables, but AP schools commonly have a more general approach, endeavouring to engage pupils and modify their attitudes and behaviour.

A feature of alternative provision providers is the way they often integrate pupils who have been excluded from others school, many of whom have a turbulent school experience and it is common for them to have missed school for extended periods of time. For this reason the curriculum rarely includes all elements of the national curriculum, mostly has a focus on core skills of literacy and numeracy and will include a small range of other subjects. The approach is very similar to that found in the majority of AP schools, although Saturday provision is unusual.

The website includes a press release about participation in a government-led event:

*'Establishing new schools is a crucial and effective way to improve education across the country - boosting choice for parents and helping drive up standards across the board. They are brand new state-funded schools, independent of local council control. They have the freedom to innovate and respond directly to the needs of parents and local communities'.*

## Appendix 4 Framework used for structured interviews

*Figure AP 4.1 Interview framework for education advisers who have helped to set up free schools.*

| Main questions | Additional/follow up questions | Clarifying questions |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Please can you tell me a little about your involvement in setting up free schools? | • How many schools have you been involved with?<br>• What types of school have you set up?<br>• Knowing what you know now would you do anything different?<br>• Have your views about free schools changed over time? | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...?<br><br>Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 2. Free schools are often described as having greater curriculum freedom. Is this something you have seen within schools you have worked with? | • What sort of freedoms have you seen used?<br>• Why would this not be possible within an academy or an LA maintained school?<br><br>Or | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | • Did schools consider using these freedoms?<br>• If they chose not to use them was there a particular reason?<br>• What is your view about the benefits of using these additional freedoms? | Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 3. Free schools are often described as benefitting from the opportunity to work outside national teaching staff pay and conditions. Is this something you have seen within schools you have worked with? | • What sort of freedoms have you seen used?<br>• Why would this not be possible within an academy or an LA maintained school?<br><br>• Or<br><br>• Did schools consider using these freedoms?<br>• If they chose not to use them was there a particular reason?<br>• What is your view about the benefits of using these additional freedoms? | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...?<br><br>Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 4. Free schools are often described as benefitting from the opportunity to change term dates or length of school day. Is this something you have seen within schools you have worked with? | • What sort of freedoms have you seen used?<br>• Why would this not be possible within an academy or an LA maintained school? | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | • Or<br><br>• Did schools consider using these freedoms?<br>• If they chose not to use them was there a particular reason?<br>• What is your view about the benefits of using these additional freedoms? | Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 5. Free schools are sometimes described as being beneficial because of their small size. Is this something you have seen within schools you have worked with? | If yes:<br><br>What sort of benefits does this give a school?<br><br>If no:<br><br>Why do you think this was not really a feature of these schools? | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...?<br><br>Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 6. When free schools were announced a lot of emphasis was given to the importance of strong discipline in schools. Do you feel that free schools have concentrated on strong discipline specifically? | If yes:<br><br>• How do you think they have approached this?<br>• Would this be possible in an | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | academy or a LA maintained school?<br><br>If no:<br><br>Do you feel that this is just a priority for all schools? | Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 7. When free schools were announced a lot of emphasis was given to the importance of traditional subjects. Do you feel that this is something free schools have concentrated on specifically? | If yes:<br><br>• Can you give me some examples?<br>• Is this approach different do you think to academies and LA maintained schools?<br><br>If no:<br><br>Is this something that you advised schools about? | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...?<br><br>Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 8. When free schools were announced a lot of emphasis was given to the ways they would increase social justice. Do you think free schools have made a | If yes:<br><br>• In what ways do you think this has been achieved? | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ... |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| particularly strong contribution to this agenda? | • What about admissions, approaches to intervention or support.<br><br>If no:<br><br>Why do you think they have not made an especial impact on this agenda? | Can you please tell me a little more about ...?<br><br>Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 9. When free schools were announced a lot of emphasis was given to the importance of independence (from local bureaucracy and 'control'). Are you aware that leaders have experienced this as a positive benefit? | If yes:<br><br>• What are the specific benefits?<br>• What about Ofsted and publication of performance tables?<br>• What about returns you have to make to the Education Funding Agency?<br><br>If no:<br><br>• Are free schools subject to the same sort of bureaucracy as other schools?<br>• So has this been a benefit or not do you feel? | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...?<br><br>Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 10. When free schools were announced a lot of emphasis was given to the importance of the 'Big Society' – the opportunity for parents, charity or other citizens to be involved in public services (including setting up free schools). Have schools you are involved with been led by any of these groups? | If yes:<br><br>• Has involvement changed over time?<br><br>• Do you think that newer free schools involve these groups, or has the policy changed its focus?<br><br>If no:<br><br>• Why do you think the policy did not involve as many of these groups as might be expected?<br>• Has the policy evolved over time to include fewer of these groups? | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...?<br><br>Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 11. Do you feel that a free school is a unique type of school? | If yes:<br><br>• In what way?<br><br>• What are the key things you would want to highlight?<br><br>If no: | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...?<br><br>Can you please give some examples of ...? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Why is this the case? | In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 12. Are free schools a homogenous group of schools? | If yes:<br><br>What are their key features?<br><br>If no:<br><br>Why not? | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...?<br><br>Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 13. How significant was the development of a suitable building in setting up a free school? | • Was it a challenge to find suitable accommodation?<br><br>• Did the set-up of the building involve a lot of time and effort?<br><br>• Are you happy with the accommodation?<br><br>• Free schools are not subject to the same building requirements as other schools (for | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...?<br><br>Can you please give some examples of ...? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | example classroom sizes can be smaller). Do you have views about this? | In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 14. Are there any other characteristics you feel that free schools have which we have not discussed? | | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...?<br><br>Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 15. Do you have any other comments or thoughts? | | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...?<br><br>Can you please give some examples of ...? |

|  |  |  |
|---|---|---|
|  |  | In particular, what do you think of ...? |

*Figure AP 4.2 Interview framework for free school proposers and others.*

| Main questions | Additional/follow up questions | Clarifying questions |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Please can you tell me a little about your involvement in setting up a free school? | • What prompted you to want to be involved in developing a free school proposal?<br>• What did you feel might be the benefits of applying to open a free school?<br>• How did you find the experience?<br>• If you had to do it again would you do anything different?<br>• Have your views about free schools changed over time? | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...?<br><br>Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 2. Free schools are often described as having greater curriculum freedom. Is this something you have used within your school? | • What sort of freedoms have you used?<br>• Why would this not be possible within an academy or an LA maintained school?<br><br>Or<br><br>• Did you consider using these freedoms? | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | • If you chose not use the was there a particular reason? | Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 3. Free schools are often described as benefitting from the opportunity to work outside national teaching staff pay and conditions. Is this something you have used within your school? | • What sort of freedoms have you used?<br>• Why would this not be possible within an academy or an LA maintained school?<br><br>Or<br><br>• Did you consider using these freedoms?<br>• If you chose not use the was there a particular reason? | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...?<br><br>Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 4. Free schools are often described as benefitting from the opportunity change term dates or length of school day. Is this something you have used within your school? | • What sort of freedoms have you used?<br>• Why would this not be possible within an academy or an LA maintained school?<br><br>Or | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...? |

|  |  |  |
|---|---|---|
|  | • Did you consider using these freedoms?<br>• If you chose not use them was there a particular reason? | Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 5. Free schools are sometimes described as being beneficial because of their small size. Is your school smaller than average? | If yes:<br><br>What sort of benefits does this give your school? | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...?<br><br>Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 6. When free schools were announced a lot of emphasis was given to the importance of strong discipline in schools. Do you feel that strong discipline is something you have concentrated on specifically? | If yes:<br><br>• How do you think you have approached this?<br>• Would this be possible in an academy or a LA maintained school? | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 7. When free schools were announced a lot of emphasis was given to the importance of traditional subjects. Do you feel that this is something you have concentrated on specifically? | If yes:<br><br>• Can you give me some examples?<br>• Is this approach different do you think to academies and LA maintained schools? | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...?<br><br>Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 8. When free schools were announced a lot of emphasis was given to the ways they would increase social justice. Do you think free schools have made a particularly strong contribution to this agenda? | If yes:<br><br>• In what ways do you think this has been achieved?<br>• What about admissions, approaches to intervention or support). | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 9. When free schools were announced a lot of emphasis was given to the importance of independence (from local bureaucracy and 'control'). Have you felt this as a positive benefit? | If yes:<br><br>• What are the specific benefits?<br>• What about Ofsted and publication of performance tables?<br>• What about returns you have to make to the Education Funding Agency? | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...?<br><br>Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 10. When free schools were announced a lot of emphasis was given to the importance of the 'Big Society' – the opportunity for parents, charity or other citizens to be involved in public services (including setting up free | If yes:<br><br>• Has involvement changed over time?<br><br>• Do you think that newer free schools involve these groups, or has the | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| schools). Has your school involved any of these groups? | policy changed its focus? | Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 11. Do you feel that a free school is a unique type of school? | If yes:<br><br>• In what way?<br><br>• What are the key things you would want to highlight? | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...?<br><br>Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 12. Are free schools a homogenous group of schools? | If yes:<br><br>What are their key features? | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 13. How significant was the development of a suitable building in the success of the free school? | • Was it a challenge to find suitable accommodation?<br><br>• Did the set-up of the building involve a lot of time and effort?<br><br>• Are you happy with the accommodation?<br><br>• Free schools are not subject to the same building requirements as other schools (for example classroom sizes can be smaller). Do you have views about this? | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...?<br><br>Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 14. Are there any other characteristics you feel that free schools have which we have not discussed? | | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ... |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | Can you please tell me a little more about ...?<br><br>Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |
| 15. Do you have any other comments or thoughts? | | Can you please clarify a little what you meant by ...<br><br>Can you please tell me a little more about ...?<br><br>Can you please give some examples of ...?<br><br>In particular, what do you think of ...? |

**Appendix 5 Ethics information sent to participants**

*Figure AP 5.1 Participant information form*

**English free schools: Are they an innovative, homogenous type of school organisation?**

**Information Sheet**

This PhD study explores the experiences and beliefs of some proposers (those making a successful proposal) and Education Advisers (professional consultants contracted by the Department for Education), associated with the 2010 coalition government's English free schools policy. Free schools are, mostly, new, state-funded 'independent' schools, with the legal status of an academy. They are commonly described as a different, and symbolically significant type of school organisation. This suggests such schools would exhibit key characteristics and a significant level of homogeneity. However, there has been relatively little exploration of the characteristics of these schools and the experiences of proposers are rarely heard. Although English free schools are often linked to other state-funded 'independent' schools, such as charter schools (USA and several other countries) and *friskolor* (Sweden and other Scandinavian countries) the similarities between these schools is not clear, other than an implication that independence and freedom from state regulation is a positive force for higher quality.

The methods involve

- analysis of policy documentation (application forms in the public domain, speeches, press releases and other information presented by politicians) in order to capture and synthesize the way policy is presented and the key features of free schools
- a review and comparison of information published on a random sample of free school websites (these are taken from a sample of schools that opened between 2010 and 2013). UTCs and Studio Schools are excluded, although they are included within the area of free school policy
- semi-structured interviews of up to one hour with a different sample of current school principals and education advisers to explore how they reflect on the policy now, and their perceptions of the way it was enacted and evolved over time

The study addresses the intertwined questions of:

1. What are the key elements of free schools described by policy (speeches, government documents, application forms, think tanks and media)?
2. What does this say about how they are distinctive when compared to other schools and what, if anything, is left unsaid, or unanswered?
3. Do open free schools promote themselves as distinctive (through information presented to an outside audience via websites and job advertisements) and, if so, does this match the features outlined in policy?
4. Is there a high level of homogeneity between these schools, clarifying difference compared with other schools, especially since the chosen sample have been open long enough to have become fully established and settled?
5. What are the experiences of school leaders and education advisers in relation to the policy over time and have their views changed or been modified?

6. Do school leaders and education advisers believe these schools are distinctive and if so, how?
7. Do free schools represent a homogenous group?

The interview process has fallen within a period where the Covid19 virus resulted in a lockdown within the UK and elsewhere. For this reason interviews will take place via video conferencing software, recorded automatically and then transcribed.

All data will be stored securely in compliance with the University of Birmingham's Data Protection/ Record Management Policy. All participants and institutions will be anonymous. Data will be stored using a numerical key to ensure that participants can not be identified.

**A consent form is attached, please return to [email address] before the interview takes place.**

*Figure AP 5.2 Participant consent form*

**Project Title: English free schools: Are they an innovative and homogenous type of school organisation?**

**Duration: June 2020 – July 2020**

**Voluntary Participation and Right to Withdraw**

Your participation in the research is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study prior to participation, during participation or after participation. You should note however that any data collected can not be removed from the study after July 31 2020 because analysis will already have started. A decision to withdraw will bring no negative consequences to you. You will be asked to confirm agreement before the interview commences.

**Anonymity and Confidentiality**

Participants in the research and individual schools will not be identified by name. If you identify a person or school during the interview this will be recorded but excluded from any analysis. Data will be stored securely in their original form in compliance with the University of Birmingham's Data Protection/ Record Management Policy. Participants will be anonymised using a code (kept separately).

There could be a very minor risk of reputational damage for participants if you put forward controversial, or defamatory views and then choose to identify yourself to others as having participated within the research.

**GDPR**

The project will comply with the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. You have the following rights:

- The right to be informed about how their Personal Data is to be used
- The right of access to their Personal Data held by the University and other information
- The right to rectification if their Personal Data is inaccurate or incomplete
- The right to request the deletion or removal of Personal Data where there is no compelling reason for its continued processing
- The right to restrict processing in certain circumstances
- The right to data portability which allows individuals to obtain and reuse their Personal Data for their own purposes across different services
- The right to object to processing in certain circumstances
- Rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling.

More information can be found at www.birmingham.ac.uk/privacy/index.aspx and www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/governance/policies-regs/data-protection.aspx

**Informed Consent**

I Click or tap here to enter text.

have read the project description in the project information sheet. I understand the purpose of the study and the procedures to be used. I know that I have the right to withdraw from the study, and to withdraw any material relating to me from the study, until July 31 2020. Please read each point below and put an x in the appropriate box.

☐ I agree to the interview being audio recorded and analysis of its contents being used for research, publication, education, lectures, broadcasting and the internet.

☐ What I say during interviews or other forms of data collection can be quoted in the reported results, so long as my name and any identifying features are removed or changed to guarantee anonymity in accordance with the University of Birmingham's Data Protection Policy.

Signature of participant:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Date:

Click or tap here to enter text.

# Appendix 6 Examples of email contact with interview participants

*Figure AP 6.1 Education Advisers contact*

*Hello fellow Education Advisers*

*I hope all is well.*

*As you know the current contract comes to an end soon and I am sure we will all have different plans for the future. I haven't quite decided what my plan is yet. Like many of you I have been involved with free schools since they started. I suspect that a change of government would mean an end to the programme.*

*I have started a PhD at the University of Birmingham where I want to look at the concept of free schools. I am not proposing to take a positive or negative view, more a case of capturing some of the interesting things that have happened.*

*I am writing to ask a favour, or two.*

*If you have the contact details of any principals who run what you consider to be innovative or interesting free schools I wonder if you could pass them on to me and even better drop a note to them saying you are intending to do so, indicating I might be in contact (GDPR). Your support might help to get participants for some interviews.*

*If you would be happy to be interviewed yourself instead or as well, that would be useful.*

*Any interviews would be confidential and no person or school will ever be identified. There is an ethical review process to go through before starting actual research activity.*

*The interview process will not start until about 12 months from now, so if you are willing to be interviewed it would help if you sent a message to me using [email address], ideally with a personal email that I can use to contact you in the future.*

*Thanks and best wishes for the future....*

*David*

*Figure AP 6.2 Snowball contact from an EA*

*Hello [participant name]*

*I am just following up a conversation you had recently with [EA name].*

*I have worked as an Education Adviser for the DfE on the free schools programme and I am now completing a PhD at the University of Birmingham.*

*I am speaking to people who have had experience of the programme in order to gain their views and [EA name] mentioned that you might be willing to participate,*

*It would involve an online interview of about one hour (I suggest allowing 90 minutes to be safe). The audio will be recorded. All*

*information will remain anonymous, its important that participants feel free to express personal views.*

*I have attached an information sheet and a consent form (which would need to be completed prior to the interview).*

*I have been using zoom for the interviews.*

*I am aware that the current pandemic has made this a very pressured time for school leaders. I can organise a session to suit you on July 10 (am), or July 13, 14, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23 any time.*

*with best wishes*

*David*

*Figure AP 6.3 Other individual contact for individual known prior to the research*

*Dear [participant name]*

*Thanks for the catch up.*

*My research is based around the perceptions of those involved in the policy and I have no interest in evaluating the policy's success or shortcomings.*

***Interviews***

*I would like to carry out an interview with you based around some specific focus areas. Given the current Covid 19 restrictions I have decided to move this to an online discussion using zoom.*

*The interview audio will be recorded and later transcribed. All participants and*

*institutions will be anonymised and data will be stored using a secure, encrypted university site. The research is, hopefully, likely to be completed in 2023.*

*I have set aside some dates for the interview schedule. They are:*

*June 22, 23, 24, 25, 30*

*July 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16*

*I am flexible about times of the day, or night. Please can you let me know a time slot that suits you.*

*An interview will last approximately one hour. I suggest allowing 90 minutes in order to allow for technical problems, overrun and unforeseen glitches.*

*I can provide support, if required, to set up any technical aspects, although I suspect that we will all have become very familiar with video conferencing software.*

*I have attached to this email a project description (for information) and a consent form. I have made the consent form electronic, so it should be straightforward to agree to this and return it to me prior to the interview.*

*Thanks in advance for your support and I hope that the present turmoil doesn't last too long.*

*with best wishes*

*David*

*Figure AP 6.4 Unsuccessful proposer contact not previously known*

*Hello [participant name] I am working on a PhD at the University of Birmingham. I wondered if you might consider taking part in the research I am doing on free schools. It would involve taking part in an interview, all participants are anonymous. My email is [email address].*

*Thanks*

*David*

# Appendix 7 Example coding extracted from NVivo defining the structuring impact of GPMR and potential misrecognition

*Figure AP 7.1 Coding example from NVivo with focus on doxa*