THE LEADERSHIP OF COLLABORATION

IN

PRIMARY SCHOOL SETTINGS

By

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ABSTRACT

Collaboration has become closely linked with school improvement. Literature identifies elements which contribute to successful collaboration. This study identifies some of these elements. The study focus is collaboration of senior leaders in primary schools in a Midland's LA. It identifies senior leaders' understanding of collaboration and how the collaborative process is developed in contributing schools.

The study is largely qualitative and based on the perceptions of primary school leaders. The methodology is that of survey, within this two methods were used to gather data – questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was designed to identify themes relating to collaboration which were then developed using semi-structured interviews to provide additional data and clarify specific areas relating to senior leaders' perceptions and understanding of collaboration and their approach to collaborative working in primary schools.

The findings show collaboration is perceived to be important to school improvement although the majority of contributors in this study have a 'top-down' approach. The study identifies if collaboration is to be successful there may be a need for reflection to be built into the collaborative process presenting a potential model for discussion on how reflection could be included in the collaborative process in primary schools.

The study contributes to existing knowledge of collaboration of senior leaders in primary schools presenting a tentative ladder, based on literature and findings in this study, for different stages of collaboration moving forward from little or no collaboration to achieving successful effective equal collaboration, identifying how collaboration may be further developed in primary schools.

DEDICATION

To my family:

Steve, Sarah, Michelle, Dave, Mark,

Jordan, Joshua and Jude.

In memory of:

My mom: Dorothy Alice Simmons

and

My dad: George Joseph Simmons

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHT	Assistant Headteacher
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CSFC*	Children, Schools and families Committee
DfE*	Department for Education
DfEE*	Department for Education and Employment
DH	Deputy Headteacher
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
HT	Headteacher
ICT	Information Communication and Technology
Keystage 1	Ages 5-7 (Years 1 and 2)
Keystage 2	Ages 7-11 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6)
LA	Local Authority
NCSL	National College for School Leadership
OfSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PPA	Planning Preparation and Assessment
SATs	Standard Assessment Tests
SDP **	School Development Plan
SEF	Self Evaluation Form
SIP**	School Improvement Plan
SMT***	Senior Management Team
SLT***	Senior Leadership Team
UK	United Kingdom

Explanation of * abbreviations

*DfE and DfEE CSFC and DES	The department changed name under different governments
**SDP and SIP	Schools refer to both these names for same document
***SMT and SLT	Schools refer to both these names for senior roles within school

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the research study which seeks to develop an understanding of the collaborative processes adopted by senior leaders in primary schools. Both how the collaborative process is organised and how schools use collaboration to contribute to school improvement. The chapter will place this study into context and provide justification for the research. The chapter is in seven parts. The first part will focus on issues being researched. Part two will develop the focus and why it is important. Part three will identify the research questions. Part four will focus on research design and ethical issues. Part five will focus on the literature I will draw on. Part six will report findings, value of this thesis and relevant audience. The conclusion will identify the structure of the thesis.

Introduction

Leadership within education particularly schools has been the subject of research for some time. There are many facets of leadership within a school as the role has been extended and developed to incorporate new initiatives and ideas that have been introduced, both externally and internally. However, little research has focused on leadership teams in primary schools. As a mathematics and assessment coordinator, in a large primary school, I am interested in leaders and leadership. One of the modules on the Ed.D course focused on teams within schools – qualities and strategies used to raise standards. As a coordinator my role involves developing teamwork and cooperation to bring in initiatives that would lead to school improvement. Leadership is identified as an important element in school improvement, with leadership in primary schools often undertaken by teams. As a team member I am interested in how teams could be successful in raising standards. From this

initial focus on teams I began reading literature related to different aspects of team management for example Kydd et al (2003). The term teamwork has evolved over time into collaboration therefore I wanted to research the impact collaboration might have on senior management teams. In primary schools although there may be several teams the central team is the senior leadership team. Following my reading of the literature preliminary discussions, within a professional context, took place. The discussions gave me the opportunity to defend my propositions with peers and tutors within the doctoral programme. Following these discussions I refined my research focus and questions from all teams in the primary school to the senior management team. By identifying a specific focus i.e. senior leadership teams I was able to informally discuss with the senior leaders both in my own and other schools their role and from this develop appropriate research questions to identify how senior leaders undertake collaboration within primary schools. From the literature reviews undertaken for various modules that of Wallace and Huckman is appropriate to my research focus. This important research into senior leadership teams in primary schools was undertaken by Wallace and Huckman (1999).

This is an in depth study of senior leadership teams in four primary schools. The study focuses on how senior leadership team communicate with each other and colleagues. It also identifies how a senior leadership team work together to raise standards. Arising from the data collected, Wallace and Huckman (1999) produced a set of criteria 'for judging perceived effectiveness of senior management teams' (p.194). However the study included no link to how collaboration contributes towards school improvement or teaching and learning. I wanted to extend this study, therefore the focus of my research will be collaboration and the collaborative process of the senior leadership team.

Focus

This study seeks to develop the research of Wallace and Huckman (1999). Their study related to primary schools and covered different aspects of the senior leadership team and different influences that impinge on the work of the team, for example governors. They undertook observations and interviews with both senior leaders and other staff, collecting data to ascertain whether senior leaders worked as a team in fact or whether it was a team in name only. The initial research questions for this study arise from a combination of questions I asked about the research concerned with collaboration including that undertaken by Wallace and Huckman (1999) and also my personal experience of an informal observation of the senior leadership team in my school. This observation enabled me to begin to clarify how the aspects of the Wallace and Huckman (1999) study, communication and collaboration between senior leadership team members, could be developed. Data from my research will contribute to knowledge of the collaborative process which aims to help primary schools make informed decisions as new initiatives to raise achievement continue to be introduced.

Research Questions

The starting point for the research questions is the importance of senior leaders collaborating to focus on teaching and learning. I am particularly interested in research which explores the concept of leadership and teams in education together with the importance of the collaborative process. The initial research question focused on the structure of senior leadership teams and collaboration at team meetings – however as I began to clarify my thinking and focus my reading other questions emerged. Although collaboration at team meetings is important, collaboration and the collaborative process may be undertaken at other times therefore the original research focus was refined to - the

leadership of collaboration in primary school settings. A review of research into leadership and collaboration produced a range of significant questions, from these the original focus developed into the following four research questions these being central to this study:

A. *What impact do senior management teams have on developing a culture of collaboration for improvement and change in order to support teaching and learning within primary schools?*

B. *How do senior leaders contribute to the collaborative process and ensure it impacts on teaching and learning?*

C. *How does reflective practice enhance the use of collaboration to improve teaching and learning?*

D. *How do senior leaders involve staff in the collaborative process for improving teaching and learning and in so doing accept they also are accountable?*

A primary school usually has a headteacher, who is the leader, with the vision for the school. A senior leadership team usually supports that vision through collaboration. They develop strategies to put the vision into place. Reflection on collaboration can lead to a new understanding of the process and how it supports learning and is therefore an important element to identify success or how to change to bring about success. The motivation of staff that deliver teaching and learning is important as they bring about the changes and vision of the headteacher. Collaboration can be at all levels within the school and may be spontaneous between individuals. This collaboration may however be initiated by the senior management team as the people who encourage and develop collaboration both within the school and the wider education community. Each aspect of collaboration is important to improving

teaching and learning and each part is dependent on the other Slater (2005) states:

> The twenty-first century approach calls for collaboration. This means that school principals need to acquire the understanding, skills, and experience to collaborate successfully. Within this context principals move away from being sole decision maker to involving others, in the decision making process (p.321).

Research Design and Ethical Issues

The research will take a phenomenological approach. Denscombe (2003) argues:

> Phenomenology is an approach that focuses on how life is experienced. (p.97)

This approach reflects the thinking that research deals with people's:

- perceptions or meanings

- attitudes and beliefs

- feelings and emotions (p.96).

One of the disadvantages of phenomenology is it lacks scientific rigour, however my research fulfils Denscombe's (2003) criteria particularly as my research is small-scale and attempts to reflect the complexity of the senior leadership teams being researched.

The field work Wallace and Huckman (1999) undertook was in two phases. The first methodology being that of survey – a postal questionnaire was sent to 150 randomly selected schools (p.29). The second methodology used was that of case studies within four schools involving semi-structured interviews, observation and analysis of relevant documentation. I will use the questionnaire and interview phases from Wallace and Huckman's (1999) format as a basis for this study. Following this format a questionnaire was sent to all primary schools within an LA (78) located in the Midlands. Responses were received from thirty one people. The questionnaire was used to inform interviews. As fifteen of the questionnaire respondents agreed to be interviewed these formed the sample. The interviews were semi-structured. My focus is how the leadership of the headteacher

and the collaboration of the senior leadership team contribute towards school improvement. This focus on collaboration involves identifying themes which are important to collaboration within senior leadership teams. These themes include leaders' understanding of collaboration and how it is practised in the school. An important aspect is whether the collaborative process impacts on raising standards. The data collected for the study will focus on the experience of those contributing. This places the approach to the study in phenomenological domain. The study is placed into the methodology of survey . The method to gather data for the first part of the study is questionnaire –the same questions are answered by all the respondents this enables themes and issues to be identified for the second part of the study.

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000) state:

> Surveys gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions (p.169).

The questionnaire will provide both quantitative and qualitative data.

The method to gather data for the second part of the study is interview. The questions for this will be based on themes or issues arising from the questionnaire and relevant literature. The interview sample was a cross section of those who responded to the questionnaire and agreed to be interviewed. The sample is purposive as agreement to being interviewed suggests an interest in aspects of the study. The methodology chosen allowed me to be as objective as possible rather than subjective particularly for the questionnaire where the only contact was the response.

The BERA Ethical Guidelines (2004) will be followed and continually referred to, to ensure ethical issues are considered at each stage. The Midland's LA agreed to the distribution of the questionnaires to all primary schools in the Authority. The support of the

LA was important as it acknowledged the relevance of this study. Returned questionnaires were coded to ensure anonymity. At the interview stage consent was obtained prior to the interview and each interviewee agreed to the data being used for research purposes. The right to withdraw at any time was also made clear at the beginning and end of the interview. Interviewees were also informed that this right to withdraw continued throughout the following stages of writing up the data including the transcript and analysis. Interviewees also agreed the research could be made available to relevant interested bodies including participants with anonymity being maintained at all times. Interviewees' identities were anonymised and confidentially maintained at all times. By talking to the interviewees personally prior to interview I was able to build up trust. Opportunities to ask questions that arose, at each stage was also given. Following the interview I returned to thank them for contributing to my research.

Overview of the Literature

Leadership in schools has evolved over time particularly under external influences and expectations. There is a large body of research into headteachers – their styles of leadership and their career paths. For example – Ribbins and Marland (1994) Headship Matters: Conversations with Seven Secondary School Headteachers, Gronn (1999), The Making of Education Leaders, Tomlinson, Gunter and Smith (1999) (eds.) Living Headship, Voices, Values and Vision. However in recent years the idea of teamwork has become important to how schools are managed and the raising of standards. O'Neill (2003) argues:

> The concept of 'the team' is now firmly embedded in the educational management literatures ...'Team' status is awarded unconditionally by practitioners to any number of different functioning groups within the institution (p.215).

Wallace and Huckman (1999) argue:

> Team members may collaborate where they combine their individual resources to achieve agreed goals that cannot be fulfilled as effectively by individuals working alone (p.7).

Some external influences on collaboration are political in nature, schools' individual achievements are scrutinised and results are accessible to the public. This creates pressure on schools as they can be compared with a range of other schools. Ofsted inspections, SATs results all contribute to how school leadership engages with collaboration for school improvement particularly teaching and learning. In addition to the above other pressures arise from internal influences of the competing perspectives and priorities of the different stakeholders within the school. There has been research undertaken on how to raise standards as a result of this schools can undertake self-review to evaluate their own successes identifying where improvements can be achieved. It is the context of leadership teams collaborating to raise standards in primary schools which will be the literature review focus. Rhodes and Brundrett (2010) state:

> The relationship between leadership and learning is increasingly accepted as being one of the most important issues in enhancing the effectiveness of education organisations (p.153).

As teaching and learning is an important element within my research the literature review will reflect this drawing on research which identifies how the collaboration of senior leaders supports improvement. Research in this area is wide and varied for example Southworth (2004) and Day, et al. (2000) have made major contributions to literature relating to various aspects of leadership and its relation to teaching and learning. I will refer to these studies and that of other researchers to help frame findings and answer the research questions.

The literature review chapter will be presented in two parts. Part one will identify and evaluate the literature which explores theoretical models and frameworks of leadership, teams and collaboration. It will draw on texts relating not only to theories of management for example Bush (1995) but also how structure and the underlying culture of the school is relevant as identified by Kydd, Anderson, and Newton (2003). The research of Wallace and Huckman (1999) will also be included as their in depth study is relevant to this study. The second part will focus on effective or improving schools. An important aspect of the research questions is how collaboration contributes to improved teaching and learning. The research literature relating to effective schools, leadership, teams and collaboration is vast and complex. I have concentrated, where possible, on recent literature which is relevant to the focus of my research. Stoll and Fink (1996) are major contributors to school improvement literature, and although some of the research is nearly ten years old it is still relevant today.

Reporting Findings

The findings in this study will be broken down into themes relating to the research questions. The purpose of the findings is to develop an understanding of the importance of collaboration, particularly of the senior leadership team, to raising standards in the primary school. The outcome of the study is to contribute to the discussion on the importance of collaboration within the primary school.

A summary of findings of this research will be disseminated to those who contributed to the study to enable them to further develop collaboration to raise the standards in their primary schools. The summary of the findings, whilst maintaining confidentiality and ensuring anonymity, will also contribute to developing collaboration to raise standards across primary schools within the Authority. It should also enable the LA to develop courses to

promote collaborative leadership skills to enhance teaching and learning. In addition to the above, the findings are presented in this Doctoral thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham, and I will disseminate the research to the wider academic community through conference papers and articles in academic and professional journals.

Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is presented in six chapters. Chapter 1 introduction identifies the specific aims of the research and places it into context. Chapter 2 review of literature will discuss literature appropriate to this study. It will also include literature which relates to collaboration, school improvement and leadership within education. Chapter 3 research design identifies the method of data collection and justification for the choice. Ethical issues which need to be considered will be identified and the conclusion will reflect on the strengths and limitations of the design. Chapter 4 will present findings identifying emerging themes relating to collaboration. These themes will be discussed in chapter 5. Chapter 6 will summarise findings and identify any new questions that arise from the literature review and data analysis undertaken in this study. This final chapter will also identify contribution to knowledge suggesting further research which may develop this field of study.

CHAPTER 2

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter is in five parts. Following the introduction part one focuses on the search of the literature identifying main themes and authors relevant to the research questions. Part two develops the themes identified in the search. This will be presented in sub-sections drawing on research within each theme. It will be presented as themes rather than chronological as each theme is linked and relevant to research questions. Part three will develop links between themes, identifying the research and arguments presented by authors. Part four will develop a critical perspective of the research identifying ways in which the research questions relate to the main themes and arguments identified by the search. The final part will summarise the chapter and identify how the literature informs the research design and facilitates discussion of findings.

In this thesis the term collaboration is understood to mean senior leaders committing to a process of working together to achieve the headteacher's vision for school improvement. Recognising agreed targets are fulfilled more effectively by the team than by individuals working alone. The focus of the collaborative process being on the whole school and on the learning of children and teachers. Discussion of and reflection on actions is important to the collaborative process. This definition is used throughout the thesis and accords with various papers for example Hargreaves (1995), Coleman (2011), DCSF (2008) and professional experience.

The literature and my professional experience strongly underpin collaboration as an important element in school improvement and school effectiveness for example various

papers by Fullan (2003) Rhodes and Brundrett (2010) demonstrate the role of leaders in school improvement. This leadership is important to collaboration because through role modelling, developing trust and openness eventual change can take place and move the school forward.

Diagram A represents how I perceived, at the beginning of my study, the collaborative process in primary schools. The diagram was developed using a combination of several aspects. The first aspect being reading of literature, for example Southworth (1998) who argues that team leadership is built into the fabric of schools. Secondly my professional background, which involved informal discussions with and observations of senior leaders in different schools, which added to knowledge presented in the literature. From these aspects I found collaboration within a primary school usually begins with the headteacher who will involve other senior leaders. Depending on the headteacher's leadership approach these senior leaders will then involve other staff in the collaborative process. The collaborative process may take place through teams or in some cases networking with other schools.

Reflective practice is considered important but is not always undertaken:
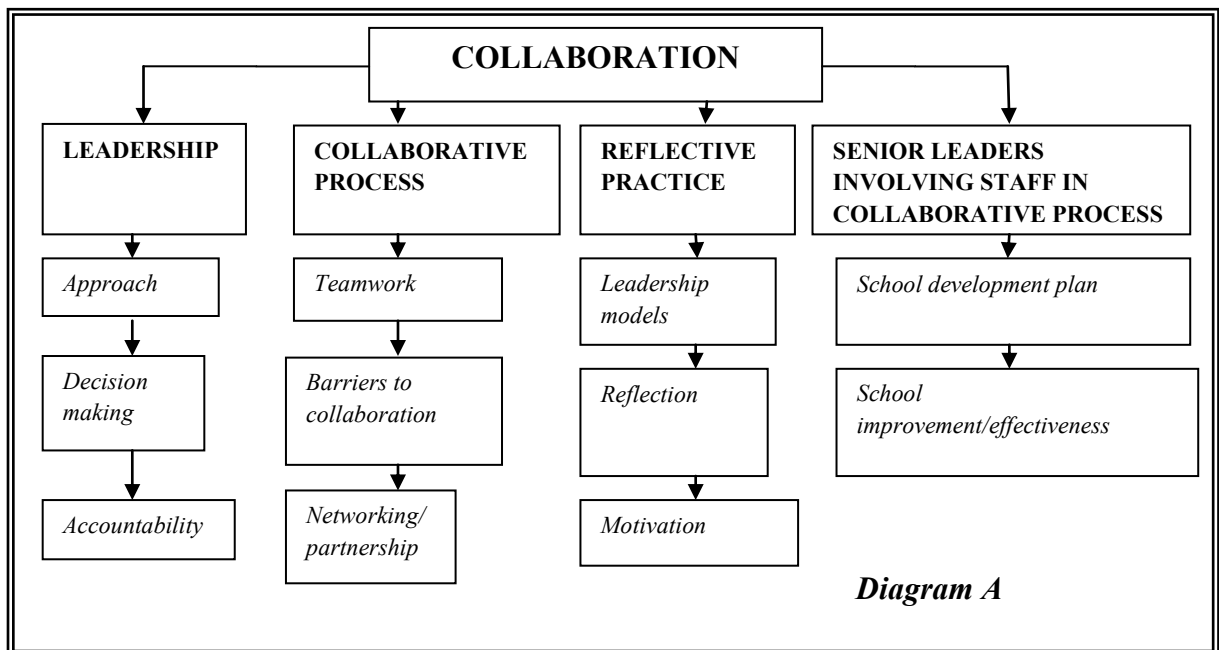
Diagram A shows aspects of this study linked to collaboration.

Search

The focus of the literature search is collaboration and the links identified in Diagram A. This search will focus on primary schools, particularly headteachers and senior leaders. From this main themes and sub-themes will be identified and supported with appropriate arguments from literature.

In order to ensure the literature search is methodical, appropriate stages have been identified. Each stage involving a detailed search of the literature within that domain.

The first stage was a search of literature and handouts given for different modules of the Ed.D program and research skills course. These together with notes taken during discussions and presentations provided a good base for a more detailed literature search.

This search also enabled some keywords and themes relating to collaboration to be identified.

The next stage was to use keywords and themes identified by the research questions to search journals specifically related to education – School Leadership and Management (2004-2011), Educational Management Administration and Leadership (2004-2011), Management in Education (2003-2010) and International Studies in Education Administration (2003-2010) identified literature and authors. By reviewing arguments presented together with quoted references and bibliographies the initial keywords and themes were refined. The references cited by the authors provided a further relevant literature source to be investigated.

The next stage was to use the electronic academic library catalogues to follow up leads identified in the previous stages of the literature search, identifying further publications including other journals and conference papers. The next stage was to access other appropriate websites. Intute and Google Scholar search engines provided a comprehensive Webb search of literature within the themes and keywords parameters. The government sites relating to education, policies, updates and Ofsted were a valuable source for reports and initiatives either introduced or being introduced. The National College for School Leadership enabled up-to-date research linked to leadership to be accessed. British Educational Research Association (BERA) and British Education Index enabled the identification of recent research. The final stage of the search was, where possible, to access the websites of the main authors to identify any relevant research or publications which may not have been identified by other stages. Having indentified a wide range of literature and publications these were then categorized into the themes and sub-themes to ensure the literature selected was manageable and relevant to the research questions.

The next part of this chapter will identify the refined themes and the main authors whose research supports the themes.

Themes

In this part of the literature search appropriate research will be presented to support the arguments for each theme and sub-themes.

Four main themes were identified from the literature search each theme is comprised of sub-themes contributing to a wider understanding of the main theme. These themes are:

- Leadership: sub-themes:

  leadership approach, decision making and accountability.

- Collaborative process: sub-themes -

  teamwork, barriers to collaboration, motivation and networking/partnership.

- Reflective practice: sub-themes–

  leadership models and reflection

- Senior leaders involving staff in collaboration for school improvement: sub-themes-

  school development plan and school improvement/effectiveness

This part of the chapter is presented in sections identifying first the main theme, then the relevant sub-themes. Appropriate research will be identified to support the arguments relating to the both the theme and sub-theme.

Theme 1: Leadership

There is a wide range of literature relating to leadership and management both in business and education. Bush (1995) presents a 'chronology of education management' stating 'All these theories developed outside education and were subsequently applied to schools and colleges, with mixed results' (p.3). He places the changes within educational management into historical context citing the DES Education Reform Act (1988). This major reform was described by Maclure (1988) as 'The most important and far-reaching piece of education law-making ….since the Education Act of 1944… because it altered the basic power structure of the education system' (p.ix). Bottery (1992) argues that one of the reasons education has 'turned to business for its management theory' is 'because education has had so little management theory of its own' (p.112). He develops the theme of the influence of business management on educational management by looking at '*the* major influence upon education on both sides of the Atlantic. This is the business management literature' (p.4). Ribbins (2001) '...examines three interpretations of leadership that were developed originally in business:

    (i)   personality trait theory

    (ii)   behavioural theory

    (iii)   situational theory (p.1).

The personality trait theory is based on studies which identified a correlation between leadership and personality characteristics. Ribbins states that Stogdill (1948) found contradictions in the studies and little conclusive evidence, Ribbins concludes there are leaders who are effective that do not necessarily have these characteristics and others who are ineffective that do.

The behavioural theory is what successful leaders do rather than what they are.

The situational theory argues that the leadership style used in one situation might not be appropriate to another. It also argues that a leader might be successful in one situation but not another.

Leadership Approaches

Theories of leadership together with the concept of power are developed in much of the literature on leadership. Southworth (1998) states 'There are many theories about leadership, most developed from organisation theory, although educational administration has in the last 20 years begun to develop concepts and theories of its own' (p.50). The literature discusses transactional leadership, that is leadership that maintains a smooth running organisation where individuals or leaders work for extrinsic rewards. Burns (1978) argues that transactional leadership does not move organisations forward because it does not encourage change needed to create this forward move. Southworth (1998) puts forward the argument that 'Transformational leaders, while responding to the needs and interests of colleagues and followers, seek to move the organisation forward' (p.45). Following this Gronn (1999) illustrates and critiques transformational leadership (p.200). Whilst individual needs are taken into account there is an emotional commitment to a vision therefore transformational leadership is leadership for change. The common interest being how we can move forward. Gronn (1999) cites 'four 'I's of transformational leadership: *inspirational leadership* (the heightening of subordinate motivation through charisma*), individualized consideration* (treatment of subordinates according to their personal needs), *intellectual stimulation* (influence on subordinates' thinking and imagination) and *idealized influence* (subordinates' identifications with and emulation of the leader's vision). Leaders embodying these characteristics are transformational primarily because they motivate people to perform at peak levels way beyond their normal expectation' (p201).

Gunter (2001) argues 'Transformational leadership and its variants have been and continue to be subjected to critique from a variety of different positions' (p.72) It is important to look at the development of theories for they are added to and refined by researchers in the field of leadership. It may be necessary to look at the original theory in order to draw our own conclusions. As Gunter (2001) argues 'In reading about, listening to and practising leadership in education we need to ask questions about the theory being used and developed to make a case regarding a particular political position over values and ethics.. Those engaged in educational practice are made powerful and powerless by the theories and theorising that is or is not revealed' (p.75). The style of leadership needed for collaboration is one which develops qualities to persuade their staff that the goals set are desirable and can be achieved through a structure which allows them to participate in decision-making. This suggests that in order for collaboration to become part of the school structure the headteacher must have leadership qualities rather than just being a 'manager'. Bell and Harrison (1998) argue collaboration is an essential guiding principle for continuous school and college improvement. Whilst it is suggested teamwork is essential to improving an organisation Bell and Harrison acknowledge teamwork can also have the opposite effect. In addition to this they point out that sometimes it is outside influence such as government that can paralyse organisations by causing them to continually review objectives to the extent they do not identify ways of moving forward.

Stacey (1993) puts forward a theory of 'chaos'. Arguing whilst the view is 'actions should be centrally controlled according to a shared overall intention to which all in the organisations should be committed' (p.37), this in effect is not the reality. His research has shown 'when you talk informally to highly competent managers you hear them referring to 'luck' and 'chance'....Despite their visions and their plans, competent managers recognise

that they are not in control of long-term outcomes that chance is important, and that

continuing consensus is undesirable' (p.42). Stacey suggests by continuing to focus on

established theories they are:

> excluding the possibility of continuing creativity and innovation. Innovation is, by definition, a break with the past and the outcome is unpredictable. Creativity requires irregularity and instability to shatter old perceptions and patterns of behaviour, so making way for the new' (p.43).

The Hay McBer report (2000) compares headteachers in UK schools and senior executives

in private enterprise suggesting each can learn from the other. Hay McBer (2000) suggests

two development priorities for headteachers based on comparison to 'their counter parts in

private business' (p.19) these being standards. 'Our investigation of characteristics found

that business leaders were better at *both* painting an attractive vision of the future and

holding people accountable for their current performance' (p.19), and rewards 'whilst

headteachers are good at recognising and valuing their employees, they are less good at

matching recognition to contribution (p.10)'. 'Business leaders tendency is to take a task

away from someone if they are not swiftly up to scratch, rather than seek ways to improve'

(p.20). Bush (1995) argues there are 'seven major ways in which leadership of education

institutions differs markedly from leaders of other organisations:

1. There are no clear-cut educational equivalents to the main private sector objectives.

2. In commercial organizations it is possible to measure success in financial terms.

3. The learning process is built on personal relationships with all the idiosyncrasy and unpredictability that implies.

4. As professionals, teachers claim a measure of autonomy in the classroom.

5. The client relationship between teacher and student differs in several respects from other profession-client links.

6. The climate for school and college decision-making is strongly influenced by a plethora of external agencies.

7. Many senior and middle managers in schools and to a lesser extent colleges, have *little time* for the managerial aspects of their work' (p.8/9).

Hay McBer (2000) identified six leadership styles:

- Coercive which they argue is used by leaders who hold people accountable, have personal conviction and a drive for improvement.

- Authoritative used by leaders who use strategic thinking, seek information have personal conviction are able to impact and influence others.

- Affiliative are leaders who seek to understand others.

- Democratic are leaders whose flexibility ranges between analytical thinking and strategic thinking. They are also leaders who develop team work.

- Pacesetting are leaders who think analytically and have a drive for improvement.

- Coaching is similar to democratic in that they also range between analytical thinking and strategic thinking. They are leaders who develop the potential of their staff.

The Hay McBer (2000) report was published later than Bush (1995) but despite this it has not included the issues put forward by Bush but simply focused on leadership style. I would argue if comparison is to be made between business and education both aspects of research are relevant to future studies.

Bush (2003) argues 'it is rare for a single theory to capture the reality of leadership or management in any particular school or college (p.189). He develops his argument by stating leaders need to be aware of theory and then apply the theory that is appropriate for the situation. Hopkins (2003) argues leadership is not the sole responsibility of the headteacher and leadership bears a direct relationship to the improvement and quality of

teaching and learning. The role of headteachers and other leaders in school have expanded over time as the curriculum has changed, government initiatives have had to be incorporated and the focus of role of the school has moved to teaching and learning bringing with it accountability. In this climate of change other approaches to leadership have evolved in order for headteachers and senior leaders to fulfil what is expected of them. Distributed leadership is one approach, this is where not only the head fulfils the leadership role (although they are still held ultimately accountable) but the role is also shared by others. It is actions through which people contribute to a group or organisation. Harris (2010) argues distributed leadership 'represents one of the most influential ideas to emerge in the field of educational leadership' (p.55).There may be times when headteachers consider the style of leadership to be distributed but it is in fact delegated. West-Burnham (1992) argues that delegation can empower, if, therefore a headteacher's approach is to delegate rather than distribute this may not adversely affect collaborative process. In 2003 the National College for School Leadership published a report on distributed leadership. The purpose of the study was to 'provide an overview of current writing on distributed leadership. The study reviewed literature up to July 2002' (p.3). The report identified that where definitions of distributed leadership existed they varied widely. Similarly the concept of distributed leadership 'has a variety of meanings' (p.6). This statement is reflected in 2007 by Harris, et al who state:

> While there is widespread use of the term 'distributed leadership', it is important to note that definitions of the term vary. Part of the appeal of distributed leadership resides in its chameleon like quality; it means different things to different people. This is also its central weakness (p.338).

In 2004 the National College for leadership published a further report 'Distributed leadership in Action' this identified terms and related meanings for distributed leadership (p.14/15). They state:

> While there is little to separate these various terms, they do share one common feature. All agree that leadership does not simply reside in one person (p.15).

Harris (2008) identifies one of the characteristics of distributed leadership is collaboration. She develops this argument to suggest that collaboration is important for developing future school leaders. Johnson (2003) however argues there are disadvantages to collaboration for example 'an explosion of meeting commitments placed added work burden on teachers' (p346). James and Connolly (2000) suggest working collaboratively is more advantageous than working alone.

Coleman (2011) argues collaboration can be 'outward facing' that is working with other schools or 'inward facing' that is within their own schools. Part of the inward facing collaboration is distributed leadership. He develops his argument by stating:

> Effective collaborative leadership is rooted in a focus on the mundane rather than a preoccupation with the 'extraordinary' aspects of this role [leadership] (p.301).

Decision Making

Evans's (1998) research into job satisfaction identified some people were 'content' that headteachers and senior leaders made decisions. They also expected these people to be the decision takers. Others wanted to become part of the process. She also identified 'what most teachers did want though was the assurance that if they wanted to be heard and taken seriously they would be' (p.132). Day, et al (2000) argue decision making is no longer undertaken by the headteacher alone but is now shared and can be given to others within the school. This sharing of decision making is closely linked, by research, to successful

schools. They also argue conflict can arise if staff, who are empowered to take decisions, want to do something the head disagrees with he/she (the headteacher) have the right to 'take the final decision' (p.153). Hammersley-Fletcher and Brundrett (2008) support this argument that collaboration should not 'involve pretence that all staff can be involved in all decisions' (p.12). They develop this stating that as the headteacher has ultimate responsibility that having talked to staff and listened to views and suggestions they 'must be enabled to take the school in a direction that allows them to take a strategic lead' (p.13). Hammersley-Fletcher and Brundrett also cite Gronn (2002) to support the argument that there are greater benefits when staff share their expertise and ideas 'in a way that produces actions' (p.13). Continuing their argument that the head should make the final decision they cite Cambell and Southworth (1992) who argued 'even within collaborative cultures, staff agree that they should ultimately defer to the headteacher' (p.13). Although research identifies the involvement of staff as important Hammersley-Fletcher and Brundrett (2008) argue that 'in order to become effective several pre-conditions need to exist, namely those of openness, trust, clear guiding values and supportive colleagues' (p.14). Busher (2003) identified from his research that headteachers emphasized a collaborative approach to decision making was important to developing teams. Meetings are identified as one of the places where decision making is debated and conclusions reached, as such they are an important aspect of school organisation. However meetings need to be relevant, both in agenda and who are included, otherwise people do not engage with the discussion and indicate that the meeting is a 'waste of time'. Goleman, et al (2004) argue:

> Of course the democratic style can have its drawbacks. One result when a leader over relies on this approach is exasperating, endless meetings in which ideas are mulled over, consensus remains elusive, and the only visible outcome is to schedule yet more meetings. (p.68).

In 1999 as part of their research into senior leadership teams Wallace and Huckman gathered data on the pattern and structure of meetings. Although each case study identified differences in the structure of the team Wallace and Huckman argue:

> How far participation was shared related to who was enabled to contribute to which parts of the decision-making procedure adopted and for which kinds of decisions. (p.65)

In an American study undertaken by Rice and Schneider (1994) they state that Lipham identified:

> Three dimensions in the decision making process: decision stages – how a decision is made, decision content – what a decision deals with and decision involvement – who participates in making a decision (p.44).

Rice and Schneider summarise arguments by Bridges (1967), Hoy and Miskel (1991):

> Principles should not involve teachers in every decision; effective involvement of teachers in school decision making requires that principals determine which issues are located in teachers' zones of indifference and which issues are not (p.45).

Whilst this study refers to teachers as opposed to those in senior leadership the argument could be applied to all those who are involved in decision making - is the decision to be taken within their expertise? Is it relevant to their particular role within the school?

Accountability

Brundrett (2011) states that before the DES Education Reform Act 1988 schools were accountable to LEA and HMI with the accountability being based on professionalism.

Following the DES Education Reform Act 1988 accountability in primary schools has increased. Brundrett (2011) argues that following this reform:

> Accountability has dominated the political and public thinking in education in the UK and internationally – based on questions about relative performance and value for money (p.21)

Leithwood (2001) presents a framework identifying 'leadership practices associated with increased accountability' (p.218). The framework is based on research from seven countries. The approaches he identifies are market, decentralised, professional and management. (p.219). Market refers to accountability related to increased competition across schools. Decentralisation encourages collaboration and sharing of power. Professional is twofold first it is related to professional control and standards, secondly it is about school leaders continuing to learn and keep up to date with both educational practice and research. Management refers to 'strategic management' based on collecting, interpreting data and an effective planning process.

The National Standards for Headteachers (DfES, 2004) considers accountability to be essential and states:

> Headteachers are legally and contractually accountable to the governing body for the school, its environment and all its work (p.11).

They continue headteachers should ensure that staff work collaboratively sharing expertise and knowledge accepting responsibility and celebrating success. Individual accountability is acknowledged by stating:

> individual staff accountabilities are clearly defined, understood and agreed and are subject to rigorous review and evaluation (p.11).

The report *School Accountability* (CSFC, 2010) states:

> We are satisfied that schools should be held publicly accountable for their performance as providers of an important public service. We concur with the views expressed in evidence to us that the two major consequences of the accountability system should be school improvement (Paragraph 15, p.5).

It continues that witnesses did not object to accountability as it is public money that is being used for education. They also agreed every child was entitled to quality education and

that education should also include wider outcomes as identified by *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003, p.24). The committee acknowledge that:

> The main message in this report is a warning against the complexity which results from overlapping accountability structures and serial policy initiatives (p.14).

There are a number of ways schools in the UK are judged on their accountability: self-evaluation, school performance and improvement, achievement and attainment tables, Ofsted, and HMI inspectorate. In response to educational reform and accountability Simkins (1992) identifies four models of accountability each identifying the 'key actors, influence mechanisms and criteria for judging success' (p.7). These models are presented as follows:

- Professional model, the key people being the professionals, influenced by peers and success identified as 'good practice'.

- Managerial model, the key people being managers, influenced by hierarchy and success identified as 'effectiveness and efficiency'.

- Political model, the key people being representatives, influenced by governance and success identified as 'policy conformance'.

- Market model, the key people being the consumers, the influence being choice and the success criteria 'competitive success' (p.7).

The professional model Simkins (1992) argues is based on the premise that giving professional autonomy to the experts in education ensures quality, for they are the people who have the knowledge to provide the best for the students. The measure of good practice is therefore defined by the profession and monitored by peer review including exchange of information. The LA, inspections and HMI monitor and evaluate the improvement or otherwise made.

In the managerial model Simkins (1992) argues success criteria are effectiveness and efficiency with the influence being hierarchy. The accountability in this model is achieved through clear goals and the development of a monitoring system to ensure progress towards

these goals. In this model are two approaches a 'hard' approach which is based on performance indicators such as staff appraisal and 'soft' approach which he argues is reliant on the establishment of a culture of achievement. In this approach the manager holds ultimate responsibility for identifying the mission of the school and for developing a culture to ensure goals are met. He continues to argue this model's accountability is through performance appraisals which result in action plans to improve schools and the implementation of national tests and curriculum changes.

Within the political model Simkins (1992) argues the role of political representatives is increased and professional autonomy is reduced. In this model governors rather than the LA have control over the school. A success criterion in this model is conformity to government policies and as such the influence is from government.

The market model Simkins (1992) argues reduces the power of the other three models. It seeks to develop competition whereby schools respond to the demands of those using them. The success criteria for this model are being competitive, and increasing demand for places at the school. The influence in this model is choice of the parents. The school is judged on client satisfaction, the quality of the school and the ability to attract pupils. The choices of pupils and parents are often based on information provided by the other models for example test results. Marsh and LeFever (2004) in their case study found:

> In one case the state imposed accountability for the school to ensure student performance improvement against a system generated improvement target. In another case the accountability was more of a market force that pushed the school to have high student performance on national examinations (p.393).

Schools may experience each of these models of accountability at some stage; this means that the headteacher, as the person who is usually ultimately accountable has to be aware of each form of accountability in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the school.

Hammersley-Fletcher and Brundrett (2008) state:

> The headteacher is the ultimate school leader and is accountable for what happens in the school. At the same time they are advised to distribute their power (p.13).

They develop this argument to identify headteachers also have to sell their school to parents and pupils this process is the 'market model' referred to earlier. Wallace (2001) argues although headteachers may want to share leadership the market model may deter them:

> In a context of unprecedented accountability, however, they may be inhibited from sharing because it could backfire should empowered colleagues act in ways that generate poor standards of pupil achievement (p.157).

The document issued by the new coalition government of 2010 (Cabinet Office) reiterates the need for accountability by stating 'that all schools are held properly to account' (p.28).

O'Neill (2002) explored the negative effects of the accountability culture stating:

> In the end, the new culture of accountability provides incentives for arbitrary and unprofessional choices (p.6).

When collaborative leadership takes place then not only is responsibility shared but so is accountability for as Briggs (2010) states:

> Collaborative leadership is not simply a 'bigger model' of single organisation leadership (p.236).

Summary of Leadership and Sub-Themes

There is a wide range of literature and research into leadership and management. The literature is not confined to education but is also used by the business sector; this is because theories which were developed outside education were taken on board by those in education. An important sub-theme is different leadership approaches. Ribbins (2001) identified three theories of leadership which were developed by those researching the business sector and then transposed to education – personality trait, behavioural, and situational. In 2000 Hay McBer published a report comparing headteachers in UK schools

and senior executives in private enterprise. This report became influential in the education sector. This report identifies six leadership styles.

An important sub-theme is that of decision making Evans (1998) stated whilst some people wanted to be involved in making decisions others did not object to the decisions being made by others. Research by various authors for example Gronn (2002) suggests school improvement is more likely if there is collaboration within the decision making process. However research identifies the headteacher is still the person ultimately responsible for the final decision.

A sub-theme which affects leadership is that of accountability. Literature focus on accountability has evolved as government interventions and initiatives have been introduced into the education system. Brundrett (2011) argues that as schools receive public funds they are accountable for demonstrating they offer quality and value. The report *School Accountability* (CSFC, 2010) states every child is entitled to quality education and as such schools should be accountable to ensure that standards of teaching and learning are met. Accountability takes different forms including Ofsted inspections and performance tables. Simkins (1992) identifies four models of accountability – professional, managerial, political and market. The impact of accountability has a wide ranging effect on the school, including how it recruits both staff and pupil thus ensuring its continued existence.

Theme 2: Collaborative Process

Collaboration in various forms is closely identified with school improvement and is identified as an important element in the DCSF (2008) White Paper. Collaboration within a primary school exists on several levels. Children are encouraged to undertake collaborative tasks within lessons. Teachers of the same year group collaborate with each other. There is

collaboration within phases in the school and different leadership teams collaborate. The

headteacher and deputy collaborate. The governors will collaborate with each other and the

headteacher. The school may collaborate with other schools and the LA. In addition to this

there is collaboration with different agencies. The purpose behind all these different

collaborations is the education and well being of the children. The level of collaboration

focused on within this study and the literature review is that of the senior leaders including

the headteacher and deputy head. As the research questions consider the impact of

collaboration on school improvement links will also be made to collaboration of the senior

leadership team and teachers. In a recent report on school leadership (2009) the National

College argued:

> Commitment to promoting collaboration within schools and across different
> services is therefore an increasingly important characteristic of school leadership
> (p.47).

Stoll and Temperley (2009) argue for 'creative leadership', the focus of this is to encourage

leadership that empowers people to lead, to identify new approaches to overcoming

problems:

> When school leadership teams learn collaboratively and reciprocally.. new
> relationships between the team members are forged and a shared confidence in each
> other's unique abilities starts to emerge (p.15).

Jones (2006) in studying leadership in small schools reiterated the argument that teams in

small schools 'have operated many ways of collaborating to meet the challenges

confronting them' (p.26) to support his argument he cites Bolden, 2005:

> One of the key principles of leadership development is to 'build on strengths that
> already exist and find ways of working with or around weaknesses (Bolden, 2005)
> (p.27).

He concludes by stating small schools provide valuable insight into how collaboration can be effective.

Hargreaves (1995) suggests there are two types of collaboration, that which is created internally and that which is imposed from outside. These he labelled collaborative culture and contrived collegiality. The collaborative culture he suggests is 'bottom up' because it comes from teachers wanting to, or needing to, work together to develop initiatives and to accomplish tasks. The contrived collegiality is top down where collaboration between staff is planned and scheduled. Staff work together because there is an imposed strategy to achieve particular goals. Hargreaves suggests that both these forms of collaboration can exist in the same school. Hallinger and Heck (2010) argue:

> Collaborative leadership, as opposed to leadership from the principal alone, may offer a path towards more sustainable school improvement (p.107).

Teamwork

An important aspect of collaboration is teamwork the concept of teamwork is not new and has been evolving for some time Torrington and Hall (1995) state:

> Teamwork, of course, is not a new idea, and the autonomous working groups of the 1960s and 1970s are clear forerunners (p.333).

In 1981 Belbin identified nine 'team roles' which attempted to distinguish group member's behaviour. This framework is often used by people when looking at the effectiveness of teams. This is a shift in terminology from groups to teams. Groups are a collection of individuals who work together but teams are identified as a group which shares a common target needing the effort of each member to achieve that target. As terminology is important within a literature search this in effect means that whilst I am concerned with 'teams' and 'teamwork' relevant literature could also be located in 'groups' or 'groupwork'. An

important part of the literature on teams and groups looks at the people that make up the

teams. In business literature team building is considered to be particularly important:

> The effectiveness of any team depends to a large extent on the appropriateness of
> the team members (Torrington & Hall, 1995, p.342).

As a result of the reforms made by governments, schools have had to make a variety of

changes 'Education managers have had to learn new skills, many of which are common

practice in business and commerce' (Bell and Harrison, 1998, p.10).

Wallace and Huckman (1999) researched senior leadership teams in a primary school. They

looked at how teams operated, including how members of the team interacted with each

other in different situations. After looking at the data they developed a model to 'explain

patterns of interaction with the case study they had undertaken' (p.202).

Table 1 shows the model Wallace and Huckman (1999) developed:

	norms	headteacher			
		Management hierarchy		Equal contribution	
Other SMT members	Management hierarchy	Moderate gain Low strain **(moderate SMT synergy)**	(few ideas, head's seniority accepted, outcomes acceptable to head)	Low gain Low strain **disengagement** **(low SMT synergy)**	(head encourages, others offer minimal ideas, willing to compromise, outcomes acceptable to head)
	Equal contribution	No gain High strain **Open conflict** **(no SMT synergy)**	(head pulls rank, others do not accept head's seniority, no consensus, outcomes not acceptable to head)	High gain Low strain **(high SMT synergy)**	(many ideas, willingness to compromise for consensus, outcomes acceptable to head)

Table 1 Wallace and Huckman (1999) Interaction between headteacher and other SLT members (p.203)

The White Paper (DCSF, 2009) states:

> Every school is responsible for its own improvement, and every school should be seeking to improve continuously. Improving schools further from this strong base now requires a more differentiated approach; We will develop this approach and reinforce it through further reform of the accountability system to focus more sharply on the progress of every child and on all aspects of school performance (p.55).

Primary schools are shifting the emphasis from working within teams to collaboration within teams. At the National New Head conference in 2009 (National College) good teamwork

was summarised as comprising nine features:

- team commitment
- constructive challenge
- alignment
- innovation and originality
- accountability and responsibility
- decisive, co-ordinated action
- accomplishment
- effectiveness in breakdowns
- mutual support and coaching (downloaded from power point presentation 2010).

The above features of teamwork are also reflected in the factors which are identified by

Mattessich and Monsey (1992) cited in Connolly and James (2006) are those which lead to

successful collaboration.

The six collaboration factor categories synthesized from current literature are:

- trust and partner compatibility;
- common and unique purpose;
- shared governance and joint decision making;
- clear understanding of roles and responsibilities;
- open and frequent communication;
- adequate financial and human resources.

Collaboration and working as a team will also be influenced by the motivation of the

individuals involved and also 'availability of opportunities for collaboration' (p.79)

Connolly and James (2006). This is supported by Wallace (2001):

> Research has found consistently that a significant minority of SLT members remain uncommitted to teamwork and may even attempt to undermine their colleagues' efforts (p.155).

Wallace (2001) argues that in the study conducted by himself and Hall (1994) senior team

members adhered to the structure of hierarchy where the heads were in control with a

different level of management to support them. He states in contradiction to this senior

leaders also stated they were able to contribute equally as a team to decisions taken. He

identified this as 'two contradictory sets of beliefs and values' (p.155).

Cranston and Ehrich (2005) argue teams play an important role within the structure of the

school. They stated senior leadership teams:

> responsibilities include making major decisions on behalf of the staff about school
> policy and practice and the overall running of the school (Hall & Wallace, 1996).
> As such, SLTs occupy a powerful place in school-decision making and are key
> contributors to leadership in the school (p.80).

Cranston and Ehrich (2005) argue the senior leadership team need to consider issues which

may affect how they operate as a team. They identified five issues which they suggest need

to be considered by SLT:

- Clearly defining their roles and objectives.
- Ensuring the competency, credibility and commitment of team members.
- Developing a shared culture, values and beliefs and effective teamwork processes among members of the team.
- Developing quality relations with other staff and ensuring communication with is effective.
- Ensuring there are learning opportunities available for members of the senior leadership to ensure they can operate competently (p.83).

Using these issues a 'TEAM Process' was compiled where members of the team identified

what happened in the team and what would be the ideal situation. These where then

compared to identify where teams worked well together or where change was needed to

improve how the team collaborated.

In 2000 the position of assistant headteacher was introduced as part of a reorganisation of

school leadership groups. This was to enable the leadership team to share responsibility.

Watson (2005) argues since the introduction of this role assistant headteachers 'are already

impacting upon primary leadership and they have the potential to do so even more in the

future' (p.27).

Barriers

Maeroff (1993) identified obstacles affecting the work of teams in schools in Minnesota however he argues these 'affect the work of teams in schools everywhere..and go a long way toward determining where teams will succeed or fail'(p.136). He states the main areas in which teams most often confront barriers are:

- societal factors
- budgets
- teacher knowledge and dedication
- team function
- continuity (p.136).

He argues even people who are good team members only give 'part-time attention to its needs and mission' (p.114). This is because each team member has other tasks and duties to undertake within the teaching or leadership role they are engaged in. Time is another barrier – time to meet, discuss, plan and reflect on team activities:

> When studied by researchers almost every team mentioned the problem of time conflicts: ...Sometimes, teams were so overwhelmed that for extended periods they pretty much stopped holding meetings (p.118).

Research has identified that in addition to staff being required to incorporate the internal initiatives they are expected to take account of external initiatives which can also affect how a team functions as Day, et al (2000) state:

> Staff morale can be affected by 'yet more demands for change' energies can become dissipated and professional lives fragmented by too many changes which often mean that pressing internal issues are not attended to (p.140).

Staff relationships can also become a barrier to collaboration and teamwork Stoll and Fink (1996) cite Bradshaw's rules that operate unconsciously and create distress:

- control
- perfectionism
- blame
- denial of the five freedoms
- no-talk rule

- myth making
- incompletion
- unreliability (p.34).

Fear of failure is identified as a common feature together with lack of trust arguing if trust does not exist then you cannot be disappointed. Bowring-Carr and West-Burnham (1997) argue trust begins with open dialogue 'at first on a one-to-one basis, and then in the teams...a genuine dialogue in which people openly share beliefs, ideas, perspective'(p.157). By identifying both successful attributes and barriers to collaboration /effective teams then reflecting on these those involved are able to initiate change which will result in school improvement. Fullan (2001) states:

> If we constantly remind ourselves that educational change is a learning experience for the adults involved.. we will be going a long way in understanding the dynamics of the factors of change (p.70).

Motivation

One of the sub-themes of collaboration is motivation. Together with this element is commitment. Muller, et al (2009) state:

> Definition of motivation underlines this process-oriented concept: 'to be motivated means to be moved to do something. A person who feels no impetus or inspiration to act is thus characterized as unmotivated, whereas someone who is energized or activated toward an end is considered motivated (p.577).

An individual's motivation may be affected by internal or external forces. Levin and Fullan (2008) identified the importance of motivation if schools were to improve:

> Many government efforts to improve education have started with negative messages about schools: ..and even more that educators cannot be trusted to do the job...Yet improvement is only possible if people are motivated, individually and collectively to put in the effort necessary to get results (p.293).

Support is important to motivation, this includes resources to undertake the tasks given, and support by colleagues including leaders. Change needs to be explained, rather than directed,

to engage commitment. This need to explain and be open is linked with how communication takes place. De Nobile and McCormick (2008) argue:

> However, there is evidence to suggest that excessive directive communication may be related to lowered job satisfaction (p.104).

If change is communicated in a supportive way and the person is perceived as someone who is interested in their staff then this will contribute to motivation. Butt and Lance (2005) analysed the views of teachers involved in the pathfinder project 'designed to address issues of teacher workload' (p.401). They identified that evidence suggests that hours worked and workload are complex. If the hours worked are valued as part of the job and not just related to administrative, clerical or excessive initiatives then motivation may be achieved:

> It is apparent that highly motivated people often gain much satisfaction from their work and choose to work long hours – as such many teachers' sense of satisfaction and motivation seems to be embedded in a larger set of beliefs and attitudes (p.420) (Butt and Lance).

Workload has been cited as an ongoing reason for dissatisfaction with a leadership role. However, Timperley and Robinson (2000) argue teachers' workload is partly a result of how they organise themselves:

> When reform requires a systemic response, these organizing principles are likely to result in increased workload through fragmentation, duplication of effort and the addition of new tasks to those already existing (p.47).

Timperley and Robinson develop and support their argument citing a New Zealand school-based study. Arguing it is leaders who can, to some extent, control workload:

> We suggest that the answer to this question lies primarily in teachers and school managers identifying what is required to engage effectively in school-wide reform efforts and to distinguish how this is different from classroom teaching (p.59).

Evans (2001) contributes to the discussion identifying whilst external factors may contribute to lack of motivation it is school context that is more relevant:

> motivation is influenced much less by externally initiated factors, than by factors emanating from the more immediate context within which teachers work: school specific, or more precisely, job-specific factors (p.293).

Evans arguments are based on two studies, in the UK, of motivation among primary teachers. She identified differences and similarities between the two studies arguing that leadership impacts on motivation not directly but indirectly:

> Understanding what matters to people and in particular knowing precisely what the key issues upon which the acceptability of an individual's work context depends are crucial to effective leadership (p.305).

Middlewood (2010) supports this argument by suggesting leadership is an important aspect of motivation:

> There is much to be gained by leaders themselves through an understanding of their staff as individuals and through addressing their needs and support be given accordingly (p141).

Fullan (2007) in presenting workshops on change theory identifies a focus on motivation is important. He argues motivation may take time:

> If your strategy does not gain on the motivation question over time (e.g. end of year one, year two) it will fail (p.6).

Networking/Partnership

Collaboration may not only take place within a school but be extended across different school for as Hatcher (2008) states 'Networks, it is claimed, offer a solution to the problem of 'school improvement' by facilitating knowledge and practice transfer' (p.25). He argues whilst networking encourages teachers across schools to develop working relationships it also has 'the potential of simply being vehicles for the transmission and implementation of government agendas' (p.29). The White Paper (DCSF, 2009) reiterates the importance of

networking, stating schools are expected to network and collaborate with other schools and agencies:

> Delivering the Pupil and Parent Guarantees will require schools to work in partnership with other schools in order to offer more by working together than any one partner could alone and to provide better value for money. At the same time, federation and other partnership solutions will become central to tackling underperformance (p.8).

One purpose of networking is to share experience, knowledge and resources to enable teachers and leaders to improve teaching and learning without continually 're-inventing the wheel'. Jones (2010) in his research into the Fast Track Teaching programme states:

> The value of networking was seen as being 'surrounded by like-minded people who were all talented and it made us confident (p.159).

Townsend (2010) argues whilst there are different uses of the term network one attribute they all possess is interacting and sharing 'in some way' (p.256). He states that because of the relationships within the network people who are part of that network can influence each other. He develops his argument stating that within education there are different types of networks those involving individuals and the other 'formal arrangements between organisations, ..providing the individuals in those organisations with the opportunity to network' (p.257). This is a two way process the individual within the network contributes by sharing their own ideas and actions. The 'network' or group of people involved then shape those ideas and actions which are then disseminated back to the school where the person can influence change. Townsend argues networking is important as it develops collaboration across educational institutions (p.259). He concludes networks bring together people who might not consider leadership as part of their role within the school but an important effect of the network is 'spreading participation in educational leadership' (p.269).

Summary of Collaborative Process and Sub-Themes.

The overall theme for this section is collaboration. The literature on collaboration is varied and identifies the growing importance of collaboration within education. It identifies how collaboration contributes to successful schools, ensuring continued improvement. The literature also identifies that in order for collaboration to be effective the elements which contribute towards this success also need to be effective. Halliner and Heck (2010) suggest that it is only over time that the impact of collaboration will be reflected in school improvement. In the sub-themes the elements focused on were teamwork, barriers to teamwork and motivation. Finally widening collaboration to networking and partnerships. Teamwork within the literature has been researched and evolved overtime. Belbin (1981) is identified as influential by developing a framework for effective teams. Research and literature relating to the business sector influenced people working in the education sector. The focus being what makes a team effective. Maeroff (1993) identified obstacles or barriers which could prevent teams becoming successful. Motivation is also closely linked to collaboration for if this is in place then commitment to collaboration will ensure it is successful. The final sub-theme of collaboration is networking and partnership. Networking developed to encourage the sharing of knowledge and expertise across different sectors of education but is particularly relevant to the collaboration between schools. The theme of collaboration continues to be researched and as such new knowledge is being identified. This new knowledge on collaboration will enable schools to develop their own effectiveness and contribute to the effectiveness of those they collaborate with.

Theme 3: Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is important to collaboration. However the culture of the school is important to whether or not it is practised.

A definition of culture is the way we do things, drawing on the beliefs and attitudes of people who work together. Culture is an important aspect in school improvement for it is one of the factors which affect change within the institution as Southworth (1998) states:

> Cultural leadership is subtle.. It sets the tone for how staff will, or should conduct their affairs and professionally relate to one another and it shapes how others will exercise their leadership (p.42).

The issue of culture in a school is an important aspect of the literature. It is not easy to define the culture of a school but it is an underlying factor when looking at how a school can raise standards. Stoll and Fink (1996) argue 'school improvement can be powerfully influenced by school effectiveness research' (p.85). Based on this they have produced a typology of school culture. This typology looks at effectiveness-ineffectiveness and improving-declining .Within this concept of culture can be found research which looks at leadership/management approaches and the importance of teams – how they are structured and operate.

School culture is as varied as the schools themselves it is often unquestioned by staff as it is something that is identified as part of the school they work in. There are also different elements which impact on school culture including: relationships, teaching and learning, other agencies including LA and government interventions. The headteacher and senior leaders also influence the culture of the school. School culture is complex as it incorporates

values and beliefs which are not always easy to articulate. Busher and McKeown (2005) argue:

> The values and choice organisational cultures and sub-cultures reflect are likely to be those of the more powerful members of the group (p.16.)

Kent (2006) argues models used to analyse school culture can be limiting and has used the analogy of a jigsaw in an attempt to develop existing models. He develops his argument by identifying the influence of society on the school stating 'it has become increasingly difficult for schools to project messages which run counter to prevailing social culture' (p.29).

Leadership Models

The National College (2009) states:

> Leadership can and does make a significant difference, but it requires a deep understanding of the context of a school, not just as it stands today but how it has been in the past and how it might look next week, next year and in five years' time (P.51).

Research literature relating to effective schools, leadership and teams is vast and complex. Bush (1995) explores different theoretical models of educational management developing the relationship between theory and practice. These models are:

- Formal models

formal models make the assumption that the system used is hierarchical. Authority is legitimized by position and allegedly decisions are made through a rational process. The emphasis is that those in authority are accountable.

- Collegial models

This model unlike the formal model is based on the authority of expertise rather than position. It assumes that members of the organization have a common set of values. Decisions are arrived at through discussion and power is shared.

- Political models

The focus of this model is mainly on group activity rather than the institution as a whole. It 'characterises decision-making as a bargaining process.' (p.73). whilst there are common attitudes towards central issues the goals of each group may be different. Groups may also create alliances to achieve their goals. Power in this model comes through control which can be gained using different strategies.

- Subjective models

The focus of this model is the individual within the organisation. The basis of the theory is that the 'organisation is the creation of the people within them' (p.93). Leaders seek to influence individual behaviour so that it correlates with their own preferences.

- Ambiguity models

'These theories assume that organizational objectives are problematic and that institutions experience difficulty in ordering their priorities' (p.111). In this model leaders become facilitators creating opportunity for discussion of problems. Leaders make a considered choice of solution to the problem from a range of alternatives.

- Cultural models

The focus is on the beliefs and values of those in the organization. These beliefs becoming shared tradition within the group. The 'maintenance of the culture is regarded as a central feature of effective leadership' (p.138).

Bush then compares the models using elements of leadership as the base for the comparison. He concludes by stating:

> If awareness of theory helps improve practice, ..then more rigorous theory should produce more effective practitioners and better schools and colleges (p.155).

Reflection on Collaborative Process

There have been many government initiatives placed on schools in recent years for example *Every Child Matters* (DfES 2003). In addition Ofsted require a self evaluation form which is accessed prior to inspecting schools. Although schools have been reflective in the past the emphasis on reflection is now greater in order to ensure the school is 'successful'. Reflection is thinking about actions that have taken place both your own and other peoples. Stoll and Fink (1996) state 'reflection initiates action' (p.155) conversely 'action initiates reflection' (p.156). This means teaching can be changed to improve outcome, then reflection on outcome can promote effective teaching it is also identified as important to learning for Day (1993) states 'reflection is identified as being an essential part of learning' (p.84).

Research into school improvement has identified reflection as an important element in the process of school improvement as Southworth and Conner (1999) state:

> Schools which recognise that enquiry and reflection are important processes in school improvement find it easier to sustain improvement effort around established priorities and are better placed to monitor the extent to which policies and plans actually deliver the intended outcomes (p.10).

Day (2007) argued that it is not always possible to reflect on events, and indeed it is not always 'appropriate'. He states there are benefits to reflection as it is a way of gaining self knowledge enabling progress and change to take place. He continues it is also a way of renewing the initial 'passion' for teaching (p.5).

Day (2003) identifies five kinds of reflection:

- The holistic where the emphasis is upon vision and culture-building.

- The pedagogical (on and in action) in which they place emphasis upon staff acquiring, applying and monitoring teaching which achieves results allied to their vision.

- The interpersonal where the focus is upon knowing and nurturing staff, children, parents and governors.

- The strategic where the focus is upon entrepreneurship, intelligence-gathering and networking to secure some control of the future.

- The intrapersonal where the focus is upon self-knowledge and self-development and fulfilment (p.37).

In the 2009 Ofsted report, reflection, together with collaboration, was identified as an important element in not only raising school achievements but contributing to schools being identified as outstanding:

> Reflection on their own practice was one of the reciprocal
> benefits that invariably accrue from supporting another
> school, whatever the differences in effectiveness (p.56)

Refection together with collaboration can lead to change. Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) state 'The hardest part of educational change is not how to start it, but how to make it last and spread' (p.94). Building reflection into the collaborative process may be a way to make changes that can be built on.

Summary of Reflective Practice and Sub-Themes

Culture is an important element within education literature. To change and improve the way a school operates it is sometimes necessary to change the culture. The culture of the school affects all aspects of school life. School culture incorporates a shared sense of purpose and values which will impact on the success of the school. The culture of the school can be influenced by both the headteacher and other school leaders.

Within the overall theme of culture one of the sub-themes is that of leadership models, these are important because the model followed will determine the effect on the culture of the school. Bush (1995) identified six models – formal, collegial, political, subjective, ambiguity and cultural. Often leadership is a mixture of more than one model depending upon the situation. Reflection is important because with so many different initiatives being introduced and assimilated into the culture of the school headteachers and those who work for and with them need to reflect on which initiative is successful and why. Conversely they need to reflect on those initiatives or aspects of initiatives that did not achieve the desired outcome, and again why that might be.

Theme 4: Senior Leadership Involving Staff in Collaboration for School Improvement

Another form of leadership is 'leadership for learning'. Rhodes and Brundrett (2010) argue:

> The relationship between leadership and learning is increasingly accepted as being one of the most important issues in enhancing effectiveness of educational organisations (p.153).

Rhodes and Brundrett cite MacBeath and Dempster (2009) who identify five principles which support the model of leadership for learning these are:

- shared or distributed leadership
- a focus on learning
- creation of the conditions favourable for learning
- creation of dialogue about leadership
- establishment of a shared sense of accountability (p.154).

The development of leadership for learning model has highlighted the importance of how power is distributed and that collaboration supports school improvement. They develop the argument stating:

> A developing consensus suggests that school heads improve teaching and learning indirectly through their influence on staff motivation, development, well being and working conditions (p.156).

They state that the systems leaders apply to the school can ensure there is an understanding of how children learn and how 'appropriate policies' can foster the individual learning of both staff and pupils. This model can then be extended into other schools using the model of networking or community.

School Development Plan

The purpose of the school development plan is to enable schools to identify strengths and weaknesses so by building on strengths and rectifying weaknesses they are able to implement changes that will improve how the school functions. The majority of schools identify ways of improving teaching and learning within the school development plan. The format for each school may vary however the content identifies issues to be addressed, how and when it will be achieved, by whom and the finance involved. It will also include criteria for success so that the school is able to reflect on whether or not the issue was resolved and identify whether the monitoring process was rigorous enough to enable targets

to be identified. The person ultimately responsible for the development plan is the

headteacher however a majority of schools will work on the plan collaboratively. Each

team contributing to the final plan. MacGilchrist, et al (1995) state:

> The development planning process, itself, is portrayed as a rational approach to the management of change; a sequential process, the different stages of which form a planning cycle (p.9).

From the data collected for this study, four types of school development plan were

identified:

> *Rhetorical plan* where there is no ownership;
>
> *Singular plan* owned by headteacher only;
>
> *Co-operative plan* partial ownership by teaching staff but willingness to participate;
>
> *Corporate plan* shared ownership and involvement of all teaching staff (p.120).

The purpose of the school development plan is to improve how a school is functioning and

to ensure that quality teaching and learning is taking place leading to school improvement.

Using the above research it could be argued that having a school development plan does not

always ensure school improvement. Bell (2002) argues that prior to DES Education Reform

Act of 1988 most schools did not make long or even medium term plans as it was the LA

that dealt with this aspect of school leadership. After the Reform Act with the introduction

of accountability linked to the national curriculum and management being transferred to the

school development plans emerged. Bell (2002) develops his argument stating:

> The purpose of school development plans was now to assist schools to introduce changes successfully, so that the quality of teaching and standards of learning were improved (p.410).

With the context of the school development plan being established Bell continues to

develop his argument:

> planning in schools is based on three sets of fallacies that undermine its efficacy as a management technique for use in educational institutions. These take the form of erroneous assumptions about the nature of leadership and management in schools, about planning as a management technique and about definitions of school effectiveness (p.413).

School Improvement and Effectiveness

Whilst the research of Wallace and Huckman (1999) examines how team members work

together, other researchers focus on school effectiveness. Important work on school

effectiveness has been produced, for example, by Stoll and Fink (1996), Southworth and

Conner (1999) and Harris, Day, Hopkins, Hadfield, Hargreaves and Chapman (2003),

Gunter (2000) argues 'in particular the work of Fullan and Hargeaves is important

regarding the process of change (Fullan 1991, 1997, 1999) and the impact of change on

teachers and their work (Hargreaves 1994, 1998 with Evans 1997). Within this work they

want those directly involved with students to examine relationships in conjunction with the

changes in education so that positive changes can be made within schools. In an interview

in 2003 Fullan stated:

> Information stays as information until people work through it together in solving problems and achieving goals ..when teachers collectively focus on student performance and develop action plans to improve it is so powerful (p.2).

In 1991 Fullan with Stiegelbauer identified three phases taking place in the 'change

process' – initiation where the need for change will be indentified. Implementation where

the process of starting the change takes place. Continuation where the change becomes part

of the school or it is decided that it not working or wanted and finally the outcome where a

review is taken of the process.

Gunter (2001) argues the field of school improvement and school effectiveness has been struggling over the relationship between the two and that some in these fields say there is a strong case for a merger. She asserts school effectiveness is concerned to work on developing more sophisticated modelling while school improvement is concerned to focus on school and classroom processes. A great deal of research has been undertaken into the area of school effectiveness and school improvement with the focus of the school effectiveness work being on the identification and measurement of key determinants. Mortimore, et al (1991) defines an effective school as:

> One in which pupils' progress further than might be expected from consideration of its intake (p.9).

He proposed criteria to promote school improvement and effectiveness:

- The headteacher and staff must agree on a clear mission for the school.
- Carry out a systematic audit of current strengths and weaknesses.
- Any change-plan is thoroughly thought through.
- The implementation of the change-plan is supported by all appropriate authorities.
- An evaluation of progress is used formatively to support the implementation.

In discussions relating to school effectiveness and improvement there is often a distinction between effectiveness being outcome driven and improvement being process driven. However it is not easy to make clear distinction and models are combined. Stoll and Fink (1996) define a school as effective if it:

- Promotes progress for all pupils beyond expectations of their initial attainment and background.
- Ensures each pupil achieves the highest standards possible.
- Enhances all aspects of pupils' achievement and development.
- Continues to improve from year to year (p.28).

Brighouse and Woods (1999) identified seven processes to encompass activities in school life which lead to improvement. Saunders and Stockton (2005) state research into school

effectiveness is about assessing and measuring outcomes. This measurement has developed into 'value added' data. They argue 'these measures generally remain relatively narrow in scope and focused particularly upon academic achievement' (p.7). The research into school effectiveness has also emphasised 'the importance of teaching and learning' (P.7). Saunders and Stockton (2005) point out that the improvement research has been criticised citing Teddlie and Reynolds (2000) they state:

> school effectiveness research presents a static picture of the school rather than something more organic and suggest a more dynamic view would be more useful in understanding the complexities and realities of school life (p.8).

They conclude their arguments stating:

> The process of school improvement is neither linear nor simplistic. In reality it is cyclical and complex (p.13).

They argue school improvement is about people, how they undertake their role in school and the influence that has on children within the school. It is about everyday actions and decisions taken within the school.

Preedy, et al (2003) state school effectiveness research attempts to identify 'factors' that contribute to effective schools. School improvement is identifying how schools can improve to become 'effective'. They identify studies relating to school effectiveness will:

- Identify factors 'associated with an effective school';
- 'Define effectiveness' relating this to the 'whole school';
- Concentrate on data which is related to processes and the outcomes;
- Compare schools using the quantitative dates then identify variables schools can 'control' in order to make comparison between 'high and low performing schools;
- Use research techniques which identify 'multi-level modelling and value added methodologies (p.266).

They develop their argument to state that as research into effectiveness has developed it now takes other elements into account including the context of the school and the pupil intakes. Although different researchers may focus on different aspects of effectiveness Preedy, et al (2003) argue:

> Factors drawn from Reynolds, et al (1997) and Mortimore (1998) are reasonably typical:
> - leadership
> - shared vision and goals
> - a learning ethos and environment
> - high quality teaching and learning
> - high expectations by staff of pupils
> - positive reinforcement
> - close monitoring of pupil progress
> - pupil rights and responsibilities
> - purposeful teaching (p.267).

They sum up school effectiveness stating 'there is a growing convergence between school effectiveness and school improvement research' (p.268).

Preedy, et al continue their discussion of school effectiveness and school improvement by identifying that school improvement research focuses on how schools might become better or more effective. They suggest the reason those whose roles are in schools are interested in research connected to school improvement is because it is:

- Motivational and inspiring
- Richly illustrated with examples of 'what works'
- Representative of the views of practitioners (p.268).

They conclude their discussion of school improved research stating that what improving schools seem to have in common is that they share:

- A proactive and shared approach to planning.
- An ethos or culture that favours improvement.
- Leadership throughout the school which focuses on the quality of teaching and learning and promotes and facilitates professional discussion around improvement.

- Specific interventions to boost exam performance (p.269).

Muijs (2006) argues schools are no longer operating as single units but 'network' with other schools sharing practice and views. Another difference is schools are becoming linked to communities through the extended school initiative. This initiative brings parental involvement into the area of school effectiveness.

Hopkins and Jackson (2003) develop discussion on school improvement arguing that:

> Distributed leadership to teachers, parents and students is viewed as a key to school improvement and that fostering distributed leadership are central to building the capacity for school improvement (p.4).

Dimmock (1995) argues the 'Quality of a school is best judged by the quality of the teaching and learning which takes place within it' (p.5). He argues that from a literature search he derived 'five main principles' for quality school learning:

- Student outcomes provide goal direction for learning.

- Learning and the individual learner are made the centrepiece of all that happens in the school.

- Teaching focuses on learning and teaching for understanding; a balance and variety of teaching strategies are achieved, using a combination of methods from didactic and expository to constructivist.

- Learning and teaching shape and dictate school structures and organisation, which are designed for the purpose of supporting and facilitating the principles and practice of learning and teaching.

- Learning and teaching determine management, leadership, resource allocation and culture/climate, all of which are dedicated to supporting a service delivery designed for quality learning and teaching (p.8).

Summary of Senior Leadership Involving Staff in Collaboration for School Improvement

Leadership and learning is identified as an important element within school research. Rhodes and Brundrett (2010) state in order to improve schools now focus on teaching and learning. This focus involves collaboration between school leaders, both in their own school and across schools, and pupils.

MacGilchrist, et al (1995) identified four types of school development plan – rhetorical, singular, co-operative and corporate. The SDP is important as it may be one of the ways schools collaborate.

Another sub-theme which is important to this study is the literature relating to school improvement and effectiveness. Gunter (2001) argues the focus of school improvement is on processes and effectiveness focuses on models. Stoll and Fink (1996) state that school effectiveness can inform improvement. The literature on both school improvement and school effectiveness identify what makes a successful school. This research has evolved to include not just leadership but also the context of the school and the pupils within the school.

Links

In this part of the literature review the main and sub-themes identified earlier will be

brought together and related to the research questions. Diagram B shows how the themes

and sub-themes in this chapter relate to the research questions:

Diagram B: showing Research questions, themes and sub themes linked to a cycle of collaborative working to improve teaching and learning within the primary school.

RESEARCH QUESTION A: What impact does senior management have on developing a culture of collaboration for improvement and change in order to support teaching and learning?

LEADERSHIP:

Approach, decision making, accountability

SENIOR LEADERSHIP INVOLVING STAFF IN COLLABORATIVE PROCESS
School development plan and school improvement/effectiveness

RESEARCH QUESTION D: How do senior leaders involve staff in the collaborative process for improving teaching and learning and in so doing accept they also are accountable?

COLLABORATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

RESEARCH QUESTION B: How do the senior leaders contribute to the collaborative process and ensure it impacts on teaching and learning?

COLLABORATIVE PROCESS: -
Teamwork, barriers to collaboration and teamwork, motivation and networking/partnership

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE
Leadership models and reflection

RESEARCH QUESTION C: How does reflective practice enhance the use of collaboration to improve teaching and learning?

Diagram B showing themes and sub-themes

The purpose of the study is to ascertain the importance of collaboration in raising achievement. Each research question focuses on a different aspect of collaboration within the primary school. The literature on collaboration also focuses on different elements of collaboration. In order to search the literature effectively four main themes were identified – these themes being linked with an appropriate research question. When the themes and sub-themes are collated to the research questions there emerges a cyclical pattern of collaboration each element being important .

Whilst it is important to understand the different aspects which comprise how a school operates it is equally important to examine links between each aspect. It is clear from the literature these themes are interrelated. Stoll and Fink (1996), who have made major contributions to school improvement literature, explore what is needed to make schools more effective. An important aspect of their study is how leadership influences collaboration resulting in effective or improving schools. This literature links school improvement with other aspects which influence this improvement:

> Commitment to change is more likely when those involved in implementation of school improvement are also consulted and involved in making decisions (p.53).

Whilst research focus is on effective leadership and how it enables schools to improve teaching and learning this is not always the result Kydd, Anderson and Newton (eds 2003) argue:

> There is no guarantee that an externally appointed head will find that other staff share her or his beliefs and values about teamwork, and this head perceived he was going into a situation where the staff did not operate according to his conception of a team structure (p.232).

Leadership is complex and does not take place in isolation. O'Neill (2003) raises questions about conflicts to team working and 'about the ways in which team approaches can help challenge conventional management structures' (p.6). He suggests established teams are likely to resist change because they have over time developed traditions of leadership and collaboration while newly formed teams are unlikely to have shared norms. In addition to this the senior leaders will have other responsibilities which will result in them adopting different roles according to the situation:

> It is reasonable to assume that team development is a fragmented, non-linear process and considerably more complex than many normative models imply (p.220).

He concludes by stating:

> management through teams is likely to succeed only where all members are committed to the process (p.226).

Research Question A:

The main theme supporting this question is that of leadership. The sub-themes which contribute to this are: leadership approach, decision making and accountability. The literature indicates that the headteacher's leadership, as opposed to management, is of utmost importance to the culture of the school. Studies have shown schools that develop a culture of collaboration have improved. This collaboration is seen as essential in the decision making stage of the process, however due to increased accountability the headteacher may have to take the ultimate decision. The above research question and themes then lead into the next research question.

Research Question B:

This question relates to the next level of leadership within the school. At this point the majority of schools create teams to implement the vision of the headteacher. The main theme supporting this question is that of collaboration. The sub-themes which contribute to this are: teamwork, barriers to collaboration and teamwork, motivation and, networking/partnership. Teamwork has been identified in literature for a number of years, however the concept of teamwork has evolved into that of collaboration. The literature identifies that collaboration needs certain elements in place if it is to work, however collaboration and teamwork may encounter barriers. People need to be motivated to become part of the collaborative process and this may also impact on whether or not collaboration is successful.

Research Question C:

The literature and the initiatives from the government focus on the importance of reflective practice to ensure collaboration achieves effective teaching and thereby contributes to improved pupil performance. As identified earlier many leaders will not just use one leadership approach but will look at the situation to identify which approach is appropriate. In order to ascertain what is happening within the school reflection is an important aspect. Reflection is built into many of the initiatives however it is also an element that is still difficult for some schools to incorporate - one reason given is that of lack of time. The literature indicates that reflection is an important process to improvement and change. In the final research question the process of reflection is built into the elements needed for school improvement.

Research Question D:

In order to become part of the collaborative process for improving teaching and learning staff need to be motivated. This question seeks to indentify how senior leaders within a school encourage staff to become not only part of the process but accept they need to take responsibility for success of the process. The literature on school improvement and school effectiveness discusses and identifies the elements which enable a school to improve. Collaboration of leaders and others within the school is identified as important because of the impact on the teaching and learning. The school development plan is one of the tools used by leaders to identify strengths and weaknesses thereby creating a whole school approach to improvement. Literature indicates that the experience of working in collaboration in this way is now being shared with other schools creating a network of shared experience. This final research question completes the cycle and I would suggest that the process undertaken would be repeated as schools continued to undertake improvement.

An influential report is that of Hay McBer (2000). This report was carried out to fulfil a specific task of comparing education and business leaders. It is considered an important document for headteachers to use to achieve excellence and should be placed into the wider research of effective leadership. Reference to this report in various documents suggests it has been widely accepted and used by those in education.

School effectiveness aims to identify what an effective school looks like. Researchers into effectiveness usually focus on elements that can be measured for example pupil results. The studies either compare school with school or longitudinal to measure change from year to year. School improvement aims to identify what changes within a school would enable it to

improve and achieve a higher standard. Bush (1995) identifies theory of management and presents different model for effective schools.

Kydd, Anderson and Newton (2003) discuss issues relating to leadership and working in teams. They also develop 'analytic frameworks that can be used to assist the reader in understanding a leadership approach to managing people and teams (p.3).

Conclusion

In this chapter the introduction identified how the search was undertaken. Part one identified main themes and authors. Part two discussed the themes identified in the search. Part three developed links between the themes. Part four identified the critical perspective of the literature search. Each part of the chapter is summarised.

The literature review identifies that collaboration within the primary school is a complex process needing different elements in place to ensure success and as such lead to improvement in teaching and learning and school effectiveness. The elements are:

- Leadership – of both the headteacher and leaders. The literature identifies different styles, but suggests that primary school leadership will involve a mixture of different approaches.

- Decision making, which leaders make the decisions and who, if anyone, contributes to the process.

- Accountability of those involved in the process of education, who are they accountable to and why.

- Collaboration – is an element which emerges in the literature search. Teamwork is the basis of collaboration however there may be barriers to

people working as a team and collaborating to move projects forward. The literature search identifies motivation as important to collaboration together with who collaborates with whom. An emerging area of collaboration is that of networking or partnerships between schools, LAs and other agencies.

- Culture of learning is important within recent literature as research into the structure of primary schools has identified that in order to promote learning and raise attainment there needs to be in place a culture of learning. Reflection is important in developing this culture.

- The school development plan and self evaluation are important to ensuring the collaborative processes are in place.

The literature search identifies how these elements impact on schools. The research of Wallace and Huckman (1999) identifies how senior leaders collaborate in different primary schools. Coleman (2011) argues how collaboration should be a blended model. Brundrett and Rhodes (2011) focus on accountability in education. Whilst Simkins (1992) identifies different models for accountability. Goleman, et al (2004), Day (2000, 2007) and Evans 1998, 2001) all focus on aspects of relationships within schools. Fullan (1999, 2001, 2003, 2007 and 2008) identifies theories for change within schools. The work of these researchers contributes to developing an overview of collaboration and is important to this study. The discussion chapter will draw on these and other authors to develop emerging themes relating to the research questions. These will also contribute to develop further understanding of collaboration of senior leadership teams in primary schools. The literature reflects the state of knowledge at the time the research was undertaken and as this knowledge is not static journal articles have been cited as these indicate some of the research which will be published in book form later.

The next chapter research design will take account of this literature in order to gather

appropriate data to further contribute to the study of collaboration within primary schools.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

This chapter is in six parts. The introduction identifies briefly what each section is going to cover. The literature shows in order to raise achievement it is important to ensure senior leaders collaborate to focus on teaching and learning. The research design is constructed to collect data which together with the literature review will address the research questions. Part two identifies the wider frameworks into which my research is placed. Part three is the philosophical approach underpinning my research. To gather data and answer the research questions both qualitative and quantitative approaches are used. The quantitative approach of questionnaire together with the literature review provides the base for the qualitative approach of interview. Both approaches complement and support each other. Part four identifies the research strategy. Part five will identify the methodology, methods, and ethics for both the design and data collection. Part six will summarise this chapter and briefly identify how the next chapter will present the results of the implementation of this design.

Wider Frameworks

The study is based on the collaboration of senior leaders, their relationships within primary school settings and how collaboration supports school improvement. Gunter (2001) argues research into effectiveness has focused on 'value-added to student outcomes by the school' (p.5). This is relevant when considering elements of collaboration.

Within this wider framework of research Gunter and Ribbins (2002) identify 'five

knowledge domains':

- Conceptual
- Critical
- Evaluative
- Humanistic
- Instrumental

The study presents information about how collaboration in a primary school is developed.

The information is gathered using questionnaires to identify themes and inform interviews.

Interviews expand these themes. This places the study within the humanistic and

interpretive domains.

Wallace and Poulson (2003) identify five intellectual projects for studying aspects of the

social world:

- knowledge for understanding
- knowledge for critical evaluation
- knowledge for action
- instrumentalism
- reflexive action (p.24).

This study is of collaboration and draws on the experience and practice of senior leaders in

primary schools. The findings are linked to wider research to develop and extend

knowledge and understanding of collaboration within primary school settings.

As the approach to the study is concerned with making sense of the perceptions of

collaboration obtained from interviews the approach is Phenomenology. Denscombe (2003)

states:

> Phenomenology focuses on how the processes of interpretation are shared and
> 'socially constructed' (p.100).

Philosophical Approach

Philosophical approach to knowledge is important as it affects the research strategy.

Mertens (1998) identified basic beliefs associated with the major paradigms in the

following Table 2:

Basic Beliefs	Positivism/ postpositivism	Interpretive/ constructivist	Emancipatory
Ontology (nature of reality)	One reality; knowable within probability	Multiple, socially constructed realities	Multiple realities shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, gender and disability values
Epistemology (nature of knowledge; relation between knower and would-be-known)	Objectivity is important; researcher manipulates and observes in dispassionate objective manner	Interactive link between researcher and participants; values are made explicit; created findings	Interactive link between research and participants; knowledge is socially and historically situated
Methodology (approach to systematic inquiry)	Quantitative (primarily); interventionist; decontextualized	Qualitative (primarily); hermeneutical; dialectical; contextual factors are described	More emphasis on qualitative (dialogic) but quantitative design could be used contextual and historical factors are described, especially as the relate to oppression

Table 2 – Mertens' suggested basic beliefs associated with the major paradigms. (p.8)

Ontology within the positivism/postpostivism paradigm suggests that one reality exists and

the methods the researcher uses are to enable them to discover that reality. The

interpretive/constructivist paradigm suggests reality is socially constructed and perceptions

may change. The emancipatory paradigm as Mertens (1998) states:

> Stresses the influence of social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, gender and
> disability values in the construction of reality. That which seems 'real' may be
> reified structures that are taken to be real because of historical situations (P.20).

Epistemology within the positivism/postpostivism paradigm suggests the researcher should

remain objective to prevent their values or biases influencing the research. The

interpretive/constructivist see the research as an interactive process Mertens (1998) suggests:

> The assumption is made that data, interpretations, and outcomes are rooted in contexts and persons apart from the researcher and are not figments of the imagination (p.13).

The emancipatory paradigm achieves objectivity by:

> Reflectively examining the influence of the values and social position of the research on the problems identified as appropriate for research, hypothesis formulated and key concepts defined (p.20).

The research into collaboration places the ontology mainly within the interpretive paradigm in that knowledge is subjective and is based on experience and insight of those who contribute to the study. The study explores collaboration in different primary schools and seeks to be objective in order to identify similarities or differences as there are elements common to each school for example accountability and imposed standards for senior leaders. This places the study towards the epistemology positivism/postpostivism paradigm. The individuals in the study give their own views on collaboration which means the ontology is humanistic interpretavism. Within this study there will be an overlap as objectivity is sought in using the method of questionnaire to collect both quantitative and qualitative data to identify themes relating to collaboration. The data from the questionnaire will inform the interview questions. Following analyse of questionnaire semi-structured interviews will be used to gather data, relating to the perceptions and experiences of collaboration of the senior leaders in the primary schools.

The sample for the questionnaire will include all senior leaders in a Midland's authority. From responses fifteen will be interviewed using questions relating to collaboration and informed by responses to the questionnaire.

Research Strategy

The study is mainly focused on how things are experienced by those taking part in the research this approach is phenomenological for as Denscombe (2003) states:

> Phenomenology is an approach that focuses on how life is experienced. It is not primarily concerned with explaining the causes of things but tries, instead, to provide a description of how things are experienced firsthand by those involved (p.97).

This approach acknowledges that people might see things differently although each is involved in a socially constructed reality. It does not suggest that there are as many social realities as people:

> Phenomenological descriptions are not concerned so much with what is happening so much as how the events get interpreted by those involved (Denscombe, p.101).

My position within the study is that of a leader in the primary phase. This places me within the social reality I am researching. In analysising the data gathered, however, I will attempt to respect the interpretation of those involved illustrating their views with quotations.

As research should increase universal knowledge and understanding the experiences researched will contribute to this knowledge.

Research Methodology, Methods and Management

This study, as stated previously, is placed in the Phenomenological approach and as such is largely qualitative and based on the perceptions of primary school leaders. The methodology is that of survey, within this two methods were used to gather data – questionnaire and semi-structured interview, However although based on the perceptions of primary school leaders the questionnaire and interviews used to gather relevant data, will be placed in the context of literature and professional experience relating to collaboration, senior leadership teams and school improvement. A mixture of quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to obtain the data. The quantitative element being that of survey

using questionnaires to collect data to place into context those contributing to the study. The purpose of the questionnaires also being to identify themes relating to collaboration which would be explored in interviews. For example the interviewee's understanding of collaboration and the collaborative process within their school. The qualitative approach being semi-structured interviews based on identified themes of collaboration. This section of the chapter considers both these methods firstly that of questionnaire, then semi-structured interviews. These will then be linked together in a summary.

Survey

The methodology that will enable appropriate data to be collected is that of survey. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) state:

> Surveys gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions, or identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared (p.169).

The method used is that of questionnaire (Appendix 4). The questions for the questionnaire were based on Wallace and Huckman (1999) criteria for judging SLT effectiveness (p.77) and school improvement literature. Permission was sought and given for the questionnaire to be distributed to senior leaders in all the primary schools (seventy eight) within the Authority. As the number of senior leaders varies from school to school the actual number in the sample could not be identified. By including all the primary schools in the Midlands Authority the intention was to include a broad range of perspectives on senior leadership collaboration in order to inform the subsequent interview stage.

The designed questionnaire, with intended questions, was initially piloted with senior leaders in my own school. The intention was to refine and improve the questionnaire. The next stage, after piloting the questionnaire, was to send it to the senior leadership teams in

all the primary schools in one Midland's LA. The analysis of the questionnaire gave important quantitative information to identify themes relating to collaboration. Once the themes were indentified appropriate interview questions were formulated to develop important aspects of collaboration by senior leaders. Gorard (2001) states a sample is the first compromise made when it is not possible to use the whole population. The study gathered data from one of several LAs which means the data gathered is different to that gathered if all LAs were used. As a small scale study the gathering of data from all LAs was not feasible. The sample, however, was senior leaders of the whole Primary school population of the chosen Midland's LA. Gorard (2201) suggests keeping a log of choices made, alternatives considered and reasons for rejecting these alternatives. As the identified sample for the study of primary schools were in one LA, Gorard (2001) calls this the population. The senior leadership teams within this Midland's LA were the sample. The target of the study was senior leadership teams in the LA. Gorard (2001) also states:

> In an ideal study you will be selecting cases from the population at random (by chance) to form your sample (p.11).

The primary schools in the Midland's LA were identified to take part in this study as the education officers in the LA were the 'gatekeepers' providing approved access to the primary schools.

This was the next stage of data gathering. However as Gorard (2001) states the ideal is not possible to achieve for several reasons one of which may be non-response, questionnaires not returned, questions omitted or only party completed or even refusal to participate. The design of the questionnaire was therefore important to encourage people to respond to them.

For as Denscombe (2003) argues:

> In general, researchers do not have the time or resources to repeat pieces of research which involve the use of questionnaires; nor do they have the opportunity to make amendments and corrections to the questionnaire once it has been printed and distributed…There is, therefore, a lot of pressure to *get it right first time* (p.146).

A questionnaire was considered to be the best method to use to gather data from a wide range of senior leaders for this stage of the study:

1. The questionnaire would provide an overview of the role of senior leaders in collaborative process.

2. Having spoken to the education officers in the LA of the study I was able to acknowledge their support in the covering letter (Appendix 5). This was important as those receiving the questionnaire may be more likely to answer it knowing it had been presented to the LA before being distributed.

3. Access via internal post had been granted making it feasible and easier to contact senior leaders.

It is clear from the literature the planning stage of the questionnaire is very important and should not be rushed but thought through carefully in order to design a questionnaire that will provide not only sufficient data but also quality data. The following identifies the design process of the questionnaire, responses to the pilot questionnaire (Appendix 2) suggesting changes (Appendix 3) before distributing the questionnaire to the identified sample.

Questionnaire Design

The first step in designing the questionnaire was to refer to the research questions and decide on the focus Robson (1993) states:

> Finding the focus involves identifying what it is that you want to gather information about. Until you have done this, further planning is impossible (p.21).

This statement is reiterated by Denscombe (2003):

> The researcher must have a clear vision of exactly what issues are at the heart of the research and what kind of information would enlighten those issues (p.152).

The focus of the study is senior leadership teams but this is not specific enough. The specific study focus is the leadership of collaboration and the importance of senior leaders in the collaborative process. The starting point is the research undertaken by Wallace and Huckman (1999). This is an important piece of research for it is an in depth study of senior leadership teams in four primary schools:

> It was designed to address the question: How, within a context of education reform, do SLTs in large primary sector schools operate where all members perceive themselves to be committed to teamwork as their core strategy for managing the school and to what effect (p.28)?

It looks at various aspects of the senior leadership team and they have produced a set of criteria 'for judging perceived effectiveness' of those who took part the case study (p.194), but the study includes no link to the collaborative process and how this relates to school improvement and teaching and learning. The purpose of this study was to extend the work of Wallace and Huckman (1999), therefore, the focus was on collaboration of the team and the collaborative process.

Having ascertained the focus the next step was to identify literature on collaboration, school improvement and teaching and learning. Before the study could move forward it became

obvious, that prior to looking at the collaborative process of the senior leadership team, the

team itself should be put into context – how did these people operate as a team? This took

my reading into literature related to teams. From the literature, it became evident it is

important not only to look at teams but also at teams in the context of the culture.

Kydd, Anderson and Newton (2003) state:

> for most people within the organisation, it is the culture that plays a significant part
> in influencing the way they each develop and enact their individual approach to
> leading and how they expect to be led (p.20).

The focus of the questionnaire design having been established enabled the identification of

the areas which would need to be researched in order to put the focus into context. A plan

for the structure of the pilot questionnaire and the themes for investigation was compiled

(Appendix 1).

The questionnaire is divided into five sections. The questionnaire would inform the

interview questions to provide data on collaboration. The questions asked at this stage

needed to relate to the research questions based on collaboration and the collaborative

process in primary school settings. Cohen, et al (2000) state:

> It is useful, in the interests of clarity and logic to break down the questionnaire into
> subsections with section headings (p.259).

The questions for each section would need to be able to elicit relevant data to different

aspects of senior leadership teams' structure, collaboration, and school improvement. The

questions were based on literature for school improvement and team effectiveness. The first

section of the questionnaire was designed to provide general information about the structure

of the senior leadership team. This was needed to establish the context of the senior leaders

in the leadership team being surveyed. The second focuses on questions relating to the

culture of the school. The third ascertains what team/individual roles are undertaken. The fourth focuses on how the collaborative process of the team might impact on teaching and learning. The final section - the only open-ended questions - is for the respondents to add any additional comments they feel are relevant to the questionnaire focus.

Context Questions

Senior leadership teams in primary schools, vary with the school so the structure might be rigid or flexible. The team may have been created by the head or inherited when the head took on their role. The number of people on the team may also be different according to the size of the school. All these factors will affect the collaboration of the team and may need to be taken into account in the study. Therefore the first section needs to establish the structure of the team (Appendix 2).

School Culture

As argued previously the culture of the school is important for as West-Burnham (1992) states: 'it has a direct impact on behaviour and performance' (p.84). Stoll and Fink (1996) state 'If norms are an expression of deeply held values and influence workplace action, it would be fruitful to consider norms that appear to underpin more successful improvement efforts' (p.92). As the study is looking at how senior leadership teams raise standards the

ten norms identified by Stoll and Fink (1996) were used as a base for questions on culture (Appendix 2) these being:

1. shared goals – 'we know where we're going';

2. responsibility for success – 'we must succeed';

3. collegiality –'we're working on this together';

4. continuous improvement – 'we can get better';

5. lifelong learning – 'learning is for everyone';

6. risk taking – 'we learn by trying something new';

7. support – 'there's always someone there to help';

8 mutual respect – 'everyone has something to offer';

9. openness – 'we can discuss our difference';

10. celebration and humour – 'we feel good about ourselves' (pp.92-98).

Team/Individual Roles

An aspect of the study is how the people themselves see their role within the team and also

as an individual with other areas of responsibilities. After carrying out research into senior

leadership teams, Wallace and Huckman (1999) produced a set of criteria for judging

perceived effectiveness of senior leadership teams (p.194). Kydd, et al (2003) state:

> It is relevant for those people involved in a leadership capacity at any level within to
> understand the concept of a leadership approach, Effective leaders adopt a strategic
> approach and lead by example 'people are their key resource' (p.25).

Since the study is focused on a senior leadership team's collaboration to raising standards it

is important that the team itself is effective. Ascertaining what is or is not effective is not

easy as it can be a subjective rather than objective exercise and mean different things to

different people; however, Trethowan (1998) identifies criteria for an effective team

(p.152). It was on these criteria that questions relating to this section of the questionnaire

are based.

Impact on Learning

The previous sections were about establishing knowledge of the school culture; the senior

leadership team, how it is structured, works and individual viewpoints relating to their

collaboration and role within the team. In this section the study aims to establish how the

team sees its collaboration in relation to raising standards. After reading the study by Wallace and Huckman (1999) I undertook informal observations of the senior leadership team in my own primary school. This was not part of my study but by completing a check list of the types of items discussed it provided a focus for designing the study into collaboration in primary school settings. Observation and reading of the literature posed the question to what extent did the structure, focus and leadership approach and collaboration within the senior leadership team raise standards. As the meeting of the team is an important decision making and collaborative process this is the starting point of the study. This together with data gathered from the questionnaire provided a base for the design of appropriate interview questions discussed later in this chapter. The questions in this section 'Impact on learning' were therefore based on literature which examined successful schools and how standards are raised.

With the focus and the information needed for the study identified. The next stage was to decide on the format of the questions. The questionnaire should not only provide information but also encourage people to think about their own team and how they collaborate to improve teaching and learning. In order to make the questionnaire more interesting to complete, whilst obtaining appropriate data, different formats of questions were presented to achieve the objective. Denscombe (2003) states:

> Variety has two potential advantages. First, it stops the respondent becoming bored. Second, it stops the respondent falling into a 'pattern' of answers (p.155).

Section 1: Structure of senior leadership team, were mostly closed type questions which were designed to enable the respondent to answer without a great deal of thought.

Section 2: School culture and section 3: Team/individual roles were based on rating scales

as Cohen, et al (2000) state:

> These are very useful devices for the researcher, as they build in a degree of
> sensitivity and differentiation of response whilst still generating numbers.
> (p.253).

Section 4: Impact on Learning are open-ended questions again Cohen, et al (2000) argue:

> The open-ended question is a very attractive device for smaller scale research. It is
> the open-ended responses that might contain the 'gems' of information that
> otherwise might not have been caught in the questionnaire (p.255).

Section 5: individual comments - are completely open so if the respondent felt anything important had not been asked, or they wanted to comment further they had an opportunity.

Data Analysis

The literature suggests that you think of how you will analyse the data at the design stage. The analysis is in two stages. Stage one is the analysis of the questionnaire, which will inform the interview questions. Stage two is the analysis of the interviews.

The questionnaire was piloted to gather feedback to identify improvements which might be needed prior to questionnaires being sent out. The questionnaire gave me the option of analysing sections 1, 2 and 3 using a data package Lewis, et al (2002) state:

> Initial analysis of closed ended questions can be done using specially prepared
> spreadsheets… which provide a rapid detailed overview (p.9).

The overview of these sections provided data to support the interview questions and underpin the study into collaboration in primary school settings – the structure of the team, the culture of the school, team/individual roles, and impact on learning, additional comments made to clarify roles.

Analysis of the open ended questions needed to be completed differently Cohen, et al (2000) suggests a coding system:

> For open-ended questions a coding frame has to be devised after the completion of the questionnaire (p.265).

Within the design of the questionnaire it was important to allow the respondent to express their own opinions, so whilst there were pitfalls in using open-ended questions the data gathered outweighed these.

Feedback on Pilot Questionnaire

The pilot questionnaire (Appendix 2) was given to six people to complete, of these five returned the questionnaire. All five completed every section the average time taken being 15 to 20 minutes. All agreed that the section which took the longest and needed the most thought was section 4 (Impact on learning), the open-ended questions. However the data in this section was the most interesting. It is also the data that provided evidence of how teams raise standards. In section 5 no one added comments of their own although they were encouraged to do so. One person stated that questions were repeated or similar questions were in section 2 and section 3. All felt that the questionnaire was useful in focusing them on their role within the team and the effect the team had on raising standards. After trialling the questionnaire constructive criticism was sought from those who had completed it. The suggested amendments are shown in Appendix 3.

Amendments were made and the final questionnaire (Appendix 4) was shown to the person who was the link to the primary schools within the authority. This was an important stage in establishing the validity of the study into the collaborative process of the senior leadership team within primary schools. Schools approached may have completed the questionnaire without this step, however, by gaining support for the study it was anticipated

the schools would take time to respond to the questionnaire. A date was given for

completing the questionnaire. The next stage was to send a thank you letter to those who

had responded and a reminder to the other schools (Appendix 6). As the next stage of the

study into collaboration of the senior leaders will be interviews the data collected at the

questionnaire stage is intended to identify important themes relating to successful

collaboration of the senior leadership team to raising achievements.

Analysis of Distributed Questionnaire

Returned questionnaires were given a code for identification and the information for each

section recorded into a data base. The analysis for the open ended questions was the same

format as that for the interviews (discussed later). As the questionnaire informed the

interview questions sections were identified with percentage responses for each question.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to provide links or connections Denscome (2003)

describes this as 'descriptive statistics'. The percentages are presented as tables which give

a visual and percentage comparison to make identification of emergent themes clearer. The

emergent themes are important as they were used to inform the interview questions. As the

themes were identified they were validated and developed in the interviews. Denscome

(2003) states:

> The mere appearance of a connection is not enough. Good researchers want to
> know: how strong the connection is (p.257).

Interviews

The second method used to obtain data was semi-structured interview. The responses to the

questionnaires enabled appropriate interview questions to be developed either to provide

additional data or clarify specific areas. Gorard (2001) suggests keeping a log of choices

made at the design stage, alternatives considered and reasons for rejecting these alternatives. Fifteen respondents to the questionnaire, (from five schools Appendix 13), were interviewed. The interviewees were respondents who agreed to be interviewed. If more had agreed then a cross-section of the questionnaire respondents would have been interviewed to develop data collected. If fewer agreed then the remaining respondents would have been approached and asked for consent to be interviewed. The data gathered was analysed to answer the research questions the focus of which is collaboration and the collaborative process. The open ended questions in the questionnaire were analysed using the same format as the interview transcripts. The interview transcripts were coded and a matrix created – the codes being placed across the top and themes and issues down the left-hand side. Themes were then be added as they emerged. The themes were colour coded and highlighted on transcripts to provide visual record of themes. The interviews were semi-structured and face to face. The time of each interview was approximately one to one and half hours. This allowed the interviewee to develop or introduce a new theme if they wished. As interviewees were selected from those who consented to be interviewed. on the questionnaire this made the sample purposive as those interviewed are likely to be interested in aspects of the study and in sharing their opinions. It was also purposive in that as the focus is collaboration it was important to ensure headteachers were included within the sample. As the literature argues the style of leadership can influence how and if collaboration within the team takes place. Where possible more than one person within the school was interviewed to provide different viewpoints of the collaboration within the school. The choice of school was also be a purposive sample.

The sample of fifteen interviewees was selected to provide a range of senior leader's perceptions on collaborative practice within a primary school. The sample is a broad

sample in that there is a similar number from each of the roles identified in the questionnaires as senior leadership (headteacher, deputy/assistant headteacher and coordinator). These fifteen interviewees from five schools represent different contexts giving breadth and a greater range of possible perceptions within this study. Of the fifteen interviewed eleven are female and four male.

Five of the sample are headteachers (two male and three female). This enabled me to ascertain their influence on collaboration Five are either deputy headteachers or assistant headteachers (all are female). Deputies work closely with the head so I wanted to see if their views on collaboration supported those given by the head of the school. The remaining five are coordinators (two male and three female). Although all the schools are primary (this being the research focus) the context represents a mixture of the type of schools within the LA with two of the schools situated in a mixed socio-economic area. Of the others one has a socio-economic background above average the other two being in areas of social disadvantage (see Appendix 13 context of interviewees).

Of these primary schools, four are one form entry and one two form entry. The smallest number on role being 183 the largest 472. Three of the headteachers have held the post between six and ten years and two have been in post for less than five years. The remaining senior leaders have been in post for less than five years.

It was important to design the interviews at this point in the research design because as identifying Cohen, et al, (2000) argue: each participant in an interview will define the situation in a particular way (p.267) and anticipated interview themes related to collaboration contributed to the analysis of the questionnaire. As the data from the

questionnaire contributed to the interview questions the link between the two methods needed to be clear and planned.

The interview was recorded and a transcript made. The transcript itself is only one way of seeing or understanding the situation being studied – there may be others, which could change the relevance of the data collected for example a group interview could be used as some of the interviewees were from the same leadership team but for this study individual opinions may give richer data. This may not be possible in a group interview as each interviewee would have been aware of the opinions of others and not feel able to be open about their own. Another aspect of interviewing which could provide data is that of non-verbal communication, the way someone sits, or uses their voice (this however would be open to interpretation which is subjective), their body language and facial responses to questions. This data would contribute greater depth to the interview. Robson (1993) states:

> Non-verbal cues may give messages which help in understanding the verbal response, possibly changing or even, in extreme cases reversing its meaning (p.229).

As a researcher conducting the interview one of the questions which should be asked when analysing the data is whether a person, who is being interviewed, with the benefit of hindsight, unconsciously changed their perceptive not just for the interviewer but for themselves in the remembering. This is why interviewing more than one person from a school was important because other data is available to draw on to ascertain the team's perspective on collaboration. As the interviews are in one LA and some in the same school, this contributes to the reliability of the study. A set of interview questions based on themes identified from the literature review and questionnaire data were designed in advance. The interviews were to be semi-structured to allow flexibility for the interviewee to develop answers. This allows questions to be added if needed to probe or refine answers.

Robson (1993) suggests there are three types of interviews: Fully structured, where the questions are set similar to a questionnaire except the researcher asks the questions. The structured interview would have restricted the data to be collected. It is an important aspect of this study that people were encouraged to talk openly about the senior leadership team and how collaboration raised standards. The unstructured interview enabled the conversation to probe more into the person's thinking and development. However, this may not have allowed a focus on my research questions to be maintained. In an unstructured interview the interviewer knows the areas he/she is researching but enables these to develop in the course of the interview. As Robson (1993) writes:

The interviewer is responsible for the 'dynamics' of the situation (p.279).

The questions and the interview themes for the pilot were based on the literature review, the overview of the data received in answer to the questionnaire and the strengths and areas for improvement provided by the questionnaire respondents. The pilot interview (Appendix 7) contained eighteen questions. Each of these questions sought to gather data about different aspects of the senior leadership within the primary school.

Having designed the questions to be asked a pilot interview was arranged with a colleague, who was not a senior leadership team member, but is a middle leader. As interviews were to be recorded in order to accurately analyse data the pilot interview was taped. This was to identify any issues which might arise when using a tape machine. The analysis of the transcripts were 'thematic'. This allowed the themes to emerge from the data collected. The literature review was linked to the analysis where it supported emerging themes.

Following the pilot interview the interviewee made suggestions for improving both the format and the questions (Appendix 8). Questions were then refined to incorporate the

given suggestions. The structure of the interview was altered from 18 questions to themes each with a small number of questions. At this stage the themes were chosen to reflect the research questions, the literature and the questionnaire responses (Appendix 9).

Teamwork/collaboration:

- Understanding of collaboration. Skills or attitudes which may result in successful collaboration.
- Extent and adoption of collaboration – the value seen in collaboration and examples of collaborative working.

Senior leadership teams' contribution to collaborative process for school improvement:

- Facilitating teacher commitment rather than compliance to collaboration.
- Collaboration in decision making process. How are decisions made, communicated and discussed with staff.

Collaborative process – achieving change for improvement through collaboration:

- focusing on the leadership of teams;
- professional learning community;
- motivate staff to collaborate and engage in professional development;
- collaborative practice – actions/drivers/barriers.

Reflection on the collaborative processes:

- what has worked/not worked and why;
- self awareness and confidence;
- leadership team developing their own academic skills.

The final question allowed interviewees to identify challenges that face schools and who supports them in the collaborative process.

The interviews were arranged at a time and date that was convenient to the interviewees. This was achieved by visiting the interviewees at their schools so that I could introduce myself to them and explain what my study involved prior to the interview. They agreed that they would be able to give me an hour to an hour and half for the interview. It was important to indicate the timing before interviewing as this would allow the interviewee to set aside enough time for the interview. When I arrived to interview I reiterated the purpose of my research and the confidentiality of the interview and should they wish to withdraw at any time that would be respected. Each interviewee signed a consent form (Appendix 10). I also gained their permission to tape the interview and take notes reiterating that both would remain confidential. In addition to the tape recorder, a note book was also taken so that reminder prompts could be used when transcribing the tape. I had written the themes down to ensure that each interview followed the same semi-structured process.

Robson (1993) gives a conventional sequence to follow:

1. the introduction
2. warm up
3. the main body of the interview
4. cool off
5. closure (p.234).

Although I adhered to the questions designed because I had chosen to undertake semi-structured interviews the flexibility meant that interviewees could expand and answer the question in their own way.

The data was gathered using semi-structured interviews involving 5 headteachers, 3 deputies and 7 senior leadership team people who were either assistant headteachers or coordinators (Appendix 13). Following the interview each tape was transcribed using the notes where necessary to ensure transcript was accurate.

The data from the transcript and field notes was analysed (using a matrix as previously discussed) question by question in order that all responses could be treated fairly and evaluated equally. Miles and Huberman 1994) argue that a strength of qualitative data is:

> The focus on naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings, so that we have a strong handle on what 'real life' is like (p.10).

The interviews were undertaken to gather knowledge of collaboration within the primary school and place this knowledge into context. Miles and Huberman (1994) continue their argument by focusing on analysis of the data. They define analysis as having three stages – data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing (p.10). By analysing question by question it was possible to identify recurring patterns. From these patterns it was possible to identify emerging themes. A matrix was created with interviewees at the top and themes down the side. This meant that whilst interviewees remained the same, themes as they emerged could be added to the matrix. As themes emerged ticks were placed in the appropriate boxes. These themes were also coded by colour on the transcript and the matrix to correlate to the appropriate research question. The sorting of the data onto the matrix is the data reduction stage referred to above. The matrix is the data display stage. As Miles and Huberman (1994) state both stages are 'not separate from analysis, it is part of analysis' (p.11). The matrix was important in that whilst consensus was identifiable it was also possible to identify disconfirming evidence should it appear. This was important if justice was to be given to the fifteen interviews. The interviewees were thanked for their time and

given the opportunity to receive a copy of the typed transcript before analysis. Each interviewee stated that the confidentiality promised was all they required.

Validity and Reliability

The data gathered from the questionnaire complements the interview data enabling triangulation based on the two methods used. Respondent triangulation is also used as different interviewees and respondents were used to complete questionnaires and undertake interviews.

As the sample size in this study is small it would be difficult to make generalisations based on the data collected from both questionnaires and interviews. The validity of the study is increased as two methods were used to collect data – questionnaire and interview. The analysis of sections of the questionnaire provided 'measureable' data. The remainder of the questionnaire and interviews provided data which could be compared because the same structure was presented to each respondent/interviewee. Maxwell (1992) argues 'understanding' is a more important concept than validity for qualitative research. He continues his argument stating qualitative and quantitative approaches to validity are not incompatible and there are similarities between the two approaches (p.282). Robson (1993) discussing reliability states:

> The concepts of 'internal validity', external validity' reliability and 'objectivity' should be replaced with 'credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability' (p.403).

Credibility is ensuring research is accurately described and identified. Transferability is providing a framework which can be used in the development of further studies. Dependability this is achieved by ensuring processes are clear, systematic and documented.

Confirmability is about the study itself and whether the findings relate to the data. Asking whether there is an 'audit' trail of the data.

In gathering data both at the questionnaire stage and the subsequent interview stage the purpose of the study was identified. Each section of both questionnaire and interviews informed those taking part the intention of the questions. At the interview stage the interviewees were given an opportunity to ask questions during any stage of the process. For the questionnaire a contact address and telephone number were also given to ensure the study was accessible to the respondents. The processes for gathering data at each stage were recorded and documented providing a systematic audit trail. The study by using both questionnaire and interview fulfils both methodological and respondent triangulation. The research design provides a framework for transferability of the study.

Summary

The gathering of data was in two stages – first responses to the questionnaire then the second stage being interviews. The analysis of the questionnaire identified the themes for the interview questions. The questionnaire, as stated earlier, was sent to senior leaders in primary schools in a Midland's LA. They were coded so that the respondents in each school, completing the questionnaire, could only be identified by me thus ensuring confidentiality and anonymity. I however, needed to know the school so that I could interview a sample of the respondents from selected schools to explore questions arising from the data and also triangulate findings. The triangulation I used was methodological triangulation:

> Using the same method on different occasions or different methods on the same object of study (Cohen, et al 2001, p.113).

I used different methods, questionnaire and interview. The interviews explored further issues raised by the questionnaire.

There were other methodologies that could have been used one being action research, but in that my role of researcher would have been influenced by my own perception of senior leadership teams and may have been compromised by the fact that my role is middle leader within the school. The role undertaken in the chosen methodology allowed me to be objective for the questionnaire where the only contact was the questionnaire itself. However whilst I did not have a strong position in the school for the interviews there was the probability of being influenced by the questionnaire response and whether or not I know the interviewee.

Ethics

The BERA Ethical Guidelines were adopted at its Annual General Meeting on 28th August 1992 and revised in 2004. The Association state:

> That all educational research should be conducted within an ethic of respect for
>
> - the person
> - knowledge
> - democratic values
> - the quality of education research
> - academic freedom (p.5).

To ensure that I adhered to the guidelines, both on the questionnaire and before interviewing I informed participants of why I was collecting the data. Also that I would

make available a summary of my findings and advise them of any likely publication of the findings.

- Consent –ensured that participants understood what informed consent means.

  I ensured that questionnaires could only be identified by myself or my supervisor for the purpose of ascertaining who would be interviewed. At the interview stage I obtained consent prior to the interview. Following transcript I ensured that each interviewee agreed with the transcription and still consented to the data being used. The participants or interviewee were informed that the data will be used for research purposes. The participants were informed of the right to withdraw from a study at any time.

- Trust - I was honest and open with all participants answering questions and concerns and shared relevant data with them (whilst protecting the identity of other people who participated in my research).

- Confidentiality – I ensured only I could identify questionnaires and interview transcripts. When writing the analysis the schools were anonymous.

- Relative status relationships – The data and result of the study will belong to myself as researcher but available to relevant interested bodies including participants.

I ensured that the participants understood what informed consent meant and each interviewee signed and dated a research interview consent form (Appendix 10). I did however, also make it clear that whilst I would take appropriate precautions to protect confidentiality of participants in certain situations anonymity may not be achieved.

Finally the data and result of the study would belong to myself, as researcher, but available to relevant interested bodies including the participants themselves.

I will inform participants of when and how I will use data collected, I will also advise them of likely publication of findings.

Weaknesses in Design

The study was designed to identify whether the collaborative process of the senior leadership team in primary schools impacted on raising standards. The data was gathered by questionnaire and interviews, this being analysed to answer the research questions. The questionnaire response provided a relatively small sample for this study. However, whilst the sample cannot be considered representative of the LA the data is important as it provides an understanding of how collaboration in primary schools is viewed giving a base for further study. This is an initial study into how collaboration contributes to school improvement. Within the primary school collaboration takes place across different groups, which in a large primary school could involve a number of staff. Whilst perceptions of all staff are important to understanding collaboration the team initiating the collaborative process, based on literature and professional observation, is the senior management team. The senior management teams have responsibility for the direction the school takes to create school improvement. They are also the team that are accountable for introducing both external and internal initiatives across the school. Their collaboration identifies the processes needed to move the school forward. At some stage of the collaborative process other staff will become involved and more research would be needed to identify how this affects the collaborative process, however this is beyond the scope of this thesis. Focus on senior management teams rather than a 'cross section' of all teaching staff places some limitations on the study both for findings and conclusions. A limitation of using a

questionnaire to identify themes was the small response. As questionnaires were sent to all headteachers in primary schools within the LA it was not possible to ascertain which senior leaders were given the opportunity to answer the questionnaire. For example one headteacher returned all questionnaires stating 'staff do not have time to complete these'. Of those who received the questionnaire and choose not to respond again the reason was not identified. The themes for the interviews therefore reflect issues identified by the questionnaires returned.

The follow-up data collected is based on interviews with senior leaders. Their perceptions were placed into the context of the literature on collaboration, school improvement and senior leadership teams, together with professional experience and is considered a valid contribution because the senior leaders' perceptions of collaboration contribute to a better understanding of this process within primary schools.

The interview data is limited in that no supporting data, for example structured observation field notes, was gathered and is based on the perceptions of those senior leaders involved in the collaborative process. As no further data was collected from staff that are not part of the leadership team the study cannot identify whether the actions of the senior leaders reflect the perceptions recorded. Within the interview senior leaders reflected on their collaborative role within the school this could be a limitation to the data collected because whilst as researcher you accept the 'truth' of the information the interviewee's reflection may again be different to the reality. Self perception data can be problematic because it may be limited to the situation the interviewee is experiencing at the time of interview. This perception could be different if the interview took place at a different time. Some authors caution about 'changing mind' and 'misunderstandings' however perception studies are numerous and constitute an accepted approach within literature for example Ribbins and

Marland (1994) and Tomlinson et al (1999). As this is an initial study into collaboration of senior leaders' sufficient data was collected using questionnaires and interviews to validate perceptions within this current study.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have identified the wider frameworks of research. Particularly Gunter and Ribbins (2002) 'five knowledge domains' and Wallace and Poulson (2003) five intellectual projects for studying the social world. Within the section philosophical approach I looked at where my own research lies within the major paradigms and identified the focus of my research strategy. The research methodology, methods and management focused on the quantitative and qualitative approaches I have used within my research. Next the questionnaire/interview design and analysis was discussed. The analysis of the questionnaire was used to identify emerging themes to inform interview questions. Finally validity and reliability were presented together with ethics underpinning my data collection and research design being identified.

The next chapter will present the overall findings from the questionnaire and subsequent interviewees with the study sample.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF OVERALL FINDINGS

Chapter four presents the findings from the questionnaire and the subsequent interviews undertaken with senior leaders in primary schools. The chapter is in six parts the introduction indentifies the demographic data of the sample placing the questionnaire and interviews into context of the study. Data collected is presented in relation to each of the five research questions used to form and direct this research study.

- *(A) What impact do senior management teams have on developing a culture of collaboration for improvement and change in order to support teaching and learning within primary schools?*
- *(B) How do senior leaders contribute to the collaborative process and ensure it impacts on teaching and learning?*
- *(C) How does reflective practice enhance the use of collaboration to improve teaching and learning?*
- *(D) How do senior leaders involve staff in the collaborative process for improving teaching and learning and in so doing accept they also are accountable?*

The final part in this chapter will summarise all findings which have emerged from the data these will then be discussed in the next chapter.

Part 1 - Introduction

The purpose of the study is to identify the extent to which collaboration of senior leaders takes place in primary schools together with emergent links with school improvement. The structure of the senior leadership team may be different in each primary school. The leadership of the headteacher may influence who is on the team and how the team

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collaborates. The role of the senior leadership team is to share leadership with the headteacher. Senior leadership team members may be appointed for their expertise in subjects or experience. This is reflected in Table 5 (Appendix 12). The questionnaire was distributed to all the primary schools in the Midland LA (78), as identified in chapter 3, the overall response rate, after two reminder letters, was 26 per cent this represents twenty schools from which replies were received. The total of individual respondents was thirty one. The questionnaire (Appendix 4) was designed to provide information that would put senior leaders into the context of their schools. Chapter 3 identifies the structure of each section of the questionnaire.

The structure of senior leadership teams in primary schools varies from school to school. It might be rigid, that is the same people meet and make decisions, or flexible, that is where different people contribute to the decision making process when their particular knowledge and expertise is required to reach effective decisions (Appendix 12, Table 7).

The team may have been created by the headteacher or inherited. The number of people on the team may also be different according to the size of the school (Appendix 12, Table 6). This first section of the questionnaire was designed to take all these factors into account so that the analysis reflects the composition of the team at the time of the questionnaire. The broad breadth of the sample responses to the questionnaire is demonstrated in Appendix 12 (gender, age, length of service on SLT, team size and structure). This variety of perceptions is used to inform this first part of the study and inform interviews identifying emergent themes related to collaboration. The second part of the study, interviews, draws on the emergent themes to develop the answers the research questions.

Whilst it would be valuable to research the influences that gender, age, length of service together with the team size and structure might have on collaboration, these aspects are not

developed in this study. These aspects could however be a focus for future research into collaboration. In order to show the degree of agreement or difference between respondents to the questionnaire and the data from the interviews the words, *majority*, *some, minority* and *few* have been used. *Majority* indicates 75 per cent and above, *some* indicates 60 to 74 per cent, *minority* indicates 40 to 59 per cent and *few* less than 39 per cent. *All* equates to the total sample.

Summary of Introduction

To summarise, the questionnaire, the responses to which would inform the interviews, was distributed to all the primary schools in the Midland LA (78), the overall response rate after two reminder letters was 26 per cent this represents twenty schools from which replies were received. The total of individual respondents was thirty one. The questionnaire responses identified information that enabled senior leaders to be put into the context of their school (Appendix 12), including how they collaborate and function as a team also the culture of the school (see chapter 3 for questionnaire design). Of those who responded to the questionnaire 68 per cent are female and 32 per cent male. Fifteen respondents to the questionnaire were interviewed. These interviewees reflected the breadth of the sample. Of those interviewed 73 per cent were female and 26 per cent male of those who responded to the questionnaire the two largest age groups are 26-35 and 46-55 years, with 61per cent serving on the senior leadership team for between six months and five years. Of those interviewed two have been headteachers for between six months and five years, and five headteachers for up to ten years. The majority of teams operate with a permanent structure of 4-5 people in the team. The choice of sample for interview is discussed in chapter 3 (Appendix 13).

Data to emerge from the questionnaire and associated interview questions relevant to each

research question is presented below for research questions A-D. As the data is from two

sources – the questionnaire and the interviews it is presented separately (chapter 5 will

discuss these together).

The questionnaire section and relevant questions, for each part, will be presented followed

by a table showing responses together with an explanation of the table. The themes to

emerge from this data being used to inform interview questions (Appendix 9).

Following the questionnaire section analysis the interview data relating to each theme,

relevant to the appropriate research question, will be presented. Each part will be concluded

with a summary of the overall data for the appropriate research question. The themes,

which have emerged initially from the questionnaire responses and explored in interviews,

are:

- leadership approach to collaboration

- the collaborative process

- reflection on the collaborative process

- leadership and collaboration for school improvement

Within the above themes those involved in this study identified sub-themes which

contributed to successful collaboration:

- decision making

- accountability

- teamwork

- motivation

- networking/partnership

- reflective practice

- school development plan

- school effectiveness

Part 2 – Research Question A:

Questionnaire - Section 2a relates to Individual Roles:

Table 8 data refers to the relevant questions from section 2a:

Q1: I am aware of my leadership approach and how it contributes both to my role in senior leadership team and as a leader of other staff.

Q4: I am aware of factors which enable my staff to perform well or may hinder performance.

Q5: As a senior leader I am able to motivate my staff to achieve agreed goals.

Q9: I am prepared to listen to ideas and present them to senior leadership team.
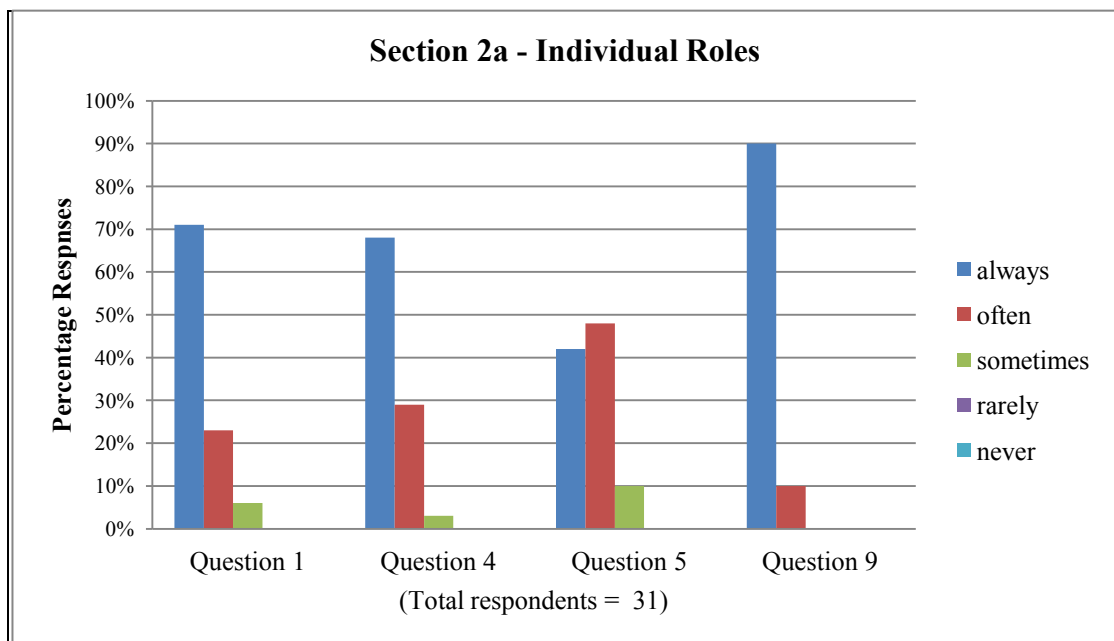
Table 8: Questions in Section 2a

Table 8 shows that respondents are prepared to listen to ideas from staff and present them to other senior leaders. This may suggest an underlying willingness to collaborate with colleagues. However, whilst they may be prepared to enable colleagues to give opinions

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and suggestions, responses to questions 5 show that they are less certain how to motivate staff to achieve goals set by senior leaders. This could become a barrier to collaboration.

Questionnaire Section 2b relates to team roles:

Table 9 data refers to the relevant questions from section 2b of the questionnaire:

Q5: We are confident in the use of a range of leadership styles.

Q7: We use professional procedures for team meetings.

Q10: We as team members have professional skills to maintain collaborative processes.

Q14: We know the strengths and weaknesses of staff and pupils.
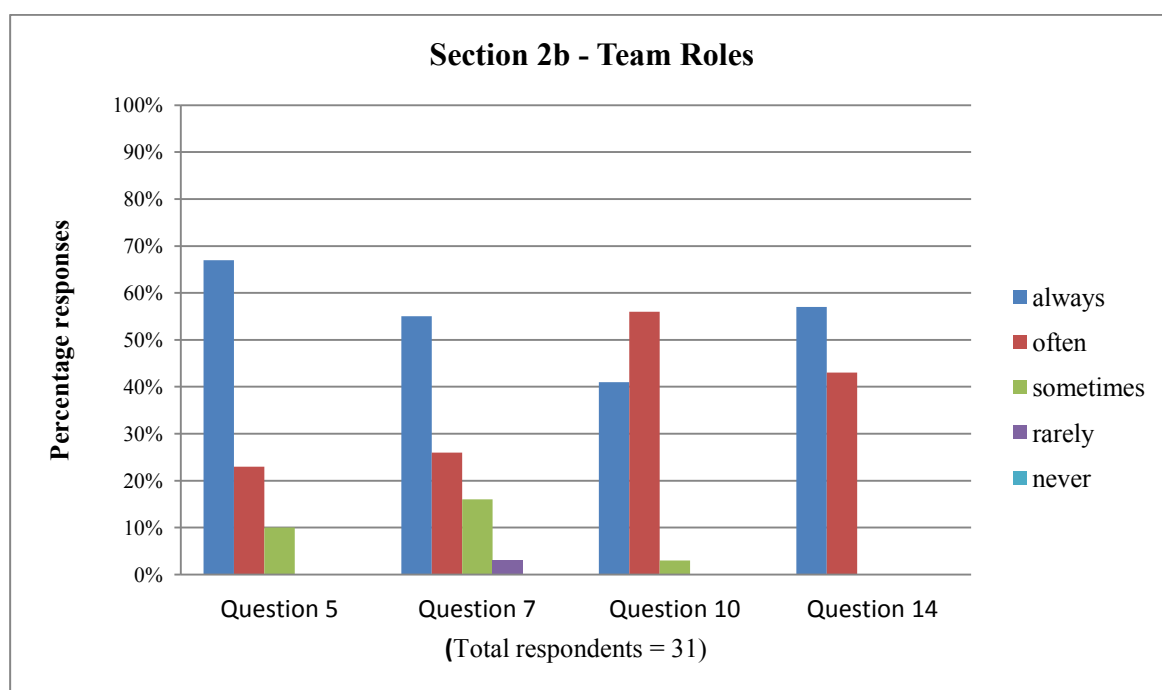
Table 9: Questions in Section 2b

Table 9 shows that overall responses to these questions are positive. However if the often and sometimes columns are taken together the responses from questions 7 and 10 are not so positive. This section asked respondents to reflect as team members rather than individuals – question 7 and question 10 responses indicate that respondents are less positive about the team reviewing and reflecting regularly on their performance and having the skills to work

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effectively together as a team. It also shows that whilst team meetings are an important element of collaboration they as respondents consider there are elements which could be developed professionally. It is unclear from the questionnaire data which areas affect the professionalism and collaboration within the meeting; however data from interviews will be used to identify some of the concerns expressed.

Questionnaire Section 3: (responses were qualitative - number in the bracket is the respondent's identity code)

Q8: When goals, targets or other information is communicated to the staff is the process explained so that they have an overview of the task and how they will be contributing.

Communication is an important aspect within any organisation, particularly in a school where there are different roles contributing to the raising of attainment. The majority response to this question was 'yes'. Some respondents expanded on this by indicating how they achieved the communication. 'at staff meetings' (20) 'give the big picture, their role, or role and why' (9). One respondent indicated that 'opportunities given to ask further questions' (24). The overall responses show that respondents are confident that that as senior leaders they communicate well with the staff, explaining to them both the process and how they (the staff) will contribute.

Q10: How does the senior leadership team ensure continuing progression with access skills such as literacy, numeracy and ICT?

The focus of this question is the continued professional development not only of the senior leadership team but also of other staff members. There were an equal number of respondents who identified professional development and in service training as a way of ensuring staff were enabled to continue to develop as teachers. Other respondents linked the

attaining of skills into their SIP. Monitoring and observations were also indentified by most respondents as the process for checking school and pupil improvement. All respondents indicated they had processes in place to ensure staff received professional development and they, as senior leaders, used monitoring procedures to ensure progression.

Questionnaire Section 4 – School Culture

Table 10 refers to data and relevant questions from section 4:

Q1: There is a shared goal 'we know where we're going'.

Q3: We have high expectations of pupils.

Q5: We aim to improve practice but understand that it is not necessary or wise to develop everything all of the time.

Q6: There is a fundamental belief that learning never stops; there is always more to learn and pupils can only learn alongside adults who learn.
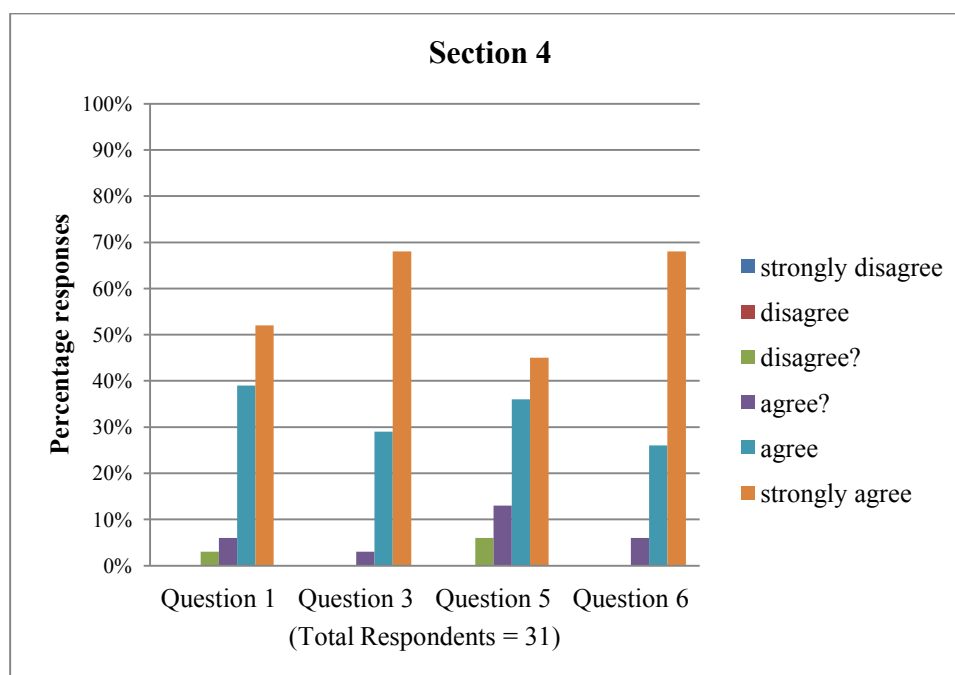
Table 10: Questions in Section 4

Table 10 shows respondents consider that contributory cultural aspects relating to high expectations and shared goals that lead to effective learning are an important element of collaboration and teaching and learning. For questions 1 and 3 half of the respondents strongly agree there are shared goals and high expectations. The others show less certainty, it may be that some goals are shared and there are times when the leaders have high expectations but conversely there may be times when the goals are not shared and expectations are lower. This theme of accountability will be explored in interviews and is discussed both in the chapter 2 and chapter 5.

Q5 shows that respondents agree that the aim is to improve practice but understand that it is not necessary or wise to develop everything all of the time. It might be the culture of the school is such that every initiative is taken on regardless of whether it is appropriate, or what other initiatives are being introduced. Again this is an aspect which will be explored in interviews.

Questionnaire section 5

This section gave respondents the opportunity to think about strengths and areas they wanted to improve within the school. As stated in chapter 3 respondents presented judgements relating to their own school. The data in this section is presented as qualitative data. The number in brackets refers to the identity code of the respondent.

For the headteacher's leadership to develop a culture of collaboration which leads to improvement and change respondents identified shared vision and good role models as important. They also identified leaders who had 'the ability to convert theory to practice at all levels' (4) as a strength of leadership. Areas for development focused on ensuring a

consistency across school in practice with focus being placed on fewer priorities 'need to ensure new ideas/initiatives are introduced at a pace that all concerned are happy with' (12)

The majority of respondents identified the importance of good leadership by the headteacher was critical to developing a culture of collaboration which could impact on improving teaching and learning in the primary school.

From the questionnaire data emerged the theme of leadership being important to developing a culture for collaboration. The following findings draw on interview responses related to this theme.

Interview data relevant to research question A: (the number in the bracket is the interviewee's identity code)

One of the emergent themes from the questionnaire analysis was leadership both of the headteacher and senior leadership team. The focus of this theme being the importance of leadership developing a culture for collaboration and improvement and change.

The majority of the interviewees identified the importance of building a team where the senior leaders were motivated not only to move the school forward but also to share in the vision or 'bigger picture' envisaged by the headteacher.

> My role is very much giving the big picture overview. Not necessarily doing the task. But whoever does the task is accountable to you (06 School B).

Whilst interviewees agree that leadership facilitate the collaboration of staff there are differing views on how this can be achieved and in some cases it is suggested that it is not always possible. The following extracts show differing interviewee viewpoints. For example distributive leadership is important as it is through distributive leadership that

collaboration may take place:

> It's about distributive leadership so the value of it is everyone is working together. If you are wanting to move the school forward and the vision of the school forward you have got to have this shared vision (10 School D).

A second view is collaboration may not be achieved because of the individuality of team members can be a barrier:

> I would say the senior leadership team are, diverse is the word I am looking for. Individual strengths are not particularly well harnessed. Certain members have got the ability to strategic forward plan, and it's not always used effectively by the team or distributed to the rest of the team (02 School A).

A third view is enabling collaboration to be more effective:

> It is about making the team work together. So this is a shared area for development not your (HT) problem. It's about allowing people to have a voice as well (09 School D).

However there are also times when these views affect effective collaboration:

> Most of the time we agree but big day to day decisions it's me. Sometimes I haven't got time to go and get opinions. It's hard ones usually where it has to be spur of the moment (11 School E).

The majority of headteacher interviewees responded positively to wanting to encourage a culture of collaboration however only a minority included themselves within the collaborative process. There is an underlying theme of the headteacher being the person who takes ultimate responsibility for raising standards and ensuring the school if not only effective but provides 'good value'.

Summary of Findings for Research Question A

The majority of both respondents and interviewees identify that if the headteacher's leadership is to develop a culture of collaboration which leads to improvement and change then sharing their vision and being a good role model is important.

Consistency across school practice with focus on fewer priorities also appears to support the development of collaboration. Respondents and interviewees indicate one of the elements of collaboration is being prepared to listen to ideas from staff one of the places this is achieved is in staff or team meetings. The data shows half the respondents consider goals are always shared but the other half indicate the sharing of goals does not always take place. This may affect collaboration within the team, as without a common goal the senior leadership team may have no direction to focus on. All the respondents identified the SIP as an important tool in the collaborative process. The contribution to the plan is different in each school with the headteacher, in the majority of schools, identifying what should be included in the plan.

The study shows the majority of the interviewees identified that for collaboration to be successful team members should be aware of the 'vision' of the headteacher to move the school forward. The views on the success of collaboration to achieve the vision vary. The majority of headteacher interviewees indicated that collaboration within the senior leadership team is encouraged. Only a minority included themselves in the collaboration, the others indicating that as they are ultimately responsible for the school and as such keep 'a distance' from these collaborations.

Whilst all respondents and interviewees agree reflection is important, this practice varies from school to school. Monitoring, school development plans and school evaluation (SEF)

are considered to be effective ways to ensure collaboration is taking place. The majority of respondents indicated that reflection on an individual's collaboration rather than the collaborative process of the team is the practice at present. This may inhibit collaboration as although collaboration is expected at the team level judgement is made on an individual basis.

Part 3 - Research Question B:

Issues raised are how to motivate staff to collaborate, and how to create effective collaboration. An aspect of motivation is staff considering themselves to be valued members of the team. The senior leadership team are usually the people who initiate the collaborative process and as such they are responsible for ensuring the staff are valued. Q12 in section 2a asked respondents if they as part of the senior leadership team felt valued. Table 11 refers to the questionnaire data and relevant questions from section 2a.

Questionnaire: Section 2a Individual Roles:

Q12: I feel a valued member of the senior leadership team.
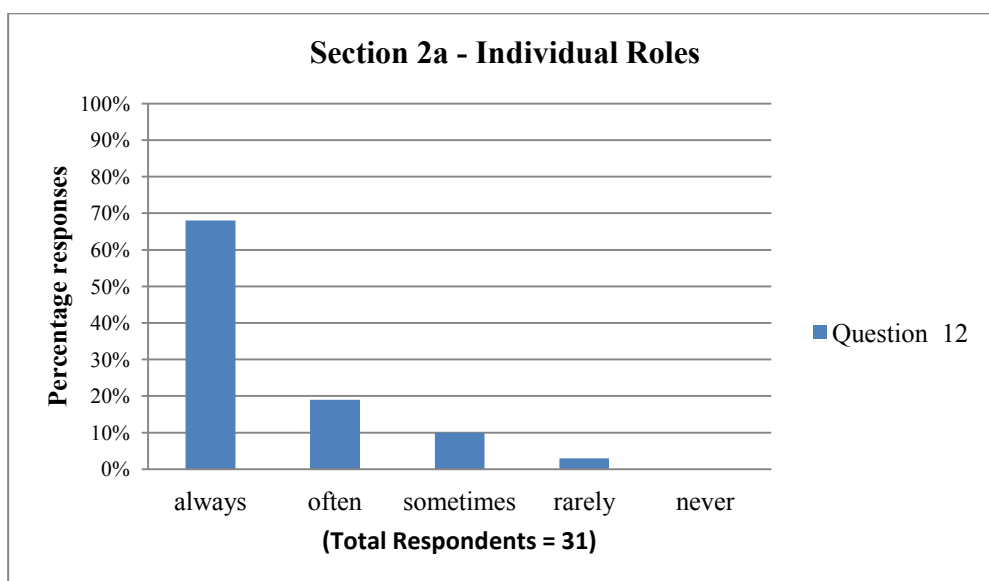
Table 11: Questions in Section 2a

Table 11 shows over half of the respondents feel a valued member of the senior leadership team. If the often, sometimes and rarely columns are added together it would indicate that some teams have members who may not feel valued. This may indicate a continued feeling of being undervalued or it may just be that on the day the questionnaire was completed they were experiencing some difficulties within their team role. Whatever the reason it may possibly impact on collaborative practice within the school.

Questionnaire: Section 2b Team Roles

Table 12 refers to the questionnaire data and relevant questions from section 2b:

Q1: We know our goals and how to achieve them.

Q11: We as team members communicate decisions to our staff effectively ensuring they are aware of the goals and how to achieve them.

Q12: We are willing to listen to ideas from outside the team and revise a team goal if conditions for the school, team or an individual change.
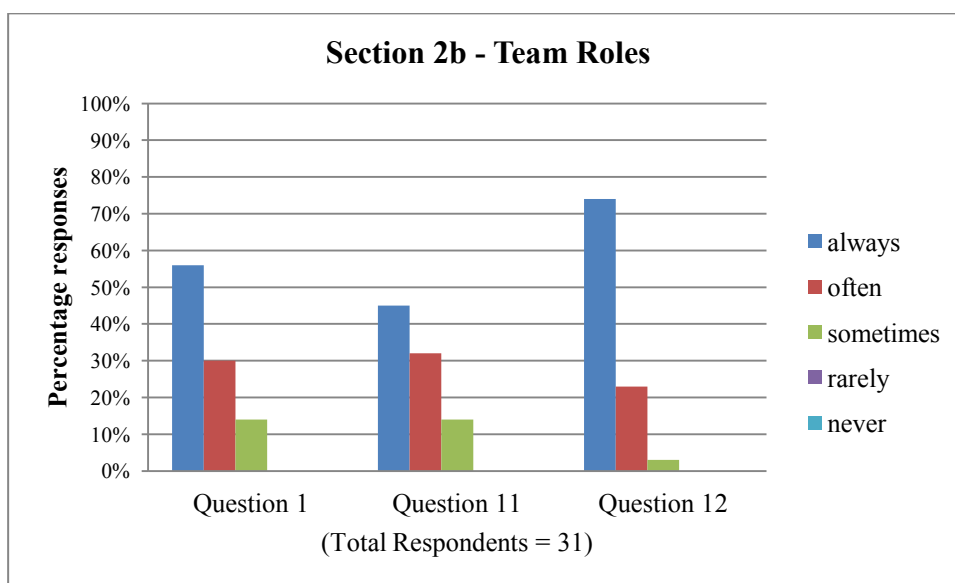
Table 12: Questions in Section 2b

Table 12 shows respondents consider they are willing to listen to ideas and revise goals if necessary. Over half responded positively to the question of knowing what the goals are and how to achieve them. If the often and sometimes columns are added together almost half of them are not as positive indicating that either the goals are not clear or how to achieve them is not thought through. Q11 shows that this lack of clarity may be reflected in communicating decisions to staff. This would impact on collaboration in that without clear goals and how to achieve them collaboration may become difficult.

Section 3 - Questionnaire Section 3: (responses in this section were qualitative- number in the bracket is the respondent's identity code)

Q7: How often do subject co-ordinators attend meetings to update the senior leadership team on progress?

The co-ordinators are the link between the senior leadership team and other staff members, thus keeping senior leaders informed may be an important element in raising attainment. There were a wide range of responses to this question from 'never' (06) to 'Key coordinators at senior leadership team meeting' (12). Respondents indicated that whilst co-ordinators where not at all meetings they were asked to attend when it was considered to be applicable, for example after monitoring had taken place. Of the respondents who did not ask co-ordinators to attend meetings one answer to the question was that updates were achieved 'through systems of communication' (05) and another 'usually report back to head/deputy who passes information on to whole staff or senior leadership team – whichever is appropriate' (08). Both answers implying that any consultation was indirect.

Q9: How does the senior leadership team ensure that the school constructively engages with change as a challenge, while retaining a healthy scepticism of change for change's sake?

Schools are continually inundated with new initiatives, these can be externally imposed or self imposed. The respondents were given this question as an opportunity to reflect on changes in their own schools, and consider whether these changes were introduced to improve teaching and learning or were they unnecessary changes. Within the interviews this was expanded to identify the effect changes may have on collaboration. As with question 7 there was a wide range of responses as to how change was handled by the senior leadership team (the number in brackets shows the identity code of the questionnaire respondents). These responses ranged from 'keeping up with new information' (16) to 'being involved in development of change with time given to change, together with explanations and staff meetings' (23). The SIP is used as a way of engaging with change, with an equal number of respondents indicating that discussion or training takes place. Some respondents indicate that they consider change needs to be planned for following monitoring, or the introduction of government initiatives. These are introduced first by trialling ideas, then introducing them slowly with support and discussion. In contrast to this, one respondent indicated that it is 'the leadership style of the headteacher' that ensures the school engages with change.

Q13: Please identify any areas or factors which you feel contribute towards raising standards.

The purpose of this question was to give respondents the opportunity to provide any personal comments about how they, as senior leaders, raised attainment. The responses

included elements of collaboration although within the questionnaire this is referred to as teamwork. The responses ranged from using monitoring and assessment processes to supporting and motivating staff. The following emerging themes received equal response – target setting, discussion and vision, accountability, leadership and finally motivation. For this question only one respondent indicated the SIP which was interesting as this plan is referred to in responses to other questions in this section.

Questionnaire Section 4 – culture

Table 13 refers to the questionnaire data and relevant questions from section 4:

Q2: There is a belief that everyone can and must make a difference.

Q4: We collaborate together for the success of the school as a whole.
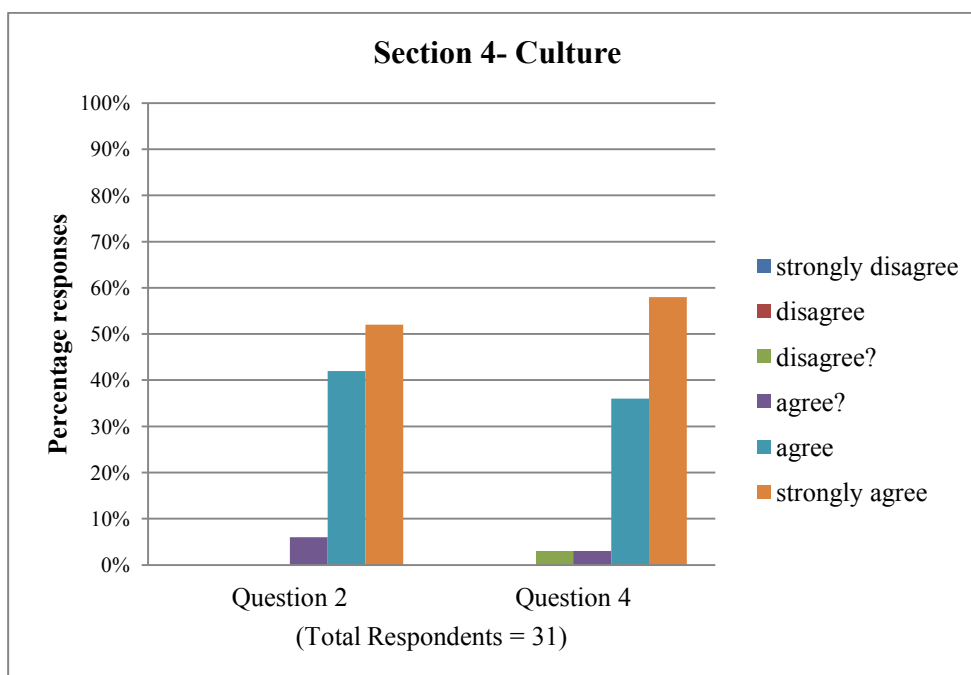
Table 13: Questions in Section 4

Table 13 shows if the strongly agree and agree columns are added together the majority of respondents indicate the culture of their school is such that it is considered that each person

can make a difference. Of the respondents few indicate that within their school this culture of 'everyone is important' is not evident. There are indications that all can make a difference the respondents are less confident each person collaborates for the success of the school as a whole. This might have a less than positive effect on collaborative practice and how it is working within the school.

Questionnaire Section 5

The analysis of this section is qualitative the number in brackets refers to the identity code of the questionnaire respondents. This section asked respondents to identify strengths of the team reflecting on how they could improve as a team. The majority of the respondents indicated the strength of the senior leaders is they support each other and all contribute to enable the team to be successful 'Everyone is equally valued' (10). They also indicated they are proactive, setting clear objectives and sharing goals 'it's all about the pupils' (18). The element of collaboration that half of the respondents indicated needed to develop was improving communication between the team and other staff members. As this is central to collaboration this may indicate collaboration is poor or needs to be improved. The theme of communication is also identified in the interviews. The respondents also indicated that it would be beneficial for staff to understand the process the senior leadership team go through to make decisions related to improving teaching and learning 'To maintain everyone's confidence as new teaching skills e.g. teacher of the future are implemented' (10 School D).

From the data emerged the theme that different elements may need to be in place for collaboration to be successful. The following findings draw on interview responses related to this emergent theme.

Interview data relevant for research question B: (the number in brackets is the interviewee's code)

The second emerging theme was the collaborative process. Respondents to the questionnaire identified different aspects of collaboration but the extent and adoption of collaboration was not clear from responses. Included in the interview questions, therefore, were collaborative processes within the school. The value seen in collaboration and examples of collaborative working.

All interviewees identified collaboration as an important issue. Each school has different forms of collaboration. The primary schools which are small indicate that collaboration takes two forms – structured and unstructured. An example of structured is meetings, unstructured is conversations between staff as necessary. The primary schools that are larger indicate that collaboration is structured as a way of encouraging collaboration to take place between staff. Although each school may have a different collaborative process the majority have structures in place to share the findings of the collaboration.

Communication is cited as an important element within collaboration together with openness and transparency. The majority of interviewees identified collaboration between schools as valuable for developing collaboration within their own schools:

> I think it is vital not just collaboration in school but between schools as well, (networking) the job has become so vast you can't have all the answers (06 School B).

Another issue identified by the majority of the interviewees is the importance of

encouraging collaboration by identifying how partnerships or teams within the school are

formed:

> There are always options of pairing them with other people initially but then you
> have to look at the personalities of the people involved because styles of leadership
> often vary drastically (02 School A).

All interviewees identified whilst the collaboration process is an important element within

schools to raising standards of teaching and learning it is not always achieved:

> If you have got someone who is going off as a loose then you either have to stop
> them completely or give them free reign to do what they want (02 School A).

Summary of Findings for Research Question B

The majority of respondents to the questionnaire indicated that within their school there is a

culture of valuing people and each person is important and can make a difference to the

collaborative process. They suggest whilst each person is important they do not consider

that each person works for the success of the school as a whole. The remaining respondents

indicated there are times when they feel undervalued both as an individual and as a team

member. No details of the reason for feeling undervalued were given on the questionnaire

but this view may hinder the collaborative process. This is seen as a leadership

responsibility to ensure support is given to those who do collaborate, valuing their

contribution, and support those who are not collaborating to by encouraging change of

attitude.

Meetings are identified by all respondents as a way of informing staff of new initiatives

which are introduced. The majority of responses indicated communication between senior

leaders and staff may be an issue particularly when setting goals and identifying steps to

achieving them. Half the respondents indicate goals are not always clearly defined. This may impact on the quality of the collaboration as there may be no common understanding of the task. The SIP is identified by all respondents as part of the process of introducing change although input varies from school to school.

The majority of the respondents and interviewees indicated that if collaboration and raising of standards is to take place it is important for the senior leadership team to communicate decisions and clear goals. The theme of decision making and communication will be expanded in chapter 5. Time to collaborate with colleagues on how to move forward and then time to reflect is also considered important.

A minority of respondents indicated that it would be beneficial and improve collaboration if staff understood the processs the senior leadership team go through to make decisions particularly those related to improving teaching and learning. The remaining respondents did not identify the senior leadership team process as being important to subsequent collaboration.

Part 4 - Research Question C:

Questionnaire Section 2a Individual roles:

Table 14 refers to the questionnaire data and relevant questions from section 2a:

Q7: I encourage reflective practice.

Q8: I ensure that success and achievement is celebrated.

Section 2a - Individual Roles
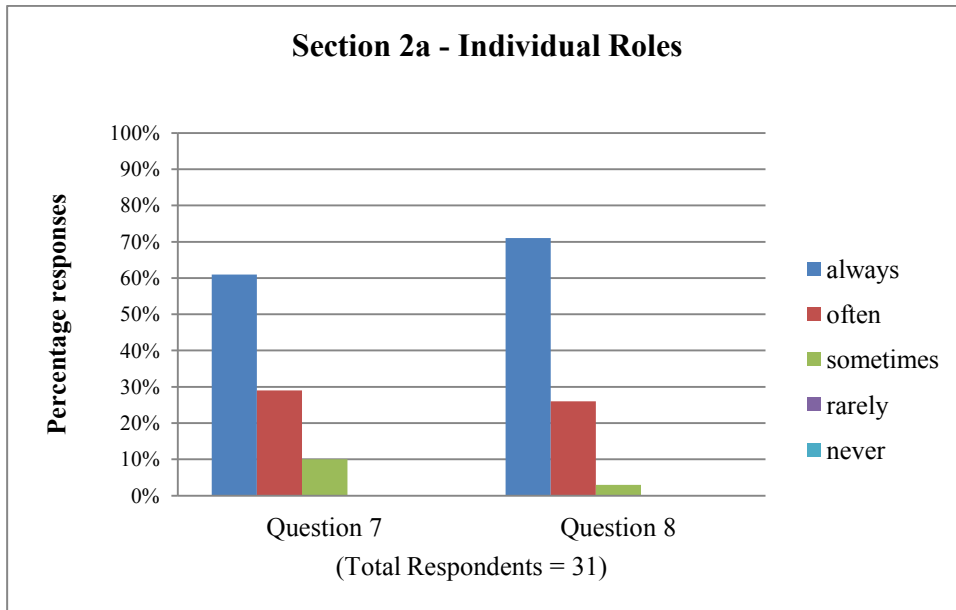
Table 14: Questions in Section 2a

Table 14 shows over half of respondents consider reflective practice together with praise is undertaken. If the often and sometimes columns are added together a minority of respondents indicate that there may be times when reflective practice may not be undertaken. Again the response to question 8 shows over half acknowledge success. If the often and sometimes columns are added together a minority of respondents indicate that success and achievement may not always be celebrated.

Questionnaire Section 2b Team Roles

Table 15 refers to the questionnaire data and relevant questions from section 2b:

Q6: We give people opportunity and time to analyse new ideas.

Q8: We reflect on team performance regularly.

Q13: We actively seek feedback from outside the team to help to evaluate team decisions.

Q15: We encourage and acknowledge success.

Section 2b - Team Roles
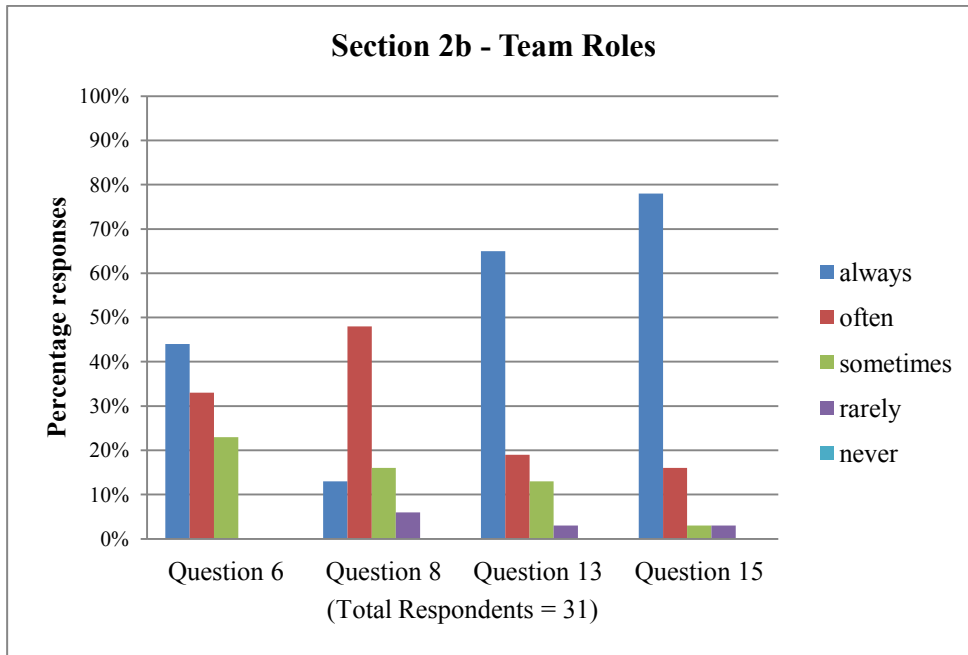
Table 15: Questions in Section 2b

Table 15 shows a positive response for questions 6 and 13 but question 8 shows a response which is not as positive. If you add the often, sometimes and rarely columns together for question 8 a large number of respondents (70 per cent) indicate that regular reviews of team performance is not undertaken. If the columns sometimes and rarely are then added 22 per cent of respondents again indicate reviews or reflection of team performance is not part of the collaboration process. The theme of reflection and its importance to collaboration and school improvement will be developed in the chapter 5. Primary schools are required to introduce new initiatives which may involve collaboration. Question 6 which asks respondents if they give time and opportunity to analyse new ideas is also linked with the theme of reflection and the response shows that if the column often and sometimes are added together approximate half of the respondents indicate people are not always given the opportunity to analyse new ideas before they are implemented. In order for people to collaborate they need to be familiar with ideas being introduced and understand why they need to be put into place.

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Questionnaire Section 3 Impact on Learning (responses were qualitative- number in the bracket is the respondent's identity code)

Q11: How does the senior leadership team ensure that all staff and pupils are clear about the goal and the success criteria?

The goal setting process is one of the ways the senior leaders can raise attainment, but they also need to identify what success looks like. Having done this the senior leadership team then needs to make sure that all who are involved in the process understand what they are being asked to achieve. The respondents indicated this understanding is communicated to staff through meetings and the SIP. They also indicate that staff share the targets with each other and the pupils and create involvement in the process 'communication, feedback on progress, involvement in initial decision making and reasoning' (9). One respondent indicated that 'dissemination leading by example' (26) was how their senior leadership team achieved the process. Of those respondents who indicated that the SIP was the process they used, some indicated that the compiling of the SIP included discussions with other staff. Others did not this might imply that it was imposed by the senior leadership team.

Questionnaire Section 4 – culture

Table 16 refers to the questionnaire data and relevant questions from section 4:
Q7: We learn by trying something new but it's ok if you don't get it right.

Q11: Criticism is viewed as an opportunity for self-improvement rather than a threat.

Section 4 - Culture
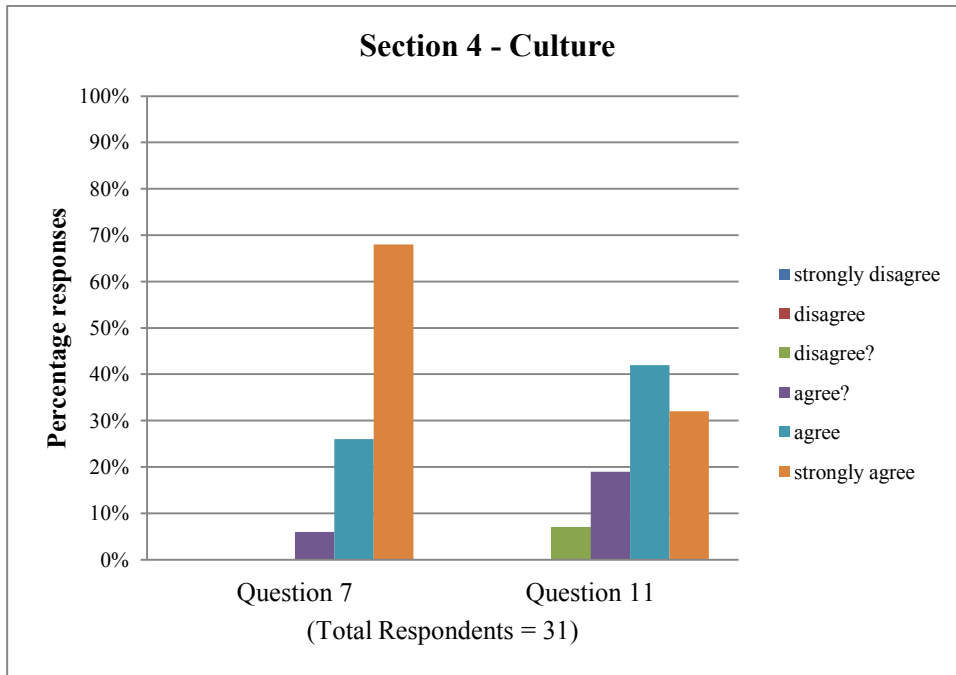
Table 16: Questions in Section 4

Table 16 shows if strongly agree and agree columns are added for question 7 the majority of respondents indicate that they are willing to try new ideas but if these are not successful then it is accepted. If column agree (?) and column agree are added together over a quarter of respondents indicate that if new ideas are unsuccessful the result may not be accepted as accurate . The response to question 11 shows some of the respondents may view criticism as constructive, whereas if the disagree (?) and agree (?) columns are added a quarter indicate that criticism is not always viewed as an opportunity for self-improvement which could indicate people feel threatened. If the column agree is also added with these two columns then more than half have occasions when criticism may not be viewed as an opportunity for self improvement.

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Questionnaire Section 5

The themes which emerge in the questionnaire are important as they inform the interview questions. The analysis of this section is qualitative the number in brackets refers to the identity code of the respondent. A matrix was created (see design chapter) to identify emerging themes. One of the themes linked to research question C is how reflective practice enhances the use of collaboration to improve teaching and learning. Few respondents identified strengths related to reflective practice. Respondents who did refer to reflective practice stated it was about understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the school. One respondent stated the team 'listen and respond to ideas and feedback '(23) another respondent stated they reflect on 'knowledge and understanding '(30) related to teaching and learning. Several respondents identified reflection in aspects of school leadership, and teaching and learning as an area to be developed 'Time to develop and reflect' (13). This theme will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Reflection may be viewed as separate from collaboration and as such may not be built into the collaborative process. The following findings draws on interview responses related to reflection as part of the collaborative process.

Interview data relevant to research question C: (the number in brackets is the interviewee's code)

The next emerging theme was the reflective process. Respondents to the questionnaire identified reflective planning as an important element to collaboration, however, the extent and adoption of reflection was not clear from responses. Included in the interview questions, therefore, was how and when reflection takes place in the collaborative process.

The interview questions themselves encouraged reflection on the collaborative process. Q11 specifically asked interviewees to think about how reflective practice might enhance the collaborative process .

Whilst the majority of interviewees consider reflective practice is important and enhances the collaborative process they do not always make reflection a part of the process. This necessitates time to reflect being 'found' rather than built into the process:

> Maybe a time should be set aside for that kind of thing (reflection) but at the moment I don't really feel I have time to do that (02 School A).

> I think what you have to be careful sometimes in this job is that time goes very quickly, you sometimes haven't reflected on things (06 School B).

One of the ways this issue is overcome is by producing a school development plan for future teaching and learning and leadership of the school. Schools also now have to produce a self evaluation form which is part of the Ofsted process:

> The SEF is a big part of reflecting on how we are doing and specific areas and the SIP as well (12 School E).

The majority of those interviewed indicate that staff are involved in producing the school development plan. Interviewees indicate the self evaluation form (SEF) is compiled by the headteacher with input from the deputy headteacher. They consider the involvement of staff in the school development plan enables collaboration to take place from the beginning of the cycle:

> We get feedback from the staff and we try to involve staff in our initiative make sure they know what is in the SIP. I think that is one of our strengths (12 School E).

The other aspect of reflection identified by the interviewees is that whilst it is important to involve staff in reflection it is the senior leadership that has the responsibility for reflecting on whether the school is on track to fulfil the vision and raise the standards of all within the

school. This is still collaboration but at this level it is the leaders of the school who collaborate:

It is the leaders who reflect on the whole picture (15 School C).

Ofsted and LA judgements of the school require documentation and evidence for judgements and this is reflected in the responses of a small minority of the interviewees who expressed concern on how to provide evidence of how collaboration impacted on moving the school forward:

So it is always a case of reviewing what we are doing and looking at what's happening and the impact. Sometimes it's quite hard to actually judge the impact (06 School B).

Half of interviewees developed the reflective process to ensure that it was acted upon so that it did not become just an exercise for looking at did or did not succeed but was used to formulate what should happen next to move the school forward:

If you are going to put something in place you have to make it consistent and if it's not in place it's up to you to raise the profile. If it's important enough to do in the first place then it's important to follow up (02 School A).

Summary of Findings for Research Question C

Half of the respondents to the questionnaire indicated that reflective practice, as individuals, together with appropriate praise is undertaken as part of the collaborative process. The other respondents indicate there are times when reflective practice is not part of the collaborative process. In addition a few of the respondents also indicate that following the reflective process successes and achievement may not be celebrated. The response to reflection on team performance indicates that 70 per cent do not undertake regular team reviews. The remainder indicate that team reviews is not considered to be part

of the collaborative process. The respondents to the questionnaire indicate that time and opportunity may not be given to reflect on new initiatives before they are implemented across the school. This has implications for collaboration as those involved may not be familiar with the initiative and the reasons for it being introduced. One of the elements of the reflective process is communicating findings to colleagues. Overall few respondents or interviewees identified strengths related to reflective practice. Although the majority identified reflective practice as being an important element of the collaborative process they suggested that time is not given to enable reflection to take place. All the interviewees state they have PPA (introduced in 2005) but because of how the time is organised it is not always possible to meet to collaborate with colleagues. Of those interviewed the majority stated that in order to develop reflective collaboration to improve teaching and learning senior leaders need to plan for directed time to be in place to allow the collaboration to succeed. A minority of respondents and interviewees equate reflection as the responsibility of the senior leadership and is linked to whether the school is fulfilling the vision and raising standards. The remainder of the respondents and interviewees indicate they are involved in the process of reflection after monitoring or when contributing to the school development plan. Where constructive criticism is used in the reflective process this is not always viewed as an opportunity for improvement and in some cases a minority of respondents indicate they feel threatened by this aspect of reflection.

Part 5 - Research Question D:

Some actions can be drivers to motivate staff, by providing support and resources to achieve the collaboration. Other actions could become barriers to a successful collaborative process. Each question asked is identified as either a driver or barrier and this is indicated in brackets after the question number.

Questionnaire Section 2a Individual roles:

Table 17 refers to the questionnaire data and relevant questions from section 2a:

Q2 (driver): I receive sufficient support and training to undertake my role as a senior leader. (Which may include developing collaboration within the school).

Q3 (driver): I receive sufficient resources (e.g. human, physical, and time) to enable my staff to achieve the agreed goals.

Q6: I ensure that both my staff and I continue professional development.

Q10 (barrier): I sometimes find my role within the senior leadership team and that of my other team leader roles conflict.

Q11 (driver): I am able to talk through conflict with other members of the senior leadership team.
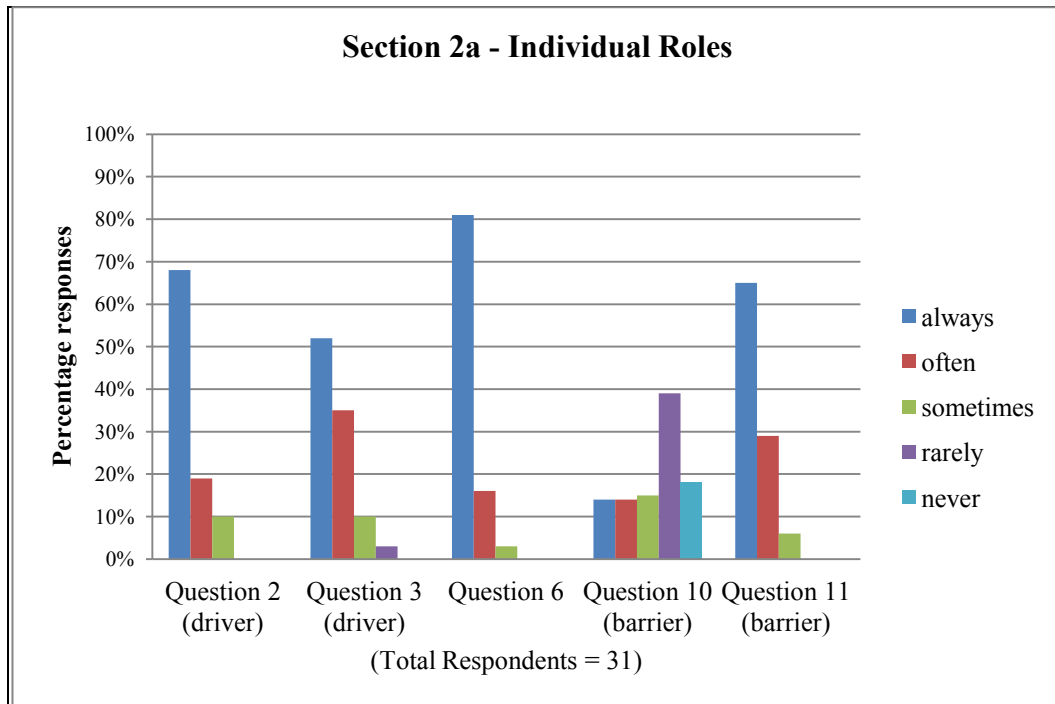
Table 17: Questions in Section 2a

In Table 17 questions 2 and 3 are linked – they are both questions which can support or drive collaboration and both identify support and resources required to achieve that collaboration. Although both questions have received a positive response if the columns often, sometimes and rarely are added the response would indicate times when these areas could be improved. For Q2 over half the respondents indicated that either sufficient support or training is not always available. For question 3 almost half indicate sufficient resources might be an issue. Both these might be less favourable because the budget may place constraints on the resources that can be allocated. Resources might be in the form of time, equipment or support.

Questions 10 and 11 are linked in that question 10 identifies the barrier of different roles conflicting and question 11 a driver in that conflict can be talked through. If the columns always, often and sometimes are added together the response to question 10 indicates almost half of the respondents find their roles conflict. The response to question 6 shows

that 19 per cent of respondents are not always able to talk this conflict through. This would suggest that sometimes the barrier to collaboration is stronger than the driver.

Questionnaire Section 2b Team Roles:

Table 18 refers to the questionnaire data and relevant questions from section 2b:

Q2 (driver): We search for relevant information before making a decision.

Q3: We have established sound collaborative processes.

Q4: We as team members have clear roles, varied as necessary with changing tasks.

Q9: Our team members have the professional skills to achieve the team goals – teaching, organisation, setting and reviewing targets.
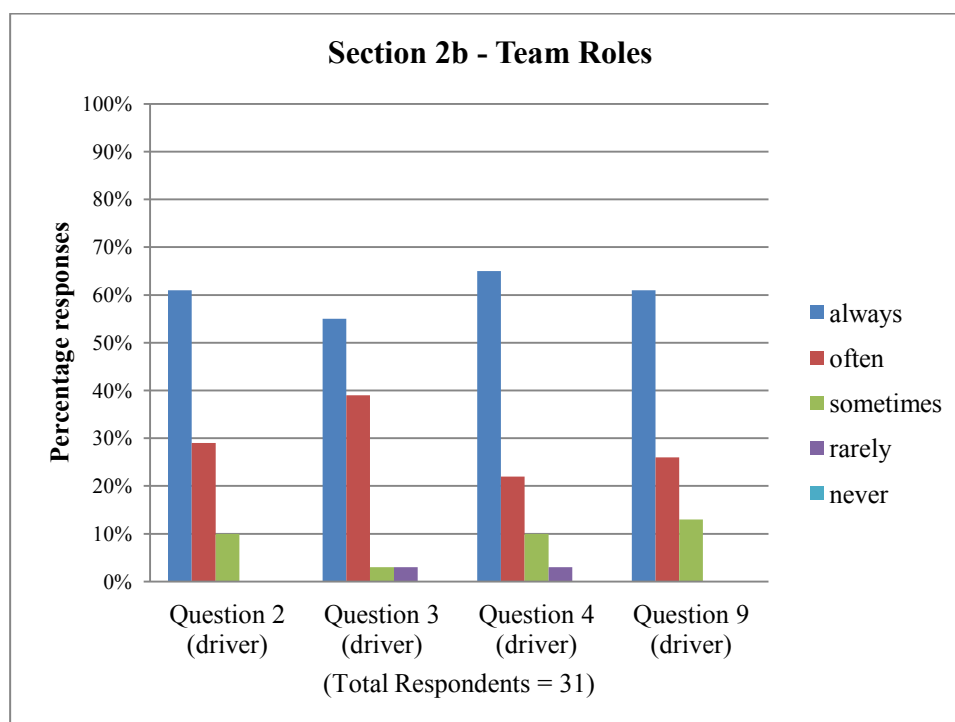
Table 18: Questions in Section 2b

Table 18 shows all the questions are drivers towards collaboration and a positive response to all questions was received. Having the relevant information to make a decision appears to be an important aspect of collaboration as it gives a starting point to begin discussions. Obtaining the information may require research so whilst the response is positive if the often and sometimes column are added together over a quarter of respondents indicate that relevant information may not always be available to enable appropriate decisions to be taken. Sound operating processes (Q3) and clear roles which can be altered as necessary (Q4) allow all team members to be aware of how processes can be implemented. Again respondents indicate a positive response to both questions but if the often, sometimes and rarely columns are added 45 per cent of respondents indicate that sound operating processes are not always adhered to and 45 per cent indicate that team members may not always have clear roles. Linked with questions 2, 3, and 4 is question 9 which requires respondents to consider if team members have the professional skills required to achieve the team goals. Again the response is positive but if often, sometimes columns are added then 39 per cent of the respondents indicate that there may be occasions when the professional skills needed to achieve the goals are lacking.

Questionnaire Section 3 (the responses were quantitative and can therefore be presented in table form).

The following tables refer to the questionnaire data and relevant questions from section 3:
Q1: How often do the senior leadership team meet?

Table 19 shows the responses to this question.
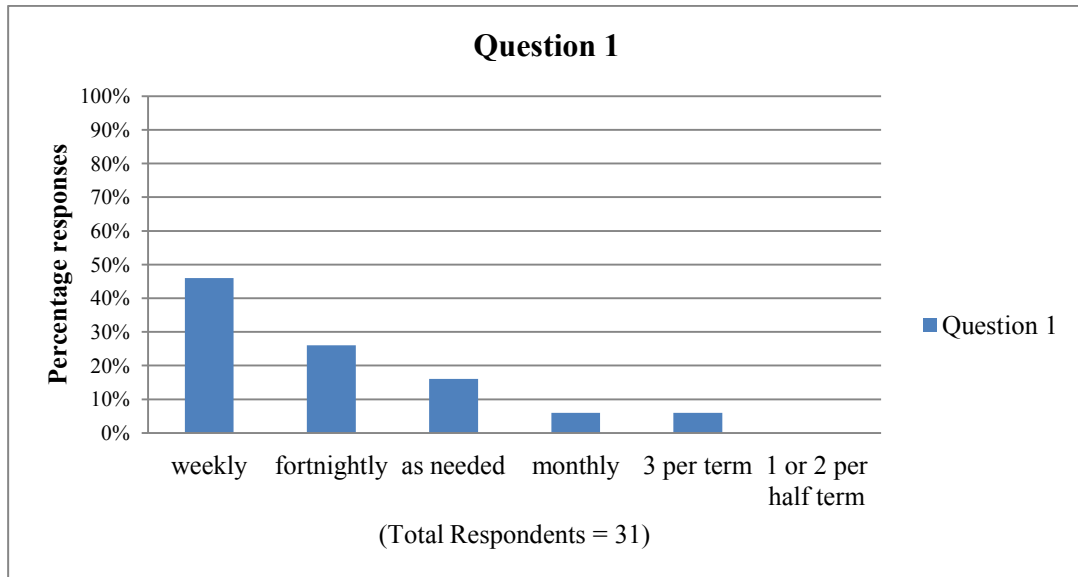
Table 19: Question 1 in Section 3

Table 19 indicates that almost half of the respondents attend a weekly meeting as part of the senior leadership team process. If the 'as needed', 'monthly' and 'per term' are added together it indicates that a quarter of the respondents follow a very different pattern of meetings. The 'as needed' shows that 16 per cent of the respondents have no set pattern for meeting or if meetings take place. Conversely it may mean that meetings are called more frequently than weekly.

Q2: Is there an agreed structure to meetings? The following table shows the responses to this question.
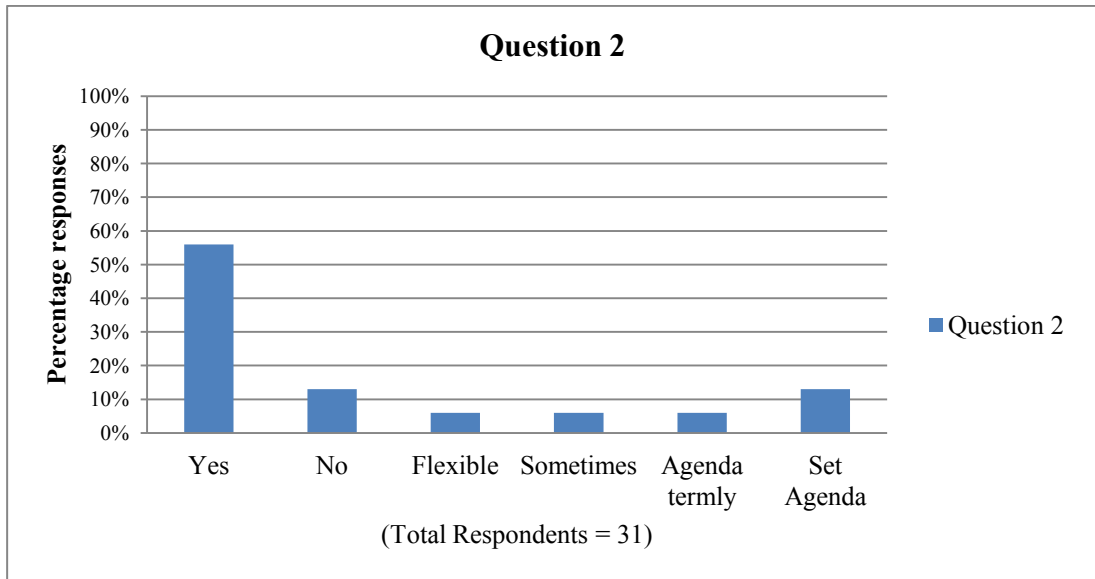
Question 2

Table 20: Question 1 in Section 3

Table 20 indicates over half the respondents have a structure which they follow when meeting. There is no data which explores this structure so although structured each meeting may be very different therefore what cannot be identified from the data is whether this is a successful format for raising attainment within the school.

Q3: Who is responsible for the agenda?

The purpose of this question was to establish whether the senior leadership team were able to bring their own themes or concerns to the meeting or whether the senior leadership team discuss imposed themes.

Question 3

(Total Respondents = 31)
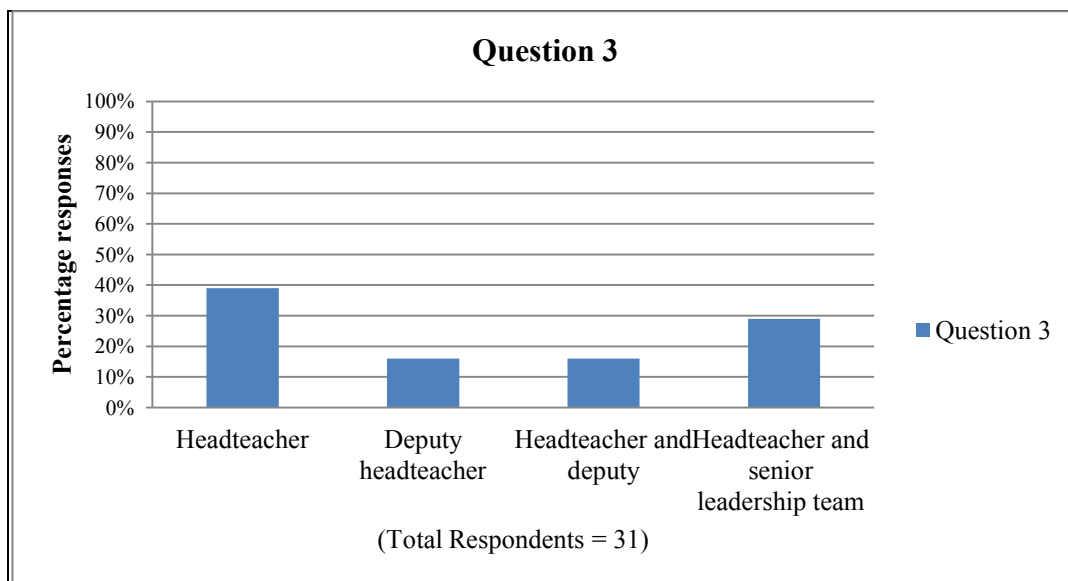
Table 21: Question 3 in Section 3

Table 21 indicates that the headteacher takes the lead for themes presented at the meeting. If the respondents who indicated 'headteacher', 'deputy headteacher' and 'deputy headteacher and headteacher' are added together it would indicate that headteachers and deputies appear to be the people who set the agenda for the meeting. In contrast, approximately a quarter of senior leadership teams, in this study, involve all the senior leaders in deciding what themes will be discussed.

Q4 in section 3: How do you decide on agenda items?

This was a written response question with the majority of respondents stating agenda items were related to the school development plan with the headteacher identifying the issues or themes for discussion. Responses identifying the senior leadership team planning agenda items was the next largest response. A minority of respondents identified the agenda setting being open to all. This would suggest even if collaboration is practised in schools this is an area that is mainly the headteacher's responsibility.

Q5 in section 3: How far in advance is the agenda circulated?

This was a written response with the majority indicating the agenda was circulated on the day of the meeting. A few respondents indicated that no agenda was given; whether the person taking the meeting had an agenda is unclear from the questionnaire. The other respondents indicated that there was no set pattern and providing an agenda varied according to the purpose of the meeting. Although collaboration may still take place without an agenda being provided the collaborative process may be hindered in that people are unprepared for quality discussion.

Q6: Who is responsible for the minutes and ensuring deadlines are adhered to .

The purpose of this question was to gather data that would enable an exploration of what the team in each school do in order to implement decisions taken at the meeting. The minutes are an important tool to enable senior leaders to ensure that decisions are followed up and action taken.
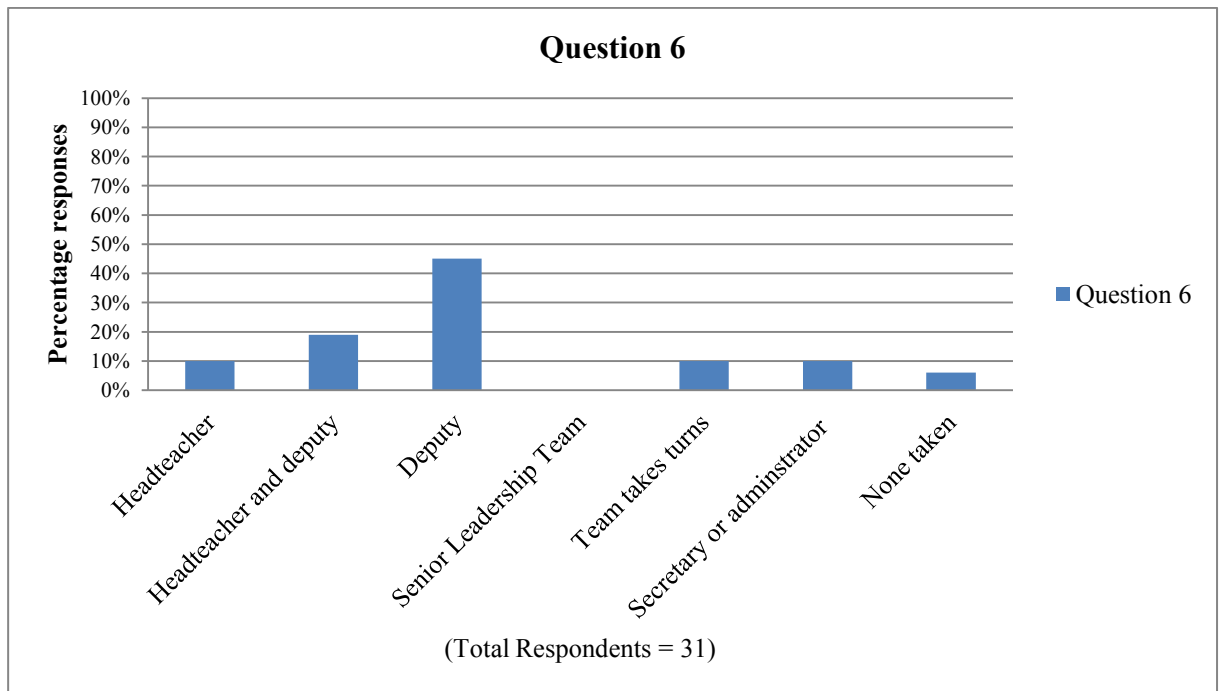
Question 6

Table 22: Question 6 in Section 3

Table 22 indicates that deputy headteachers are the people who have the responsibility to make sure an accurate record of decisions is kept and decisions are implemented. Very few senior leaders appear to be involved in this process which would indicate headteachers and deputy headteachers are firmly in control.

Q12: What proportion of a senior leadership team meeting is usually dedicated to discussing teaching and learning?

The response to this question is presented as a Table 23.

Question 12

(Total Respondents = 31)
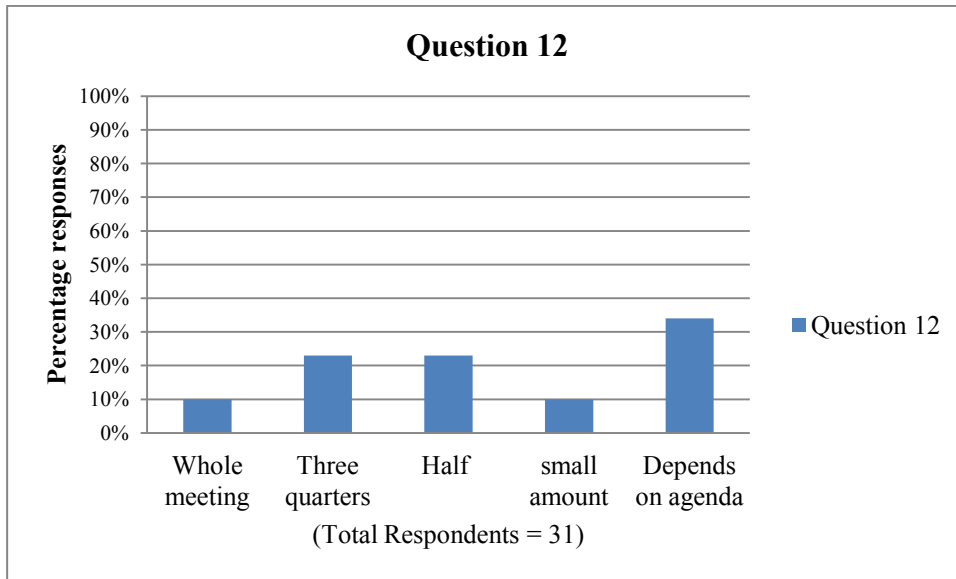
Table 23: Question 12 in Section 3

Table 23 shows that the respondents who take the whole meeting to discuss raising standards are the same as those who take only a small amount of the meeting. Those who responded 'depends on agenda' gave no indication of time, if any spent, on discussing issues relating to raising attainment. As this is an unknown element by adding together those who do indicate the amount of time spent more respondents take more than half the meeting time to discuss raising standards compared to those respondents who take a small amount of time.

Questionnaire Section 4 – Culture

Table 24 refers to the questionnaire data and relevant questions from section 4:

Q8: Senior leaders make time for other people, are good listeners and supportive.

Q9: There is mutual respect, individuals are valued 'as people'.

Q10: The ability to speak one's mind and voice concerns is valued.

Q12: We feel good about ourselves - people are valued.
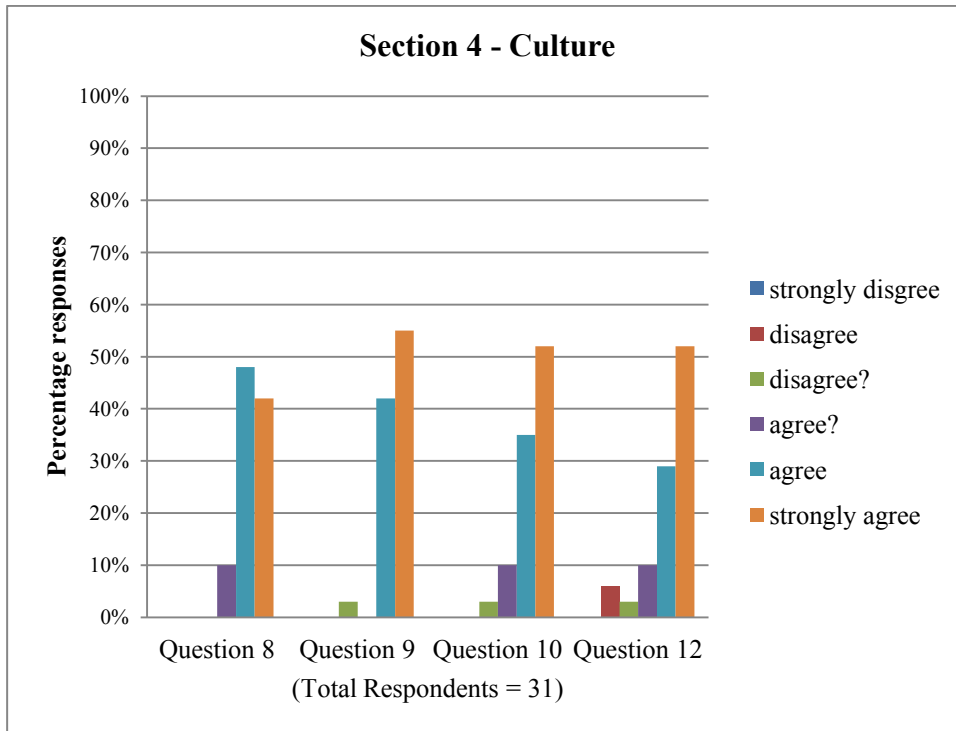
Section 4 - Culture

Table 24: Section 4

Table 24 shows the strongly agree response to questions 9, 10 and 12 are over 50 per cent. With the response to question 8 being 42 per cent. This may indicate that the culture within the school is one of valuing people and their opinions. If the disagree? and agree? columns are added to the agree column then over half of respondents indicate there may be occasions when people do not always consider they receive mutual respect and are listened to. The table also shows that respondents do not always consider that if they voice concerns it is valued (Q10). Nor do respondents always feel people are valued or encouraged to feel good about themselves (Q12). In order for collaboration to be successful people should be able to speak up and feel valued. This will be developed in the next chapter.

Questionnaire Section 5 (responses were qualitative- number in the bracket is the respondent's identity code)

A further theme to emerge from the data is motivating staff to become part of the collaborative process. Motivation means staff *want* to become part of the collaborative process rather than being *expected* to be part of the collaborative process. Several respondents indicated a strength of the team was a willingness to listen to staff ideas. They also indicated that leaders who were themselves motivated were able to motivate staff to work with them towards a shared vision. Areas which the respondents identified as needing to be developed further were:

> (a) more time to carry out tasks with these being distributed evenly. 'To maintain a manageable workload for everyone without compromising quality teaching and learning' (10).
>
> (b) praise staff and acknowledge achievements and efforts – 'Need to value others more and praise ideas more' (31).

The following draws on interview responses related to this theme.

Interview data relevant to theme (the number in brackets is the interviewee's identify code)

An emergent theme from the questionnaire was how do senior leaders motivate staff to become part of the collaborative process for improving teaching and learning? In practice what actions encourage collaboration, what actions can become barriers to collaboration. Interviewees were asked to define their understanding of collaboration, with the majority responding to them it meant working together. Some of those interviewed indicated that collaboration did not always take place. The next theme was identifying elements of the collaborative process the interviewees considered important to successful collaboration. These elements were explored with interviewees to develop an understanding of the collaborative process within each school. A few of the interviewees indicated that whilst collaboration was considered to be important they were still at the early stages of introducing it to staff. They indicated that it was not an easy process to implement as the

way of working within the school had mostly been senior leaders or the headteacher identifying what was needed with little or no input from other colleagues.

On the other hand the majority of the interviewees identify levels of collaboration. These are:

- across schools

- senior leadership (headteacher, deputy, assistant headteachers and senior leaders)

- curriculum teams or keystage/year group co-ordinators

- teachers in parallel classes or in keystage/foundation stage teams

- support staff are either included in one of the above or form their own team.

This collaboration may then be shared or cascaded to other colleagues not in a particular team. Interviewees identify both positives and negatives to the process of collaboration. The majority identify collaboration across schools as important and successful:

> One of the reasons we link with other schools is to get other skills (06 School B).

> Some of the most effective collaborative work of the school has gone on with other schools (14 School E).

The majority of interviewees whilst wanting collaboration to succeed had found they needed to work at developing a culture of collaboration. The main obstacle was cited as staff who were reluctant to collaborate:

> There are some teams where people really feel that they are a member of a team and contribute to it and they collaborate on things. There are others where it is a little bit less well established as a team (07 School B).

Summary of Findings for Research Question D

Evidence from this study suggests that involving staff in the collaborative process is complex. For staff to become involved in collaboration both respondents and interviewees indicate that successful collaboration is based on leadership that supports and encourages the collaborative process. Over half of the respondents indicated that sufficient support or training is not always available. They also indicate that available resources, including time, could be improved. Another element which may impact on collaboration, particularly in small schools, is that of being responsible for different roles within the school. Some of the interviewees indicated there are occasions when there is a conflict in roles for example if the senior leader also has a subject area, the interventions needed to improve results may not be agreed by others in leadership role. This conflict may become a barrier to collaboration or may be viewed as an opportunity to develop the collaboration by discussing evidence and agreeing the action to be taken.

The study identified that having relevant information to make decisions appears to be an important aspect of collaboration. Whilst all agreed relevant information was essential a quarter of the respondents indicated that relevant information was not always made available. Linked to this was the understanding of their role within the collaborative process and the operating process of the collaboration. Both respondents and interviewees (45 per cent) indicated that there are occasions when roles may not be clear with 39 per cent stating there are occasions when professional skills needed to achieve goals are lacking. This impacts both on the operating process and the success of the collaboration.

Part of the collaborative process is using meetings to discuss changes to improve school effectiveness or the progress of school improvements. The study shows the pattern and

format of meetings varies from school to school. In this study 46 per cent indicated that meetings take place weekly. At the other end of the spectrum 16 per cent indicated they only meet as needed. The study further indicates that in the majority of schools who took part in this study it is the headteacher and deputy who decide on the items for discussion. This would suggest that collaboration at this point is limited, with collaboration within the meeting being partly imposed, in that not all staff have had the opportunity to raise issues, which may contribute to the collaborative process of school improvement. The time spent in meetings in discussing raising standards varies from school to school with 34 per cent of this study indicating that it is dependent on the agenda. The headteacher and deputy headteacher in the majority of schools set the agenda so this implies that discussion of raising of standards is the responsibility of the headteacher. The data also shows that the distribution of the agenda prior to meetings is not viewed as important, with the majority handing it out on the day of the meeting. This suggests that collaboration is undermined in that it may not be possible to contribute to the collaborative process effectively if information is not given.

The majority of the schools in this study indicated that there is a culture of valuing people and their opinions. Whilst the underlying culture is considered as valuing people there are times when the minority, in this study, do not consider their concerns are listened to and as individuals they do not always feel valued.

Motivating staff to become part of the collaborative process is an issue that is faced by schools. Having relevant information as a starting point to discussion and to enable effective decisions to be taken is considered important by the majority of respondents and interviewees. The majority of respondents and interviewees consider clear roles, good processes in place to support decisions, a willingness to listen to ideas, valuing

achievements and efforts and providing resources (including professional development) are all elements which contribute to motivating staff to collaborate. Forty-five per cent indicate that one or more of these elements is sometimes missing, this then creates a barrier against collaboration.

The majority of schools in this study indicate that there are different levels of collaboration within school with results of these collaborations being cascaded to other colleagues. The main obstacle to collaboration identified by the majority of those who contributed to this study was staff who were reluctant to collaborate. This reluctance is complex and may be the result of different contributing factors for example people find it easier to be independent in their working practice.

Part 6 - Conclusion of Overall findings for all Research Questions

Part 1 the introduction identified how data was collected. Respondents were analysed to give a contextual overview of data (Appendix 12). The questionnaire was distributed to all primary schools in the LA and received a response rate of 26 per cent. From the analysis of the questionnaire themes relating to collaboration were identified and formed the basis for the interview questions. The introduction concluded by identifying the structure for the next part of this chapter.

Part 2 research question A used data to identify the impact the headteacher may have in developing a culture of collaboration. Although the majority of respondents and interviewees indicated that it is the leadership of the headteacher that develops a culture of collaboration and the headteacher is ultimately responsible for ensuring standards of teaching and learning within the school continued to improve. The data from the questionnaire and the interviews indicate for collaboration to be successful one of the

elements is being prepared to listen to ideas from staff. This together with sharing goals impacts on the collaborative process. Half of the participants in this study indicated the sharing of goals does not always take place which may hinder collaboration as the focus for collaboration may be unclear. All the schools identified the importance of the SIP in identifying actions which will lead to both school improvement and their own professional development. The data shows that collaboration in forming the SIP varies from school to school. Monitoring of the SIP are considered by all to be effective ways of identifying if collaboration is taking place, although reflection is not always built into the process.

Part 3 research question B looked at the overview of how the senior leadership team contribute to the collaborative process. An important aspect of collaboration identified by the data was whether there was a culture of valuing people. Of those who took part in this study the majority considered that there is a culture where staff are valued, however they do indicate they do not consider that each person works for the success of the school as a whole. The remaining respondents and interviewees indicated there are times when they feel undervalued both as an individual and as a team member which may prevent the collaborative process from being successful. The study does not provide data to show reasons for feeling undervalued, this could be developed in further research. However the respondents and interviewees indicate that it is considered to be leadership responsibility to support those who are collaborating and encourage those who are reluctant. Meetings are an important link between staff and senior leadership as the data in this study indicates it is meetings where initiatives are introduced and goals communicated. The majority of those who took part in the study indicated that time was needed to collaborate in implementing change and to reflect on the process. A minority of those interviewed indicted that it would be beneficial to the collaborative process if senior leaders were 'open' about the process

they went through when making decisions. The other interviewees however did not believe knowing the process was important or affected their own collaboration.

Part 4 research question C used data to identify the overview of the reflective process and its importance to collaboration. The data indicates that whilst half of those who took part in this study indicated reflective practice as individuals and appropriate praise is an important part of collaboration the other half indicate there are times when reflection does not happen and achievement not acknowledged or celebrated. When asked about reflection on team performance 70 per cent indicated that regular team review of collaboration does not take place. The remaining 30 per cent indicated that review is not considered to be important to the collaborative process. The study shows that where reflection does take place the findings are communicated to other colleagues through staff meetings, training days or as part of the SIP. Although reflective practice is an element of successful collaboration this study indicates time to focus on reflection is not always possible. Linked with this is the element of constructive criticism which may be part of process of reflection creates an element of threat to a minority of respondents. This negative aspect of reflection may impact on developing the reflective element of the collaborative process.

Part 5 research question D data in this study suggests that motivating staff to become part of the collaborative process is complex. Those who took part in this study indicated that leadership that supports and encourages collaboration underpins successful collaboration. More than half of the respondents and interviewees state this support, and where appropriate training is not always given. The providing of appropriate information for change is identified by all as essential to the collaborative process however a quarter indicated this information is not always made available to those involved in the collaboration. Meetings between staff are considered an important element of collaboration

but this varies from school to school. The majority of the respondents and interviewees indicate that it is the headteacher or deputy who initiates the collaboration process with only a few of the schools indicating inclusion in the collaboration at the point change is identified. The motivation of staff to become involved in collaboration varies from school to school with the majority of those who contributed to this study identifying staff who were reluctant to collaborate as an obstacle to the success of the process.

Each part of this findings chapter has provided both qualitative and quantitative data which will be drawn upon in the next chapter to discuss some of the issues faced by schools as they endeavour to encourage collaboration to move forward teaching and learning and raise standards. The data suggests whilst collaboration exists in schools it is in the process of being developed to become more effective in the majority of the schools from whom the data has been collected. Statements from the majority of schools suggest that collaboration is, at the moment, implemented on a 'top down' approach although those interviewed do not consider this to be the case. The data indicates both strengths and barriers which impact on collaboration. The interviews identified that the majority of schools considered communication may be a weakness but if improved it could also become a strength in the collaborative process. Motivation and networking partnerships were identified as a weakness in half the schools but as strength in the others. Again the data also shows that whilst reflection is considered to be important by all schools, in the majority of schools it is not always a part of the planned collaborative cycle. The data indicates that all schools in this study use the SIP as a tool for moving the school forward. Collaboration in this process varies from school to school with schools being at different stages of developing the collaborative process. Chapter 5 will discuss emergent themes identified in the overall

findings. These will be linked with the literature review and research questions that inform this study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter is in four parts. After the introduction the second part places the discussion of findings into context. It will also identify how respondents understood the term 'collaboration'. The themes identified by the questionnaire and subsequent interviews will be linked to the research questions. The third part will discuss the findings from the questionnaires and interviews. These findings will be related to each research question and literature identified in chapter 2 will underpin the discussion. The final part will then summarise the discussion, the contribution made to knowledge and identify themes to be presented in the conclusions and recommendations chapter.

The questionnaire was designed to gather data which would provide a context for senior leaders in primary school. From this context themes relating to collaboration were identified. The identified themes then became the basis for interview questions to develop in more detail the collaborative process within primary schools. The overall findings of both the questionnaires and interviews are discussed in chapter 4.

Context

The research questions are based on the principle that in order to raise achievement it is important to ensure the senior leadership collaborate together and with other colleagues to focus on teaching and learning within the school. A search of the literature identified not only the importance of collaboration but also elements which should be in place to support successful collaboration. Chapter 2 discusses this in more detail. The themes identified in

the literature search formed the basis of the questionnaire. The initial questionnaire was piloted and refined before being distributed to all the senior leaders in primary schools in one Midland's LA. Chapter 3 details how the questionnaire was constructed. Next the respondents' answers to the questionnaire were used to identify themes to be developed. Initial pilot interviews were undertaken and refined before fifteen senior leaders from the schools who replied to the questionnaire were interviewed (see Appendix 13). The data from the interviews indicates that for successful collaboration to take place different elements need to be in place. Chapter 4 presents an overview of both questionnaire and interview data.

As with the questionnaires the interviews began with 'context questions' to place the interviewee at ease. The focus of this study concerns the perceptions of collaboration within the primary school; therefore it is important to ascertain what meaning the term 'collaboration' has for each interviewee.

The interviewees were asked to define their understanding of collaboration. The majority responded that collaboration was working together. All identified it as an opportunity to share ideas and resources. Some interviewees whilst supporting this view of collaboration qualified their response by arguing that collaboration does not always take place. Others identifying collaboration as working together qualified the response by arguing that people do not need to be working on the same thing. Maeroff's (1993) argument supports the view that the practice of collaboration within the school may not always be successful: 'team building is not alchemy, and it probably will not transform someone who does not want to improve or is incapable of doing better' (p.141). He states 'there is more than one way for a

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team to be a team, and some of the ways may not be appropriate to the situation in a particular school' (p.142), which supports the response of interviewee (07 School B):

> I think collaboration is working together effectively pooling skills and ideas and discussions. Not necessarily working together on the same thing but sharing tasks the appropriate person doing the different aspect of jobs that need to be done in the school.

Interviewees' definitions of collaboration have a direct relationship to the findings both of the questionnaire and interviews, the overall findings being presented in chapter 4.

The next part of this chapter will discuss the findings for each research question based on the appropriate main and sub-themes identified.

Findings

This part of the chapter discusses the findings from the questionnaires and interviews drawing on the literature search in order to place the data into the wider framework of research. Each theme and sub-theme, whilst being discussed separately, are closely linked to each other and form part of the main theme of collaboration.

The discussion will be presented in four parts. Each part will be based on the appropriate research questions, themes, sub-themes, literature and data from questionnaires and interviews. Each part will discuss the questionnaire data first, then the subsequent interview data arising from the questionnaire response. Tables 3-6 (Appendix 12) relate to context data from questionnaire. Context of sample interviewees is given in Appendix 13. Each section will then be summarised and address the appropriate research question.

Research Question A:

The main theme of this research question is leadership and how the senior management team's leadership affects whether or not collaboration can be fostered. The literature review identifies that following the DES Education Reform Act (1988) schools became responsible for not only education of children but also managing other aspects of the school including finance. With decentralisation new roles and responsibilities were placed on headteachers. A wide variety of models of leadership emerged. Transformational leadership was considered to be leadership for change, Gronn (1999) cited 'four I's' of transformational leadership (literature review). At this time Bottery (1992) states that education looked at business management theory for models of successful leadership. Ribbins (2001) linked business leadership with education. The Hay McBer Report (2000) compared headteachers and senior executives to create a 'model of excellence for leadership'. This report identified five leadership characteristics of effectiveness. This is important to this study because the majority of those interviewed referred to it being discussed in leadership courses they attended: 'Then we encourage people to do things with leadership, there are so many courses people can go on these days. It's trying to keep abreast with it all' (01 School A). The literature and those interviewed argue that different approaches of leadership are applied depending upon the situation. The approach they (interviewees) most referred to is that of distributed leadership. Within that approach reference was also made to decision making and accountability. The following discusses the themes using literature, questionnaire and interview responses to address the above research question.

Theme 1: Leadership

Leadership Approaches

In chapter 4 (Tables 8 and 9) show that the majority of respondents to the questionnaire are able to identify their leadership approach and how it enables them to collaborate with staff. As the questionnaire did not give the opportunity to explore the theme of leadership approach this was developed within the interviews. Although Southworth (1999), Gronn (1999) and Gunter (2001) identified different types of leadership for example transformational, the majority of interviewees considered their main approach to leadership to be distributed leadership. Harris (2008) states 'distributed leadership implies that the practice of leadership is one that is shared' (p.37). The data in this study, indicates the perception of distributed leadership varied from interviewee to interviewee. This reflects the research by Harris, et al (2007) and the report by the NCSL (2003) on distributed leadership literature. Although all those interviewed identified distributed leadership as an important element in developing collaboration within the school they present different viewpoints on how distributed leadership is applied. One way of presenting leadership as distributive and encouraging collaboration may be for the leader to suggest that it is best for the children, even if professional opinion is opposed to the initiative:

> I make sure the children are at the centre of any decision and everyone will take it on board (14 School E).

It may be that the school structure itself is based on the traditional approach to leadership and is in the process of change. Imposition of collaboration may be a step towards that change. It may be the senior leader's knowledge of distributed leadership and collaboration is limited. Those who identified collaboration and distributed leadership as being 'imposed' from the top did not appear to question this action.

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Wallace and Huckman (1999) identified that senior leadership in the schools, accepted that the headteacher was in control but collaboration contributed to supporting the headteacher. The schools in this study reiterated this both from the viewpoint of the headteacher and also senior leaders. Imposed collaboration, is accepted if team members can voice concerns. Staff need to feel free to speak if there is a problem for as the following interviewee states:

> It is the senior leader's responsibility to create an atmosphere where people feel they can come forward and say if there is a problem (02 School A).

The above shows the complexity of leadership approach. The interviewee firmly believed the leadership approach was that of distributive, stating that distributed leadership supported the development of collaboration within the school. This suggests whilst senior leaders consider they are developing collaboration through the distributed leadership model this is not always a reality. Wallace and Huckman (1999) identified in their study that the majority of headteachers kept control by who they allowed to 'initiate or participate in making decisions'(p.79). Others they argued:

> Were more open to delegating some of their authority with the proviso that, if they were not comfortable with the way things were going, they could take it back (p.79).

Rhodes and Brundrett (2010) argue 'some school leaders may be better at distribution than others (p.169). This is reiterated by Harris (2010) who states 'some patterns of distribution are more effective than others' (p.66).

This is developed to suggest '*how* leadership is distributed is more important than whether it is distributed' (p.66). Those interviewed for this study identified that leadership was distributed but did not consider how it was distributed. The study shows that distributed leadership is viewed as important for collaboration. In order for the collaboration to be successful it may need leaders to consider how they approach this style of leadership and

whether changes are needed in *how* it is put into practice for effective collaboration and school improvement.

In some schools the changes needed to promote collaboration may have been identified however interviewee (15 School C) shows implementation of change may not happen. In this case people are identified as having the qualities needed but are not involved in the collaboration needed to move the school forward:

> We have just had an advanced skills teacher. We have got people in the school who could have done it but they were so busy we couldn't free them. He came in and worked collaboratively with the staff (15 School C).

The distributed leadership approach is cited by the majority of senior leaders, in this study, as their approach to leadership. This may be because it is the approach which is linked with school improvement. One of the pitfalls identified by literature and by those interviewed is that distributed leadership, where power is redistributed to develop tasks, is confused with 'delegated leadership' where tasks are handed down without power to complete them. For example the following statement shows a willingness to collaborate and indicates distributed leadership is part of the collaborative process however the headteacher makes the final decision:

> I have a clear vision of where we are going, this is achieved through distributed leadership. I want everybody on board so I will ask their opinions and collaborate on certain things. But there are things I am not going to budge on, that's my way, that's what I want for the school so that's what we are doing (11 School E).

Distributed leadership requires those in leadership to empower others. This empowerment may contribute to collaboration that is viewed as worthwhile as those involved understand the importance of their contribution. The findings, of this study, suggest senior leaders may

consider their leadership approach is important to successful collaboration but may have limited knowledge of the theory of leadership. A variety of leadership courses are available, whether these include leadership theory has not been identified by this study but further research may be valuable in establishing whether the research into leadership and leadership theory is part of the course.

Collaboration involves colleagues being given time to work together if they have input into the task they are more likely to find this time. Those interviewed suggested senior leaders should build in time to allow collaboration to take place. The issue of time to collaborate is approached in various ways by the schools who took part in this study. Some headteachers recognise a need to give time 'x (headteacher) gives us time when things come up' (08 School D). Some interviewees ask for time 'we ask the head who usually gives some time if it is desperately needed. Obviously there is PPA time so that can be used' (12 School E). Then some headteachers use the development plan to facilitate collaboration. 'A whole day together each term has greatly improved the leadership team – its togetherness, collaboration, quality. Everyone is involved to the same level in the leadership of the school' (03 School C). The findings in this study suggest that structural changes are being made by schools but these may not be developed to alter the culture. A minority of schools appear to have developed a culture of collaboration 'that is how we work that is the process, we do it together and agree what the whole school will work on, so they are part of the collaborative process of moving the school forward (03 School C).

West-Burnham (1992) argues delegation can be achieved successfully if staff are trained and developed. He develops this argument stating that delegation empowers. He also states that accountability is still retained by the head who maintains control by setting and reviewing targets.

The problem with delegation is although it can empower people it does not necessarily give them power to control how the tasks evolve. This is because of accountability being retained by the headteacher. Interviewees consider distributed leadership that is delegated is superficial as it involves little contribution from them. The resultant effect on collaboration, as identified by the interviewees is that the collaboration is constrained in that they are following a given or perceived agenda. If the perception is collaboration does not need their complete involvement the end of the process is not owned by them. This understanding of distributed leadership and its implementation, in this study sample, may affect different levels of collaboration. For example at teacher level collaboration in relation to moderation and accuracy of assessment is expected to produce consistent results:

> moderation, accuracy of assessment has been an issue it has meant that we have actually had to collaborate with some staff to remark their papers or rethink the levels. That's the sort of issue where collaboration is really difficult (07 School B).

If collaboration is to be successful, with distributed leadership identified as a way of developing collaboration then leaders' understanding of this approach to leadership may need to be clarified.

The responses to both the questionnaire and interviews show that the type of distributed leadership practised by the majority of those who contributed to study is divided leadership:

> The way we are setting up the senior leaders is myself (HT) and deputy are a strategy team. We have two other senior leaders one to look at assessment the other to look at curriculum. Then my deputy and I feedback to each other from those meetings (01 School A).

Hopkins and Jackson (2003) argue 'leadership is a shared function' they state:

> It cannot be imposed. Leadership has to be bestowed, given wilfully by those who are to be led. As such it cannot be delegated. Growth in leadership is about empowerment (p.97).

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The argument is developed by stating that leadership approaches that conform to a 'top down' structure make distributed leadership difficult. Collaboration may still take place but not become part of the school culture:

> The more hierarchical the management structure, the more the liberation of leadership capacity is likely to be stifled (p.98).

This difficulty is supported by interviewee 15 (School C) who identified distributed leadership within the school. However the leadership structure was hierarchical, interestingly within the hierarchy collaboration did take place. This collaboration did not extend to those outside the senior leadership team:

> I think as a senior leadership team we collaborate and we share it. Sometimes that collaboration is only at our level so they (staff) have to take on board what we have decided (15 School C).

This suggests that in this school whilst leadership was on occasions shared it was imposed rather than empowering.

All the interviewees are part of the leadership team in their own schools, or are leaders in their own right so the above discussion on distributed leadership is from the perspective of those who are influential in setting the approach to leadership prevalent within the school. This means their perception of collaboration may not be the same as other staff members.

The evidence from the questionnaire and interviews suggests that majority of senior leaders identify distributed leadership as the approach they adhere to. The other interviewees indicate their leadership approach may alter or change dependant on the situation:

> It's getting the best your of people, so you may deviate from your initial style but then still end up with a good result but you've gone along the way the teachers are thinking. They don't want it done to them they want to be part of it (09 School D).

Hammersley-Fletcher and Brundrett (2008) state that in the research by Currie, et al (2005) 'leaders have to adapt to each situation that they meet and their actions and the approach taken varies accordingly' (p.13). The findings in this study show that a minority have senior leaders who state they adapt to situations. This ability to adapt leadership approaches may be a result of experiences within the role 'as a young head, years and years ago, I had a bull in the china shop approach. You think that's a good way but in fact you realise people are not on board with it' (06 School B). All the interviewees indicated that experience of the leadership role is important to developing their own approach to leadership and linked with this is the aspect of collaboration to develop an approach which is successful for them:

> You can learn the theory but until you are in a team with those personalities it is
> very hard to know how you are going to react. You listen and collaborate with other
> people it's about cooperation (05 School B).

The majority in this study indicated they consider that distributed leadership leads to collaboration which in turn leads to school improvement. The study did not ascertain whether or not school improvement was achieved. The study did, however, show whilst collaboration may take place within all the schools it is not necessarily as a result of the distributed leadership style. The interviewees themselves, however, suggest collaboration is as a result of distributed leadership. The analysis of the questionnaires and interviews indicates that the understanding of distributed leadership may not be fully developed. The majority of the interviewees, in this study, indicated that they have participated in a leadership course at some point. The study provides no details of these courses; however it does show that senior leaders have an awareness of the distributed leadership approach. The study also indicates whilst interviewees consider collaboration is important Table 13 shows it is not always linked to whole school success. The implication of the findings in this study is that courses may not be providing senior leaders with sufficient knowledge to make

informed decisions about their leadership approach and how it can be used to develop effective collaboration within primary schools.

Decision Making

Research into successful schools indicates that collaboration needs to be purposeful and involvement in decision making is important. Involvement in decision making may also lead to commitment to successful collaboration to move the school forward. Bush (1995) argues:

> Teachers as professionals should participate in school or college decision-making because their commitment to the implementation of decisions is essential if the process is to be more than an empty ritual (p.8).

The structure operated by the senior leadership team is an important indicator of the decision makers within the school. The data presented in Table 7 (Appendix 12) identifies that a permanent fixed structure is in place in the majority of schools with the same people making decisions. This suggests that collaboration may be largely restricted to the senior leadership team particularly when taking decisions. Findings in this study however, (based on later sections of the questionnaire responses and interviews) indicated that before decisions are taken the views and suggestions of staff are both sought and listened to by over half of the senior leaders who responded (Table 8). Interviewees state:

> It is about collaborating with people, seeking their opinions. Collecting ideas, before making decisions, so that all have an input into the process (05 School B).

In addition, to talking to staff, a quarter of the respondents indicate they search for relevant information before making decisions (Table 18). This shows that at the point an actual decision is taken it is the senior leadership who decide on action to be taken. The decision

being taken after collaboration and colleague involvement during the process of identify changes needed.

The next stage of communicating decisions effectively is less positive with half suggesting a lack of clarity (Table 12). This may indicate a 'top-down' approach which may result in the 'message' not being communicated accurately. The literature supports the argument that people want to be involved and consulted about decisions but accept that sometimes the decision is taken by the headteacher or senior leadership. The study by Rice and Schneider (1994), whilst focusing on teachers rather than senior leaders, emphasised the importance of involvement in decision making. The argument is developed by stating whilst involvement is important, the issue of when and to what extent is one that needs to be addressed. 'When teachers do not perceive their decision involvement to be influential, their actual and desired levels of involvement will decline (p.55/56). The majority of interviewees also support this argument that whilst it is important for staff to be involved in decision making this does not necessarily mean every decision taken involves everyone. The leaders, within this study, consider it is part of their role to identify which decisions involve which staff.

The findings indicate that each school has a structure of collaboration for making decisions which is team based:

> The curriculum team are going to look at the curriculum, finding things out from different sources then coming back with ideas (01 School A).

The questionnaire findings in this study show that 90 per cent of respondents listen to staff when making decisions. This shows decision making is a feature of the collaboration in the school. The interview data indicates that whilst senior leaders do listen to staff the final decisions are taken by them the senior leaders.

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Whilst collaboration takes place within teams and is part of the process undertaken before decisions are made findings indicate there may be a limit placed on the collaborative process. The advice and/or conclusions arrived at by the collaborations may or may not be taken by the headteacher:

> If you are leader of the school you have to make your decisions and there does come a point where you say this isn't negotiable now we've had our options to talk about it. This is how it's going to be (05 School B).

Evidence from the literature shows that schools, other than those in this study, also have limitations on collaboration and decision making for example Hammersley-Fletcher and Brundrett (2008) argue that:

> It is notable that headteachers uniformly talk about themselves as people who distribute responsibility even where research evidence from their staff suggests otherwise (p.13).

The process of collaboration is important and the findings do not show to what extent advice from these collaborations is taken into account when reaching final decisions. As the ultimate accountability for moving the school forward is the headteachers' responsibility this may involve taking into account factors not necessarily shared with colleagues. The collaboration may identify important aspects to be considered when arriving at a decision. So whilst involvement in the final decision may not be possible that decision will be based on professional opinions and advice. All interviewees in this study indicated that they are aware that there are some decisions they will not be involved in. All accepted the headteacher has the final say 'It's a headteacher's decision and you have to go with it' (02 School A).

The findings suggest that collaboration supporting decisions is considered to be valuable. The making of the final decision is considered by all interviewees to be the role of the headteacher, however perhaps it might be valuable to be clear about which decisions are open for collaboration and which, for whatever reason, cannot be shared for as stated by Hammersley-Fletcher and Brundrett (2008):

> Collaboration, sharing and distribution should not, however, involve pretence that all staff can be involved in all decisions (p.13).

Day, et al (2000) state that decision making is shared in successful schools. Different types of decisions are made within schools. Some decisions are about everyday school leadership, others relate to school improvement, teaching and learning. As the types of decisions taken were not explored in either the questionnaire or the interviews no data has been gathered to explore which decisions may improve collaboration. The data, in this study, does show that decisions are taken by senior leaders with the ultimate decision being made by the majority of the headteachers. As the literature search shows shared decision making is important to school improvement the findings from this study indicate that senior leaders may benefit from changing decision making to include wider collaboration of staff. Decision making is complex because as Rice and Schneider (1994) state 'individuals involved in the process possess different preferences, interests, expertise and need disposition' (p.44). In addition to this the headteacher is held accountable not only to the governance of the school but also outside agencies such as Ofsted, the LA and parents. This accountability may influence not only how decisions are made but also who makes them. This in turn may limit collaboration.

Accountability

Accountability has become an important aspect in education, not only in the U.K. but also in other countries. Leithwood (2001) presented a framework for identifying 'leadership practices with increased accountability' (p.218). Brundrett (2011) argues 'senior leaders in particular are held responsible for the performance of their organisation' (p.28). He develops this stating that leaders may find accountability challenging or problematic as there are a 'wide range of stakeholders' including governors, Ofsted parents and others.

The aspect of accountability which concerned the interviewees, in this study, was that of standards 'you go to the staff and tell them we have got to raise standards or we will go into a measure, and that's what justifies everything really, it's the game we have to play' (04 School B). The question then becomes how standards are raised in order to achieve the level of accountability expected of the school. All the schools, in this study, show that they are working on collaboration within their school, across schools and with the LA to find ways of achieving the pupil outcomes and levels agreed. This has implications for leadership approaches for as Briggs (2010) argues collaborative leadership:

> Involves collaboratively developed strategy and provision for learning and learners and collective accountability for learner outcomes (p. 241).

As educational reforms have been introduced accountability has developed in response to them. The literature review presents the four accountability models developed by Simkins (1992). These models provide a base for identifying accountability within primary schools. Accountability has become an important element within education with primary schools being inspected regularly by Ofsted and results being published. The publishing of results has had the effect of parents being able to identify which schools they consider appropriate for their children. The responses to the questionnaire and the interviews show that primary

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schools are aware of the importance of published results not only for encouraging parents to choose their school but also because Ofsted use the results to inform their judgements of the school and whether it 'adds value' to the pupils progress. These results as Marsh and LeFever (2004) argue then become part of the marketing of the school.

DES National Standards for Headteachers (2004) requires headteachers to be committed to working with others to be 'accountable to the governing body' (p.3). This would suggest it is the headteacher that is accountable for the attainment of the school. The standards do reiterate that collaboration is important and one of the professional qualities headteachers should be committed to is distributed leadership. The headteacher then takes responsibility for ensuring staff adhere to the accountability expected of them. In order to meet the accountabilities staff need to be aware of the goals they are expected to achieve. In chapter 4 Table 10, shows 52 per cent are aware and collaborate in setting the goals they are expected to achieve and be accountable for. The other respondents show that 9 per cent do not collaborate with goal setting and 39 per cent are involved in the goal setting but possibly not always. These responses show that joint accountability is not practiced as part of the organisation for the schools in this study. One of the difficulties of accountability and collaboration identified from interviews is that people are concerned that if they are to held accountable the contribution they make should be acknowledged. This concern was recognised by some of the interviewees :

> They (staff) have professional support for what they do and professional recognition so people know you don't take the glory for someone else's work when they have put in the hard work (10 School D).

The above may imply that whilst the schools, in this study, are encouraging collaboration it may be that acceptance of the collaborative process goes through stages of development. Hargreaves (1995) argues that the terms collaborative and collegial are often used within

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school culture 'interchangeably'. Collegiality is about the approach where people undertake the same tasks but do not necessarily involve collaboration. As accountability is an important issue within schools collegiality may be a preferred option to collaboration as it is clear who is accountable for the outcome. With collaboration it may be necessary to establish joint accountability which in itself could be problematic. In the School Accountability Report (CSFC, 2010) there is an emphasis on collaboration to achieve standards. Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003) and the Children's act (2004) also identify the need for accountability. However whilst these legislations identify collaboration as important it appears that the headteacher is ultimately responsible for the school. Simkins' (1992) model gives a base to ascertain accountability. Within the professional model the success criteria is good practice influenced by peer review and monitored by processes put in place by senior leaders. Table 10 shows half of the respondents expect and understand that shared goals are important to having and achieving high expectation of themselves and students. Conversely they indicate that where goals are not shared expectations might be lower:

> I think it is absolutely essential that people know what the senior leaders are doing because the automatic reaction when you hear that a decision has been made is 'I wasn't consulted' (02 School A).

It may be argued that whilst ultimately accountability is the responsibility of the headteacher and senior leaders, others also have the responsibility of ensuring decisions are acted upon. The above extract shows that accepting this responsibility is problematic if collaboration has not been part of the decision making process. Acceptance of individual accountability may be more likely if collaboration has taken place before decisions are

made as the following interview extract shows:

> Individuals at different levels all complete where they feel they are. Things they need to maintain improve or change. We then share this together (03 School C).

Within the managerial model Simkins (1992) identifies the success criteria as effectiveness and efficiency. He argues it is the hierarchy which influences this model. This approach is reflected by interviewees in their understanding of their leadership role:

> Following up and making sure things are acted on is a leadership role that can be difficult to fulfil at different levels of leadership because where does the buck stop? Whose responsibility is it? That kind of collaborative leadership and dispersed leadership is sometimes a weakness in that sense (07 School B).

This shows that collaboration and accountability can be problematic for with the headteacher being ultimately accountable if collaboration is not happening then effectiveness and efficiency are achieved by a change of leadership style.

Within the political model Simkins (1992) identifies the success criteria as conforming to policy and argues the influence in this model is governance. There are elements of this model as most interviewees linked the judging of the quality of education provided by the school:

> The onus is on the keystage 2 results where you are mainly judged whether you are satisfactory or whatever (06 School B).

Headteachers of primary schools are expected to be accountable not only to the LA and Ofsted but also to the governors of the school. Whilst this study has not gathered data on collaboration with governors presenting results based on testing and data in 'league tables' is expected.

The final model identified by Simkins (1992) is the market model. He argues the influencing factor is that of choice. The market model has been established since mid 1990s the emphasis of this within education, is providing a successful school. This may create a dilemma which impacts on collaboration not only within their own schools but with other schools. For schools to improve there is an expectation that collaboration will extend to other schools and indeed other agencies. However there remains the expectation that schools may compete for pupils. This suggests that whilst collaboration may take place within the school, collaboration across schools may not always benefit them. The market model requires information about the school to be given to demonstrate the effectiveness of the school in order to attract parents/pupils to choose them rather than another school. All the interviewees indicated that raising attainment was an important aspect of the senior leadership role. They acknowledged that published results and Ofsted inspection reports were used by parents to decide where to send children. This fulfils the success criteria of the market model. However some schools, within this study, expanded on how they develop other aspects of collaboration in the school to encourage wider collaboration with the community.

Accountability in schools is complex and the interviewees appear to adhere to a mixture of the accountability models developed by Simkins (1992) by adhering to this they might inadvertently not achieve the desired accountability for any model. An experience of those interviewed is reiterated in CSFC School accountability Report (2010):

> League tables based on raw test and examination scores failed to account for a school's context, particularly in terms of a challenging intake. Such measures tended to increase the demand for places at schools perceived as 'high-performing' and reduce demand for places at 'low-performing' schools, with damaging consequences for the local community. (p.102).

Research suggests that to develop or improve school performance collaboration is important. This collaboration should not only be happening in the school but also between schools. Collaboration is expected to be used to reach a given goal and as such those collaborating are accountable. This is problematic in that as stated earlier shared accountability may not happen. Also if people are accountable for achieving set targets or results they expect recognition which may introduce an element of competitiveness. This competitiveness may be within or across schools. The School accountability report (CSFC, 2010) indicates this creates a pull in different directions. The reality may be that collaboration may be strengthened by shared accountability or it could be undermined by accountability. In schools where collaboration is part of the culture to collaborate with other schools is a natural extension. Accountability is shared between schools and is viewed as positive:

> I was involved with the triad, this was a productive collaboration and part of the strength was we were coming from different places. (07 School B).

If collaboration happens within a school but may not be part of the culture then collaboration across other schools may be difficult. Accountability may then undermine such collaboration:

> Schools become quite precious if they have something that is good and I am thinking that's why we don't collaborate (04 School B).

Accountability through league tables and Ofsted inspections was referred to by all those interviewed. Whilst some saw a positive element within this, others concentrated on improving their own school.

Part of this confusion is also the element that the headteacher is the person who is ultimately responsible and is expected to adhere to accountability rather than encourage

collaboration. O'Neill (2002) suggests that the 'wrong sort of accountability' (p.4) is being imposed on schools. All those interviewed accepted that accountability gives an opportunity to demonstrate success but are under pressure to achieve targets based on data rather than individual pupils.

Collaboration and accountability may be linked to the advantage of both if there is a change in what is accountable, why accountability is needed and how accountability is undertaken.

Leadership for Collaboration

Goleman, et al (2004) identified 'leadership competencies' the domains which are explored in the questionnaire and interview responses are 'social awareness' and 'relationship management' as they are particularly relevant to collaboration which is the focus of this study. In chapter 4, Table 8 shows that over half of the respondents consider they have a social awareness of their colleagues however the other respondents consider they do not always have or use this domain. A similar response is reflected in Table 11. In section 5 of the questionnaire this domain is considered by some respondents to be strength of the leadership and by others an area that needs to be improved or developed. Interviewees also identify aspects of these two domains contributing to the way collaboration takes place in their school. 'Relationship management' is the domain the majority of interviewees identified as important to the collaborative process.

Another of the characteristics presented by Goleman, et al (2004) is 'inspiration'. Goleman argues that inspiration is shown by a leader who can enthuse people with their vision. They make work exciting with a shared purpose. They 'embody what they ask of others' (p.255).

Many initiatives are introduced into the primary school and it appears from this study leaders no longer feel 'inspired themselves'. All those interviewed talked about 'standards' this links with the previous aspect of accountability. Without raising standards schools may be put into categories by Ofsted, or face falling numbers within the school. Both these have consequences for the school. The first will involve rigorous monitoring and the second financial implications. Although this study provides no data to support the effect of accountability on the aspect of inspiration and collaboration the following extract shows that standards (as measured by others) are the basis for actions within the primary schools, within this study:

> It's always going to be standards. It's always raising standards and something to improve for the children (15 School C).

All interviewees talked about standards, however, a few still found it important to identify how the inspiration of their leader impacted on collaboration. The following extract sums up what inspiration means within the primary school:

> My biggest inspiration is (headteacher). I try to model myself on her. So the skills are people skills that is massively important. If you don't have people skills then people don't want to do anything for you. It is reaching out to their strengths and helping them overcome their weaknesses, even though you might not use that word (09 School D).

Influence, Goleman, et al (2004) state, is about being persuasive and engaging by finding what appeals and then knowing how to build support for an initiative (p.256). This process is demonstrated by the following extract:

> If you can get people to think that things are their idea that is very often a better thing. That is why staff meetings should be in run as 'what do you feel we should do to improve our school'. If a member of staff doesn't feel they have ownership of what is happening in the school then they won't go with it (04 School B).

Developing others is a focus of leaders who 'cultivate people's abilities (p.256) this is demonstrated by the following:

> Also one of our main reasons for going into the Triad was to allow my senior leaders to work and support other schools (03 School C).

Collaboration needs leaders who are enthusiastic and committed to developing a collective effort built on friendly collegiality. Motivation is considered to be a key factor in both in bringing about change and also in enabling successful collaboration to take place for as Fullan (2007) states:

> The message all boils down to one word: motivation. If one's theory of action does not motivate people to put in the effort – individually and collectively – that is necessary to get results, improvement is not possible (p.6).

Summary of Research Question A

The DES Education Reform Act (1988) is important as it at this point that education changed with models of leadership being taken from businesses. The Hay McBer report of 2000 is considered to be important in identifying six leadership approaches. Those interviewed whilst not talking about the report itself identified different characteristics from the report when describing their own leadership approach. Ribbins (2001) also referred to interpretations of leadership that were originally developed by the business sector. He concluded that effective leaders might not have the characteristics and still be successful and others conversely may have the characteristics and not be successful. He suggests that situations may influence styles used. This was reiterated by those interviewed as a quarter of them described their leadership approach changes according to initiatives that need to be introduced and other situations that arise within the course of the school year. Hargreaves (1995) identifies this type of collaborative process as contrived collegiality. Those

interviewed did not however distinguish between collaborative culture and contrived collegiality in their interview responses, collaboration was working together whether imposed or voluntary. Hammersley-Fletcher and Brundrett (2008) support the argument that it is beneficial for staff to share their expertise and be involved in decision making but conclude the head should make the final decision. The majority of interviewees agreed with this. Whilst they (the interviewees) consider it important for their views to be taken into account before a final decision is made they accept it is ultimately the head who has responsibility for decisions as the leader of the school. Accountability in school is complex and this is reflected by those interviewed who supported a mixture of the models developed by Simkins (1992). The literature review identifies headteacher's leadership is considered important in developing and maintaining a culture of collaboration in primary schools. All senior leaders interviewed, for this study, identified collaboration as starting with the headteacher. What the study does not identify is the thinking process the headteachers themselves engage in before putting collaboration into place.

The findings for research question A show there are elements headteachers may need to think about if the collaboration is to be successful:

- The first element is their own style of leadership, the majority in the study identified distributed leadership. The others identified mixed styles depending on the situation.
- The next element to be considered is the collaborative process – do they (the headteachers) consider it should be themselves and a deputy or senior leadership team? Should there be different teams collaborating for example curriculum teams, across phases or year groups? Should other people be involved in the collaboration – parents, helpers, children? Should collaboration be extended to other schools?

- The next element is accountability this may be an issue for as the National Standards for Headteachers (2004) states: 'Headteachers are legally and contractually accountable to the governing body for the school, its environment and all its work' (p.11). It may be that each group of people involved in the collaboration need to document the process so that the headteacher has knowledge on which to accept the accountability.

Changes to develop effective collaboration may take time before they are accepted by staff. The changes may be subtle in that there is a shift from hierarchical 'power' to providing opportunities for involvement in collaboration thus sharing 'power' with others. The way decisions are made may change from being imposed to going through a collaborative process. This type of research would need to be longitudinal in order to identify the change process. This study shows that the majority of senior management teams recognise the value of collaboration:

> Now we look at the whole school self review as well. We look at that altogether; they (the staff) feed into that say why is it like this? Is this performance ok? Is that the vision we started with (03 School C)?

Johnson (2003) argues although collaboration is important implementing it 'involves major changes to the established routines and power dynamics, (p.339/340). The way each school will implement collaboration will vary. Senior leaders introducing and developing collaboration will be able to identify elements that are the same in each school. The knowledge senior leaders have of their own staff and school systems will need to be considered if changes needed for collaboration are to be implemented. Senior leaders should be prepared for effective collaboration to take time to become part of the school culture. This may mean being prepared to refine ideas as the collaborative process is developed.

Research Question B:

Theme 2: Collaborative Process

The main theme of this research question is the contribution the senior leaders make to the collaborative process. As collaboration is identified in literature as an important element in raising the standards in teaching and learning this suggests that senior leaders need to not only encourage collaboration amongst staff but be actively involved in the collaborative process. The literature shows that features of good teamwork also lead to successful collaboration. The difference between teamwork and collaboration is that teamwork may end with compromise, whereas collaboration seeks consensus. Collaboration may from time to time meet barriers which hinder successful collaboration so it is important that senior leaders can recognise these and plan strategies to overcome them. The collaborative process is ongoing and as such may be constantly changing depending on the situation and the people involved in the collaboration.

Teamwork

In chapter 4, Table 12 shows when respondents consider how the team works together there are elements where they feel improvement can be achieved. The overall findings, from present sample, also indicate that communication is one of the elements which need improving. This is important because one of the key elements to effective collaboration is communication. Conversely if communication needs to be improved then collaboration whilst taking place may not be as effective as it could be. One of the blocks to communication identified by interviewees is that of staff meetings. There are different ways of communication identified by interviewees these being either talking to people or giving them written communication. A problem identified by some interviewees is that if either

the individual misses a meeting or the meeting does not take place important issues are not addressed:

> The senior leaders have thought it has been shared and it hasn't. Without minutes, quality sharing, you have the danger of the leadership thinking everybody knows but it has actually been kept in that bubble (04 School B).

If the collaboration which takes place is to be valued and be successful an important aspect is communication. The headteacher's leadership is essential to effective collaboration. If the staff are to fulfil the vision the headteacher has this can only be done if there are clear lines of communication to enable collaboration to move the school forward.

The data collected shows that senior leaders are aware of problems in communication and are attempting to find solutions. Maeroff (1993) identified three major communications skills 'that could be used to promote better understanding:

> 1. Asking better questions in order to get more accurate understanding
>
> 2. Listening better
>
> 3. Being willing to be vulnerable by making 'I think ..' statements instead of presenting one's feelings as facts (p.113).

James and Connolly (2000) argue one of the ways to create a more collaborative 'way of working' so that progress can be made is to empower and encourage collaboration rather than working alone:

> professional dialogue and two-way communication were particularly important where there had been strong resistance to change (p.97).

The issue of communication was discussed in various forms by the majority of those interviewed. Staff meetings and senior leadership meetings are identified by the majority of interviewees as the times when communication should be most effective but half of the interviewees consider the structure of the meetings is such that communication is a

weakness rather than a strength:

> A lot of the things discussed are not shared efficiently with staff. Because there is very little sharing one of the things the staff keep saying is 'we don't feel there is enough communication' (04 School B).

The people who consider communication to be a strength of the collaboration have strategies in place to ensure staff are aware of decisions. The main strategy identified is that of meetings or some activity where all staff are involved. In chapter 4, (Tables 19, 20, 21 and 22) identify the process of meetings in different schools. Table 19 shows that the majority of respondents have a weekly staff meeting. At the other end of the spectrum 16 per cent only call staff meetings when they are considered necessary. This may indicate a 'top down' approach to meetings, with possibly little or no collaboration even though responses suggest that a main source of communication is the staff meeting. Table 20 identifies the structure of meetings the majority indicate that each meeting has an agreed structure, although this structure is not expanded on in the responses. The remainder of the respondents indicate that there is no agreed structure or structure is flexible. This may indicate that there is opportunity for staff to identify areas to be discussed. Table 21 indicates that 39 per cent of headteachers, in the sample, identify the themes they wish to be raised. The remainder identify the themes in collaboration with other colleagues. This suggests collaboration is an important starting point for the staff meetings. Table 22 relates to the discussions and decisions that take place in the staff meeting. This is important as it may inform action to be taken. When collaborating to improve school effectiveness it is important to adhere to the agreed actions so that the school moves forward as a whole. Fullan (2008) identifies two aspects of communication. The first, frequent and timely that is constant, keeping everyone informed. The second, problem solving communication that is where people collaborate to solve problems, learning from the problem but not blaming

people. The primary schools, in this study, identifying communication as a strength produce agendas for meetings giving all staff an opportunity to contribute to the agenda. In this study staff meetings are held by all. A few of the schools, however indicated that meetings are not always frequent but may be timely in that they are called as appropriate. Problem solving communication may not necessarily take place in staff meetings but may be part of the collaborative process. The interviewees, in this study, all identified particular areas where they are facing problems or need change. These problems/changes are the focus of collaboration. This collaboration is instigated by the headteacher through distributed leadership. As with staff meetings effective communication is needed to identify the problem. When meetings have taken place minutes are published showing which person is responsible for following up the agreed action. Then the senior leaders monitor progress giving support if needed.

Fullan (1999) argues that effective communication needs to be consistently worked on because the person doing the communicating 'realizes that difficulties of communication are natural and inevitable' (p.1999).

Barriers

The literature identified Maeroff's (1993) obstacles which affect people working as a team or collaborating. The need for time is to meet with colleagues one of the barriers identified by those interviewed. Table 15 in chapter 4, shows that less than half of respondents gave people time to collaborate on new ideas and reflect on how the collaborative process contributes to school improvement:

Time as always is an issue and finding time becomes more difficult (07 School B).

> I feel the time should be set aside specifically to look at the SIP and issues around raising stands and moving the school forward (01 School A).

The other interviewees when discussing the issue of time talked of how they had made conscious decisions to overcome this obstacle as one interviewee states:

> We have spent time together on what we need to do to maintain, what is duplicated we take out. We have also looked at PPA time which is in school time. We try to be flexible (03 School C).

Within a primary school the issue of time to collaborate is more complex as arrangements may need to be put in place for several staff to be released from the classroom in order to enable the collaboration to take place. The reality is that the issue of time may only be addressed if senior leaders consider it valuable to collaboration and school improvement. Leaders may also find that staff may be reluctant to meet outside school time as the issue of work/life balance may be eroded. As interviewee 04 (School B) stated:

> I get paid to do a job and I am dedicated to the job at times I have to say there is a cut off point.

Another barrier is that of change, for example introducing new initiatives to raise achievement. Fullan (2001) argues:

> Educational change depends on what teachers do and think – it's as simple and complex as that (p.115).

The literature identifies collaboration as important to change for as Day, et al (2000) states:

> The heads in this study were effective because they held and communicated clear vision and values. They empowered staff by developing a climate of collaboration (p.178).

Collaboration for change requires input not only from senior leaders but also from other staff members and other stakeholders. The collaboration may involve staff in making decisions on how the changes are to be introduced and monitored to support colleagues and

thus create successful change. However interviewees, in this study, suggest that in reality collaboration may not always take place to introduce change. Where collaboration is involved interviewees state this may not be as successful as envisaged. All interviewees found this aspect of collaboration for change met difficulties. The data, in this study, identifies relationships as one of the difficulties for as one interviewee states:

> I think there is no point in collaborating with someone if they are set in their ways and they don't want to know anyway (04 School B).

This resistance to change may be identified as unwillingness to collaborate however, Fullan (2003) argues 'dissent is seen as a potential source of new ideas and breakthroughs (p.97). He develops his argument by suggesting that an absence of conflict suggests 'decay'. By listening to concerns Fullan suggests change can become effective as change is based on interaction. This study shows that whilst a collaborative process is taking place it may need to be widened to include the understanding that collaboration can benefit from resistance as this can lead to a new ways of approaching change. All interviewees stated that if collaboration for change is to work then those involved in bringing about the change need to know:

- Why change is needed?
- Who it will affect?
- How it will be introduced/monitored?
- Is it necessary to improve teaching and learning?
- How will the change benefit the children?

The above questions could be the starting point of the collaboration for change, as by answering them a purpose for the change is established.

Motivation

Motivation is an important element of collaboration because unless people see their contribution as being important and meaningful they may not consider it worthwhile joining in the collaborative process. Motivation can be self motivation or senior leaders providing motivation for implementation of changes or improvements to school effectiveness. Levin and Fullan (2008) argue one of the problems with educational reform is demotivation of staff who may consider the reform to be an 'attack' on them as professionals. Table 16 shows respondents sometimes consider criticism to move the school forward may be personal rather than an opportunity for improvement. This perceived 'attack' may not only affect motivation but ultimately the collaborative process. If people are defensive at the start of the collaborative process then they are less likely to interact effectively with colleagues.

In chapter 4, Table 8, shows just under half of respondents consider they motivate staff whilst the remainder consider they do not always succeed in motivating the staff in their school or team. Lack of motivation may impact on collaboration with the possible result that even if the task is completed it may take longer to achieve.

Evans (2001) states that the key fulfilment or motivating factor is achievement. The following supports the argument present by Evans:

> It's not really a job it's a profession and as part of profession you should in a way be self motivated to succeed (04 School B).

It may be that self motivation is expected from senior leaders and other staff and that motivating colleagues may not be necessary.

Johnson (2003) identified 'important emotional and psychological benefits associated with collaborative working. These benefits may contribute to intrinsic motivation.

Middlewood (2010) argues:

> What motivates one person will not necessarily motivate and another, and consequently, not to assume that what motivates the leader will necessarily motivate the led (p.139).

He suggests that ownership of individuals working in teams develops individual support from which motivation can be developed.

All of those interviewed considered, together with support, praise and acknowledgement of achievement is an important aspect of motivation. They stated in the interview that senior leaders were quick to criticise or point out failings but rarely acknowledged success. Although the interviewees suggest that people do not always feel valued the responses to the questionnaire indicated that 68 per cent feel valued. This result may be because the questionnaire did not require an in depth response whereas as interviews progressed people had opportunity to develop their responses. Table 24 responses also show that respondents do not always feel valued. This result may only reflect opinions on the day it was completed and opinions may change from day to day. Brighouse and Woods (1999) identify the importance of recognition and respect not only 'top down' but also among peers if collaboration is to be successful. Working relationships may also affect collaboration. Research by Johnson (2003) argued the majority in the study identified working collaboratively provided 'made them feel better about themselves' (p.344). Conversely, Johnson (2003) states a minority were negative about the collaboration (p.347). The following is an example of the type of comments made by interviewees:

> I think enthusiasm, encouragement, praise – make sure everybody feels valued. Everybody is valued as being equal within the team - It's just encouraging everybody to do their bit really (14 School E).

Evans (2001) argues that 'recognition is a key motivator' (p162) recognition will only be achieved if leaders know what is happening in the school. All of those interviewed

considered acknowledgement of achievement and success important as it motivated people to continue to meet challenges:

> I suppose in terms of motivation it's nice to get a pat on the back and sometimes just a little gesture like a card saying thanks for having the class (11 School E).

Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) argue changes in education to increase competition between schools and to introduce standardisation (p.8) resulted in a 'crisis of sinking professional motivation' (p.11) .They continue the argument by stating there was a move towards professional recognition which 'reinvigorated and restored pride among the teaching profession' (p.88). These arguments suggest that motivation, as with other aspects of collaboration, is complex. Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) suggest one way to increase professional motivation is through networks.

Networking/Partnership

The majority of those responding to the questionnaire identified collaboration between schools to be important, identifying a positive impact on collaboration within their own schools. This is reflected in the government White Paper (2009):

> Over recent years, schools have increasingly chosen to become involved in collaborations in order to achieve more by working together than they could by acting alone (p.44).

Interviewees state that the collaboration between schools is not always with all staff members. It is mainly the senior leaders who collaborate with other schools. The results of

the collaboration are then 'cascaded' to the staff. One difficulty with this might be that the dissemination of the information may not be accurate. Those who were involved with the collaboration may only feedback the aspects that interested them. As a result of this it may be that an important element is ignored. One difficulty in the way of collaboration or networking is that of releasing staff to visit other schools. A few of the schools where interviews took place have shared training days with other schools resulting in collaboration not just in the day but in subsequent activities. Collaboration between schools is indentified, by those who participated in this study, as an important aspect of raising achievements within each school. The schools identify the collaborative process in terms of sharing resources, skills and ideas:

> Collaboration between different schools is something we do. It's good because the collaboration takes skills and ideas from other people (07 School B).

This reason for collaboration is also identified in the literature for as Townsend (2010) argues:

> This participant/organisation interaction in these networks is perceived as providing an opportunity for the construction and sharing of new practices which evolve from the aspirations of participants and through the mechanisms of networks (p.257).

The remainder of the schools indicate they are in the process of developing collaboration between schools, one way this is beginning to happen is to ask coordinators from a different school to staff meetings to share the good practice relating to teaching and learning. Collaboration between schools may however be potentially problematic for example integrating structures and roles. Accountability may also need to be agreed. This study has not gathered data on collaboration between schools however further research into this would be valuable.

Summary of Research Question B

The literature links collaboration with school improvement and effectiveness. Collaboration can exist on several levels although for the purpose of this study the focus is on collaboration undertaken by senior leadership. The DCSF (2008) White Paper identified collaboration as element of education. Connolly and James (2006) stated current literature identified six collaboration factors. One of the factors of collaboration is motivation or commitment of team members. The responses to the questionnaire and interviews identified that motivating staff is not always successful. Collaboration between schools was identified as being important the majority of those interviewed indicated they are in the early process of networking or collaborating with other schools. Townsend (2010) argues that there are different types of network of these types the schools interviewed identified that networking they used is based on Townsend's 'formal' type.

Wallace (2001), Cranston and Ehrich (2005) and Connolly and James (2006) all identified issues which enabled senior leaders to develop opportunities for collaboration and also issues which may affect how they operate as a team.

The results of the questionnaire and responses to interview identified elements that respondents indicated improvements needed to be made. These were communication, time and introducing change, for example, introducing new initiatives. All identified a 'top down' approach to each of these elements rather than a 'bottom up' approach. By developing reflective practice it might be possible for schools to identify how changing this approach could be beneficial and enable improvements to be made to communication, time and change itself. The data in this study shows the senior leaders begin the collaborative process, by identifying issues related to teaching and learning, within leadership meetings.

The results of this collaboration are then shared with staff. The collaboration is then developed to include other colleagues 'impact on teaching and learning will have been developed collaboratively rather than by one person doing something' (07 School B).

Research Question C:

Theme 3: Reflection on the Collaborative Process

The main theme of this research question is the importance of reflection to the collaborative process. Day (2003) and Stoll and Fink (1996) all identify reflection as a key element to school improvement. Reflection may be made as an individual on their own practice. It might also be a collaborative reflection, as a group, identifying strengths and where improvements could be made in the collaborative process. These reflections may then feed into identifying if collaboration within the school is successful. As collaboration contributes to school improvement then time for reflection should be part of the collaborative process. Bush (2003) argued that leaders need to be aware of different leadership approaches but in reality may use a more than one dependant on the situation. This is important to the concept of collaboration because in order for collaboration to be effective different strategies may need to be introduced:

> Leaders should choose the theory most appropriate for the organization and for the particular situation under consideration. Appreciation of the various models is the starting point for effective action (p.195).

Reflection on leadership and leadership approach may be necessary for senior leaders to develop and improve collaboration which will in turn improve teaching and learning. Day (1993) argues that reflection is 'an essential part of learning' (p.84). He develops the argument that reflection should be 'analytic and involve dialogue with others' (p.86). This suggests that reflection within the collaborative process is important to improving teaching

and learning. The data from this study does not identify whether reflection within the collaboration is analytical but it does show that those who responded engage in dialogue 'we listen to each other taking on board what we are saying in an effort to move forward as a unit' (05 School B).

Reflective Practice

Reflection can be undertaken in different forms but as Day (2000) argues reflecting alone has limitations it is through collaborative reflection that the school moves forward:

> Discussions and dialogues between practitioners with common purposes are needed to move from routine to reflective practice in schools (p.123).

The data in this study shows that reflective practice is used to develop collaboration and improve teaching and learning. Interviewee 13 (School E) identifies that reflection is a continual process within their school:

> We are very much into reflection, we reflect everything we do, processes, teaching and learning.

In chapter 4, Table 14 shows that just over half of the respondents actively encourage reflection in individuals. The other respondents show that whilst they do use reflective practice it is not always a part of the collaborative process. In interviews those who do not incorporate reflection into the collaborative process stated that if time was an issue this was left to individuals. When reflection involves analysing the actions or decisions of teams then less than half of respondents show this is part of the team process. This may affect the

collaboration process because:

a) it might be difficult to identify what was successful;

b) it may difficult to identify where changes or improvements need to be made to the process to enable success to be achieved.

This process of reflection is an important aspect of collaboration. It gives people the opportunity to voice their opinions and perspective on the collaborative process. It also provides an opportunity to celebrate success. Including reflection in the cycle of raising standards may also improve collaboration. Day (2003) identified five kinds of reflection the majority of those interviewed support this using aspects from each type of reflection. The two kinds of reflection receiving greater emphasis are 'pedagogical' and 'intrapersonal' as the shown by the following extracts:

> We do ask for feedback, it's about the whole school moving forward. We analyse and share good practice as well (10 School D).

> On some things (our reflection) is adequate, on most things abysmal. If you put something in place you should check on it regularly until you are sure it is embedded (02 School A).

Part of the reflective process is that success and achievement are acknowledged and may be celebrated. It is important, if collaboration is to work, achievements are acknowledged and success celebrated. The responses to the questionnaire and interviews show that whilst all agree reflection is important it does not happen as often as it might. Interviewees that state that reflection takes place also indicate that this is because it has been made part of the collaborative process. Those that state that it is happening but not always it is because reflection has not yet been planned for in the collaborative process. The implication for collaboration to improve teaching and learning is, there may be occasions when

opportunities to develop both successful collaboration and teaching and learning are not identified. It may also be reflection is itself a skill that needs to be developed and refined. This might be an area of research which could be undertaken for as Day (1993) states 'We do not know how reflection leads to change (p.90).

Summary of Research Question C

In order to develop effective teaching and learning and by implication school improvement both literature and those interviewed agree reflection on processes is important. Bush (1995) argues leaders may need to alter the leadership depending on the situation. In order to adapt leadership they should be aware of the theory and models identified within the research literature. Half of those interviewed referred to their awareness of the leadership approach they adhered to. The others stated they did not consciously adhere to any theoretical approach. In the study by Johnson (2003) teachers who reflected on their practice were able to 'locate their teaching within a coherent educational philosophy (p.345)'. This suggests that reflection is important to identifying leadership approach. Collaboration is important because it allows discussions to take place which promotes 'thinking at a theoretical level (Johnson 2003, p.345)'. Day (1993) extends this argument to suggest that 'the reflective process is central to learning' (p.90).

Stoll and Fink (1996) and Day (2007) identify that reflection is important both to school improvement and the collaborative process. All those interviewed stated reflection is important although it is not always built into the collaborative processes in place within the school. This study provides no statistical data to show teaching and learning is improved by collaboration - however all the interviewees indicate that the collaborative process, where followed, has impacted on the quality of lessons. If lessons are improved then it suggests

that learning and achievement has also improved. The reflective process may provide an opportunity to gather data to support this assumption.

Research Question D:

All those interviewed indentified the school development plan as the document which they used to develop collaboration to improve school effectiveness, particularly teaching and learning. All the schools use the school development plan as the starting point for identifying changes or developments which will move the school forward.

Section 3 of the questionnaire shows respondents reflect on changes the introduction of changes may also affect the process of collaboration as teams may need to be altered. The professional skills and resources needed to introduce change may also affect the dynamics of the collaboration. Table 17 shows half of the respondents indicated that sufficient support or training is not always provided. This may hinder or affect the collaborative process. In my professional opinion although collaboration may become challenging schools need to be open to change which will not only improve attainment but is also workable. From the findings in this study there has emerged different ways in which collaboration for change may be introduced into a primary school. One of these ways is the school development plan.

Theme 4; Senior Leaders Involving Staff in Collaboration for School Improvement

School Development Plan

The school development plan is a process through which senior leaders, often in collaboration with other colleagues, identify priorities for school improvement and development. Whilst the format of the plan may vary from school to school the principle is the same. Actions needed to improve the school including teaching and learning are identified, the cost, the resources needed, and time scale are also included. The person responsible for initiating and monitoring the process and success criteria are also identified. Few of the interviewees stated that they involve and collaborate with all staff members in the planning process so that they have ownership of the plan and are empowered to contribute to actions identified. The other interviewees indicated that the plan is compiled by the headteacher and deputy with input from senior leaders. Other staff members are presented with the plan when it is finished. This means that whilst there may be some collaboration amongst the leaders other staff members are not involved in this collaboration. Since staff have no involvement in the planning they may not contribute to the collaboration needed to successful fulfil the plan. The literature identifies that staff may not always be part of the collaborative process of the school development plan. Bell (2002) argues that during the planning process leadership do not always consider the school context and as such:

> The planning process does not recognise the part played by individual teachers in implementing strategies for improvement and fails to acknowledge the very real dilemmas that confront senior staff in schools (p.414).

To overcome the issues raised, Bell (2002) argues planning should be shared and flexible so that it can be updated or changed when new information is received or the initial situation changes:

> At the strategic level there will be much more emphasis on the collaborative revision of the overall plan (p.421).

In this study schools indicate the senior leaders begin the collaborative process then involve colleagues at appropriate points of the plan:

> At the moment we have been doing the school development plan, we are actually asking people to identify their own area development. To look at what they have improved upon this year (09 School D).

Whilst collaboration on the school development plan does happen it may be embedded in the practice that it is the senior leader's responsibility to identify changes or improvements that need to be implemented. Bell (2002) argues there 'a realisation of plans requires a commitment from and the involvement of staff at the organisational and operation levels' (p.414). The implementation of any plan needs a willingness on the part of the staff if the plan is to succeed. Collaboration may be the way to ensure staff understand the importance of decisions made at the planning stage.

School Improvement and Effectiveness

The school development plan is identified by all respondents as an important base for action within the school and as such they state it should be an ongoing agenda item for discussion at staff meetings. The reality does not reflect this, Table 23, in chapter 4 shows that 10 per cent use the whole meeting to discuss raising standards and 10 per cent use little of the meeting to discuss raising standards. Of the remaining respondents, in this sample, 46 per cent use either half or three quarters of the meeting time to discuss how to raise

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standards and improve the school. The other 34 per cent state discussion on how to raise

standards and improve the school is dependent on the agenda. This suggests that

collaboration, as a whole staff, on school improvement and effectiveness is limited. The

agenda is proposed mainly by the leadership indicating that there is little opportunity for

input from staff at this stage. This may become a barrier to collaboration when

implementing actions for school improvement.

Despite the above limitations all those who responded to the questionnaire and were

interviewed put school improvement and effectiveness as a high priority. Table 10 shows

whilst improvement is important respondents do not consider that everything introduced

needs or should be developed. Respondents identified that the school development plan,

motivation, accountability were important aspects of the process The processes used to

check on improvement and effectiveness are identified by the respondents as monitoring,

assessment and collaborative working. Stoll and Fink (1996) and Brighouse and Woods

(1999) identified processes they argued would lead to improvement and effectiveness.

Rhodes and Brundrett (2010) argue:

> A developing consensus suggest that school heads improve teaching and learning
> indirectly through their influence on staff motivation, development and working
> conditions (p.156).

This is important because as Rhodes and Brundrett (2010) state in the classroom it is the

teachers who build up relationships with the learners utilising their knowledge and skill to

provide lessons that provide good experiences of learning together with high expectations.

The standards for good teaching are reinforced not only by the headteacher and senior

leadership team but also by Ofsted with input from the LA. Those interviewed identify

different processes within the school to check improvement is being achieved and

maintained. Whilst interviewees indicate school improvement and effectiveness is a collaboration in reality this collaboration may be limited. As Rhodes and Brundrett (2010) argue school leaders have a direct influence on school improvement and effectiveness and this is achieved through a collaborative culture. This leadership influence is shown in the following interview extract:

> Support from the headteacher is important. The support given teachers makes them feel more comfortable at delivering if they have the necessary resources (09 School D).

Dimmock (1995) argued that changes made in the classroom should be supported by changes at other levels of the organisation if innovations are to succeed. Those interviewed show evidence of support for delivering quality teaching and learning is part of their processes:

> We are doing a lot of monitoring, lesson observation, looking at planning and books. Just keeping everybody informed of what is expected and making sure everybody is doing the best they can for the children. Teachers are more aware of the standards in their class (14 School E).

Dimmock (1995) concluded his arguments stating:

> Too many innovations have failed because change was attempted at one level by grafting on to existing structures and practices, which remain unaltered (p.17).

The evidence from those interviewed supports this statement. The structure of collaboration in the majority of schools interviewed appears to be imposed by the senior leaders. The links exist from leadership down, but do not appear to be initiated from teachers with links up to senior leaders. The interviewees indicate that the schools keep structure and practice the same but tried to 'graft' on the innovations or changes they wanted to make.

Summary of Research Question D

The main theme of this question is collaboration for school improvement. The sub-themes which contribute to this are the school development plan and school improvement/effectiveness. Bell (2002) suggests for planning to succeed it should be built on a shared understanding 'a collaborative process'. Of those interviewed few referred to collaboration at each stage of compiling the plan. The others stated that it is either the headteacher or deputy who produces the plan. This may affect the quality of collaboration when the plan is implemented. Those who are involved throughout the process are more likely to collaborate successfully because they have ownership of the plan. Those who are not involved in the planning process may still collaborate but may possibly have less commitment to how it is put into action. This study, suggests that senior leaders may need to develop strategies to involve all staff members not only in collaborating on the school development plan but also in identifying effective ways to implement it.

All schools identified school improvement/effectiveness as important; they all referred to Ofsted inspections indicating that it was essential to make sure standards would meet any inspection. This may be the reason that only a few schools saw collaboration in each process important, senior leaders may be reluctant to involve staff completely in collaboration as in an inspection they are the people who answer questions and see themselves as responsible for achieving a satisfactory or better outcome.

Summary of Discussion and Contribution to Knowledge

Each theme and sub-theme identified by the questionnaire and developed by the interviews are analysed separately as important elements of collaboration. Connolly and James (2006) argue:

> Collaboration in education can operate in varied ways and at different levels in the system. Those involved require particular capabilities, need to be motivated to collaborate and require opportunities to do so (p.76).

Leadership is different from school to school, because of this whilst schools indicate they use collaboration to raise achievement, collaboration ranges from a culture of collaboration to one that is at the start of changing to a collaborative culture. The leadership approach identified by the majority of interviewees is distributed but again this varies from school to school. More than half of those interviewed identified their leadership approach as a 'mixture' depending on the situation or task needing to be addressed. Involving staff in decision making is an important element of collaboration but this is complex as half the respondents to the questionnaire show that sometimes they are not involved and it is the headteacher or senior staff member who makes the decision. This is linked to the fact that although each person within the school is accountable it is ultimately the headteacher who is responsible for ensuring the school is reaching the required standards.

Next is how the senior leaders contribute to collaborative process within the school to ensure it impacts on teaching and learning. All those interviewed identified that the collaborative process is important if teaching and learning is to make an impact on school effectiveness. One of the elements of collaborative process the majority identified as either a weakness or needing to be improved is communication.

Fullan (2008) identifies that when collaboration begins with teachers they move from thinking only of their class to thinking about the school. This then evolves into looking at the success within other schools. An element of this change is communication or sharing of knowledge. Fullan develops the argument by stating that collaboration needs to be purposeful Leadership is important in 'providing direction, create conditions for effective peer interaction and intervene when things are not working as well as they could' (p.49). Collaboration in meetings, for example whole staff, phase meetings or senior leadership meetings, takes place within the schools in this study. The sample in this study shows meetings have become routine within schools and may have become ineffective in that the collaboration within the meetings may not be about sharing knowledge that is purposeful. For example interviewee 13 (School E) states:

> There certainly needs to be a more rigorous use of the senior leaders meeting. At one point they tended to be more of an update and giving a list of dates.

This study indentifies a need for the function of meetings to be reflected upon to develop a format that allows purposeful collaboration to take place to meet the challenge of school improvement. Agendas are one of the tools used to promote collaboration and as such should be given to people before meetings so that effective knowledge can be brought to the collaboration. As interviewee 15 (School C) states:

> I like to be informed so that my contribution is effective and relevant not just off the top of my head.

Time to meet collaboratively in various situations was also discussed. Time for the collaborative process is not new and is identified as an issue by Maeroff (1993). Effective collaboration should involve everyone in the specific area of development. This may mean several people from different phases of the school need to meet. Those who responded to the questionnaire and interviews in this study indicate that giving time to each of these

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people at the same time can be problematic. The contribution this study makes is to show how different schools are attempting to overcome the problem of time for collaboration for example:

> We allocate support staff so that everybody is covered. We work on giving one day a week this is done as a whole school thing (03 School C).

Another way of giving time to collaborate may be bringing in specialist staff:

> While staff are together sports coaches work with the children. This has led to more effective collaboration (11 School E).

Once time is provided for collaboration it will need to be used effectively for example:

> Define task – clarify what is required.

> Agree end date balancing long term objectives with short term ones.

> Review progress – identify where people are in collaborative process.

> Collaborative time together may not solve problems but can reveal them enabling solutions to be found.

Senior leaders are important to the management of time, for time is a resource. It may be beneficial for senior leaders to train others in time management. Providing an overview together with actions needed to be done and follow up on actions. Reflection on how time was used, providing information on which way of using time was successful and which might need improving. Hargreaves (1995) suggests externally imposed change is structural rather than cultural since changes are about practice. If changes continue to be implemented over time they become part of the routines. With changes is an increase in paper work and minutes to keep people informed so they do not suspect changes are being made without consent or collaboration. This study contributes to knowledge in that it shows externally imposed change needs to be taken into account but all agree that the change should benefit the children not just academically but holistically. The model for school improvement and effectiveness does not extend to reflective collaboration. Reflective collaboration on

structural change, identifying at what point it becomes routine may provide the knowledge required to determine whether the change should continue and become part of the culture or be altered to enhance school improvement.

The element of networking is viewed by those interviewed as ongoing. In the majority of schools this process is at the beginning stage with staff collaborating on issues relevant to each school. In others a conscious effort has been made to bring schools together to focus on elements of teaching and learning that will develop and improvement effectiveness of the schools.

Finally is how senior leaders not only motivate staff to become part of the collaborative process but how they ensure staff accept that they are also responsible and accountable for school improvement and effectiveness. Bell (2002) argues:

> It requires a new form of leadership predicated on openness, collaboration and power sharing where flexibility, creativity, imagination and responsiveness can flourish and genuine accountability for school improvement can exist (p.421).

The questionnaire responses and interviews show that all of the schools spend time on school development plans. The majority involve staff in the process of planning as they consider it to be an important tool in school effectiveness. Once the plan is created it is not always referred to and only a small number will use the plan as a working document which is amended or added to as appropriate:

> Meetings still need to have a heavier lean on the school development plan and it needs to be more strategic in that you need to know what you are turning up for (13 School E).

MacGilchrist, et al (1995) argue there are different types of planning. In their study they identified schools which used each of the different types. The responses to interviews undertaken in the study supports their findings. School improvement linked to the school

development plan and teaching and learning is considered a high priority by all the schools. Rhodes and Brundrett (2010) identify the classroom as central to developing teaching and learning. The headteacher and senior staff indirectly enable this to be achieved by their influence. Dimmock (1995) contributes to this argument by suggesting changes in the classroom should be supported by changes at other levels. Those senior leaders interviewed show that change in classroom is varied; it is imposed by the majority of those interviewed. The minority of the senior leaders take into account not just the context of the

school but also the variation in the pupils within each class:

> It's furthering our knowledge and understanding of how to get the best from the children and get them where we want them to be. If it needs a different style and approach in order to do that I think it's important to change (10 School D).

The literature for themes related to collaboration, school improvement and teaching and learning is wide and varied. This chapter has discussed those identified by literature and data gathered in this study. To develop effective collaboration within a school an audit or reflection should take place to ascertain where strengths and weaknesses are. The study, however, has only researched collaboration of senior leaders. For the research to develop it would be valuable to gather evidence from others involved particularly the children as they have rarely been included by those who have been interviewed.

The next chapter will present overall conclusions identifying main themes, arising from the literature and data, relating to collaboration of senior leaders in a primary school. The chapter will also link the contribution to knowledge identified, in this study, to the research questions.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The theme of this study is collaboration. The purpose of the study was to develop an understanding of the collaborative processes adopted by primary schools in a Midland's LA. The starting point for the study was the research of Wallace and Huckman (1999) from which questionnaires were designed to inform interviews. The study shows that whilst the importance of collaboration is identified, both in literature and in responses collected through questionnaires and interviews, the understanding of collaboration may vary. There are a number of elements which contribute to effective collaboration some of which schools in this study identify as strengths and some as needing improvement (Diagram A).

This chapter is in five parts. After this introduction part two will present an overview of findings in relation to research questions and the literature review. It will identify emergent issues linking them to the research questions and how they may contribute to further knowledge. Part three will identify some limitations of this study making suggestions for future research. Part four will summarise the contribution of the study to developing understanding of the collaborative process and identify implications of findings. Part five will present a final reflection on this study.

Review of Findings

The focus of research question A was leadership. Wallace and Huckman (1999) suggest that equal contribution between headteacher and senior leaders with willingness to

compromise produces 'high gain' in progress (Table 1). Brundrett and Rhodes (2011) state:

One way in which leaders can act to modify prevailing culture and hence facilitate quality improvement is by changing how they work with their colleagues (p.41).

The senior leaders in this study consider their style of leadership to be distributed. However the conception of 'distributed leadership, was different for each interviewee. Indeed the complexity of leadership is such that whilst headteachers considered 'distributed leadership 'to be a way of developing collaboration this study indicates that in reality this appears not to be the case. Those interviewed stated the distributed leadership within their school involved little contribution from them. The result of this is whilst collaboration takes place it is under the constraints of the task delegated. The final decision and control of the task remains with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. The literature suggests distributed leadership is confused with delegated leadership which may distribute tasks but does not give the authority to take final decisions.

Elements which contribute to the collaborative process, such as decision making and accountability are all dependant on headteachers' perceived interpretation of collaboration. Again the study suggests that whilst headteachers consider they involve all staff in each of these elements the reality is they operate a top-down approach for each element. The structure of each primary school is such that ultimately the headteacher considers that, as they are responsible for standards and improvements within the school, they need to keep control of what happens within the school. This suggests that whilst they give power for staff to develop collaboration, this follows their own concept of collaboration. The interviewees argued that the headteacher is 'paid' to take ultimate responsibility and as such they accepted that the final decision is theirs. The frustration expressed is a result of not being empowered to complete the collaborative process by implementing changes

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identified before consulting the headteacher. Although the interviewees accept the headteacher is ultimately the person held accountable they acknowledge that they should also accept responsibility for raising standards within the school. Collaboration when successful allows this responsibility to be shared. The interviewees identified that the collaborative process is not always equal because there are times when people either do not enter into the collaboration or may even attempt to undermine it. If this happens then the responsibility and subsequent accountability is not shared but becomes individualistic, perhaps becoming competitive rather than collaborative. O'Neill (2002) argues that accountability may hinder collaboration, however if accountability were re-examined in the way it is administered it could be changed to become an effective tool for collaboration. Diagram C shows the present leadership structure in primary schools:

Diagram C: present structure in Primary school – identifying 'top-down' approach.

Headteacher

Deputy headteacher

other senior leaders

govenors

other schools

teachers/other staff
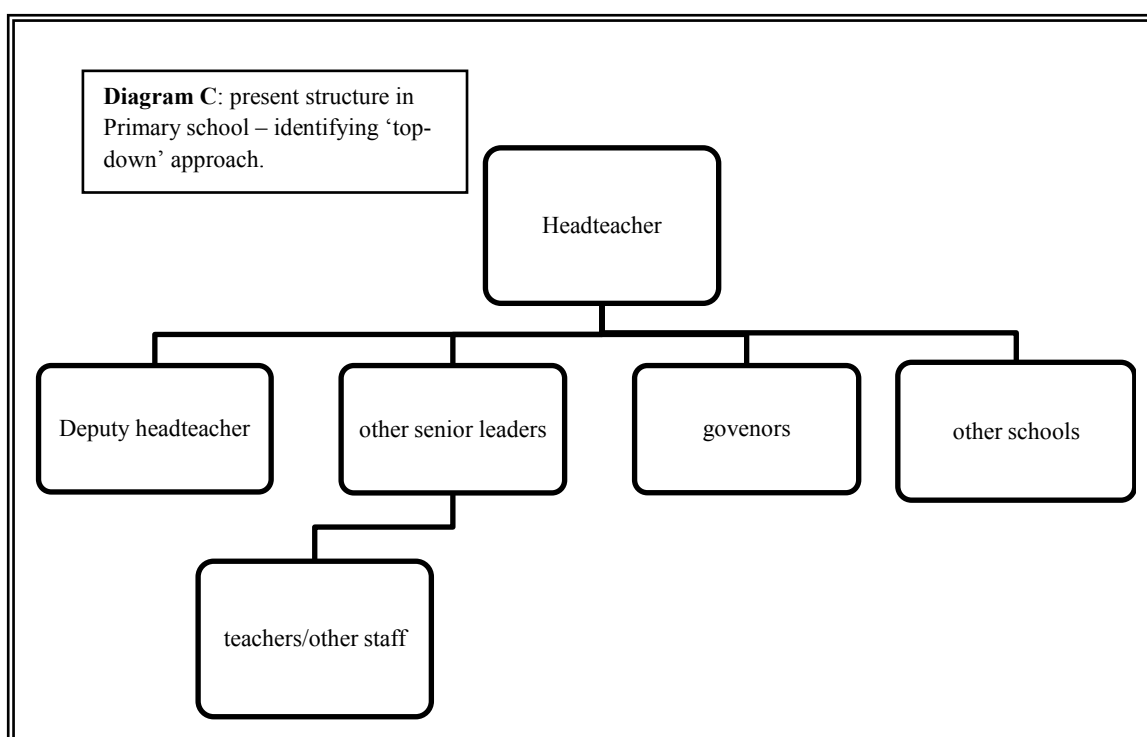
Diagram C: present structure of primary schools in this study

The contribution this study makes is to identify that leaders consider the leadership approach used contributes towards successful collaboration but this may not be the reality. I would suggest extending the equal contribution aspect of the model developed by Wallace and Huckman (1999) may be valuable for leaders in primary schools. They show high gain is achieved from equal contribution of senior leaders with 'many ideas, willingness to compromise, outcomes acceptable to head' (Table 1). The following Diagram D suggests an addition to this:

Quality collaboration	Identifying common understanding of distributed leadership.
	Identify common understanding of collaboration.
High gain	
Low strain	Shared accountability.
Increased motivation leading to school improvement	All have a voice.
	Time to collaborate.
	Reflection built into collaborative process.

Diagram D: Development of model presented by Wallace and Huckman (1999)

The focus of research question B is how senior leaders contribute to the collaborative process. This study identified that the senior leaders who contributed data, whilst acknowledging the importance of collaboration, identified barriers or obstacles that hindered successful collaboration. Continual educational change, communication and time were the elements identified as needing improvements. Fullan (2001) argues that change happens best when collaboration is involved. The data collected for this study again shows that all the issues, change, communication and time are imposed top-down. The evidence identifies this itself is one of the barriers for whilst the view from staff is that all that

happens is top-down, little effort may be made to identify where those not at the 'top' can initiate change or improve collaboration. Although schools are individual in how the collaborative process is approached. James and Connolly (2000) argued that working together, rather than alone enhances professional dialogue. One aspect of communication which varies between schools staff meetings. Wallace and Huckman (1999) identified that

in their research 'heads controlled parameters for joint work through team meetings' (p.158). The interviewees in this study suggested a 'top-down' approach as it is ultimately the headteacher who instigates meetings, often being the person who sets the agenda. If meetings take place initiated by other staff the interviewees state that the headteacher's consent is sought and results presented either verbally or as minutes. Thus collaboration whilst taking place is still constrained by the headteacher.

An element which is important to collaboration is motivation of staff the results of this study show that this again is a complex area. Literature identifies that motivation can affect collaboration. Evans (2001) argues that school specific factors are significant to motivation with the common element across schools being that of the success of the children. Those interviewed felt it was important to acknowledge not just their success but also the contribution made by them to the collaborative process. This is one area that whilst it is important to receive this acknowledgement from the headteacher it is also valuable to receive acknowledgement from colleagues.

This study contributes to knowledge by identifying how communication may affect collaboration. The staff meeting is one form of communication which may impact on collaboration these meetings may either strengthen collaboration or alternatively be a

weakness in the process. Diagram E shows how communication is part of the model to promote collaboration.

The focus of research question C is how reflective practice enhances collaboration for school improvement. Reflection is identified as important both in literature and government imposed initiates. It is also an aspect the National Standards for Headteachers (DfES, 2004). Reflection is considered important by the interviewees, in this study, however, half of those who contributed to the study stated that reflection is not always a part of the collaborative process. They argued that if it does take place the time given to reflection is very little. Reflection is identified as an individual responsibility rather than part of the collaborative process. Those who do build in the reflective aspect of the process indicate that it is important as reflection enables them to identify success, where improvement is needed, what was unsuccessful. This strengthens the collaborative process as the sharing of opinions provides a better overview of how the collaborative process is raising achievements. Again whilst this would appear to be initiated at all levels those who contributed suggests that it is the headteacher that encourages reflection or not dependant on their view of the importance of the task. This would suggest that a top-down approach is important as it is the headteacher that takes the 'lead'.

This study shows that further research into how reflection is perceived as part of collaboration would be valuable. This study presents a tentative model for discussion (Diagram F). These discussions would then, with this study, further contribute to knowledge of collaboration.

The focus of research question D is how senior leaders involve staff in the collaborative process. The development plan is identified by all schools as the action plan for school

improvement. This plan is identified by the primary schools, in this study, as informing the collaborative process to improve teaching and learning. Findings show that collaboration takes place on different aspects of the plan as it is implemented, however if discussions take place at staff meetings this will have be a top down process as discussion will be instigated by the headteacher. Bell (2002) identified issues relating to the school development plan and suggested that the approach to the plan should be altered so there is collaboration. This collaboration would then produce a plan which may lead to in-depth improvement of achievements. Wallace and Huckman (1999) identify the school development plan as part of 'strategic planning'. This study develops this by identifying the importance of the SDP in the collaborative process.

Limitations of the Research

As indicated in the chapter 3 a limitation of the design was the relatively small scale of the research.which posed limitations on the study. The study is still of value although a larger sample would have allowed verification of collaboration within the primary school to have been more conclusive. However it is suggested that future research be carried out by entering into closer personal contact with schools at the questionnaire stage. It would also be valuable to undertake a longitudinal study based on collaboration as it is at present and then after implementation of the suggested model.

Implications of Findings

This study indicates that as collaboration is closely identified with school improvement and school effectiveness in literature, government documents and the various professional training offered to schools, it would appear to be appropriate to reassess how collaboration

takes place within schools. The study identifies that although senior leadership teams

consider collaboration is taking place at all levels, it is in fact mainly a top-down approach.

Diagram C identifies the present structure of collaboration in the primary school. The data

collected shows it is rare for the other colleagues within the school to be included in the

collaboration other than at the point designated by the senior leadership team.

Wallace and Huckman (1999) identified that collaboration is dependent on the headteachers

perception and commitment to a collaborative process (Table 1). Their findings are

reflected in the data for this study. Diagram E is based on the findings of this study and

develops Diagram A. This tentative model reflects the elements needed to promote

collaboration. Collaboration between the headteacher and senior leaders is, as with Diagram

A the start of the process, however, the main element to emerge is that of reflection (shown

in middle of diagram and linked to collaboration). The diagram is simplified as some

elements in Diagram A become integral to those in Diagram E for example lead by example

encapsulates leadership approach and leadership models. By developing the elements in

Diagram E collaboration should become part of the culture of the school rather than

needing to identify where collaboration can happen. The work of Coleman (2011) argues

that a blended model of leadership will lead to effective collaboration the data which has

emerged from this study identifies reflection as important to any leadership model. This has

implications for leaders and those who provide leadership training.
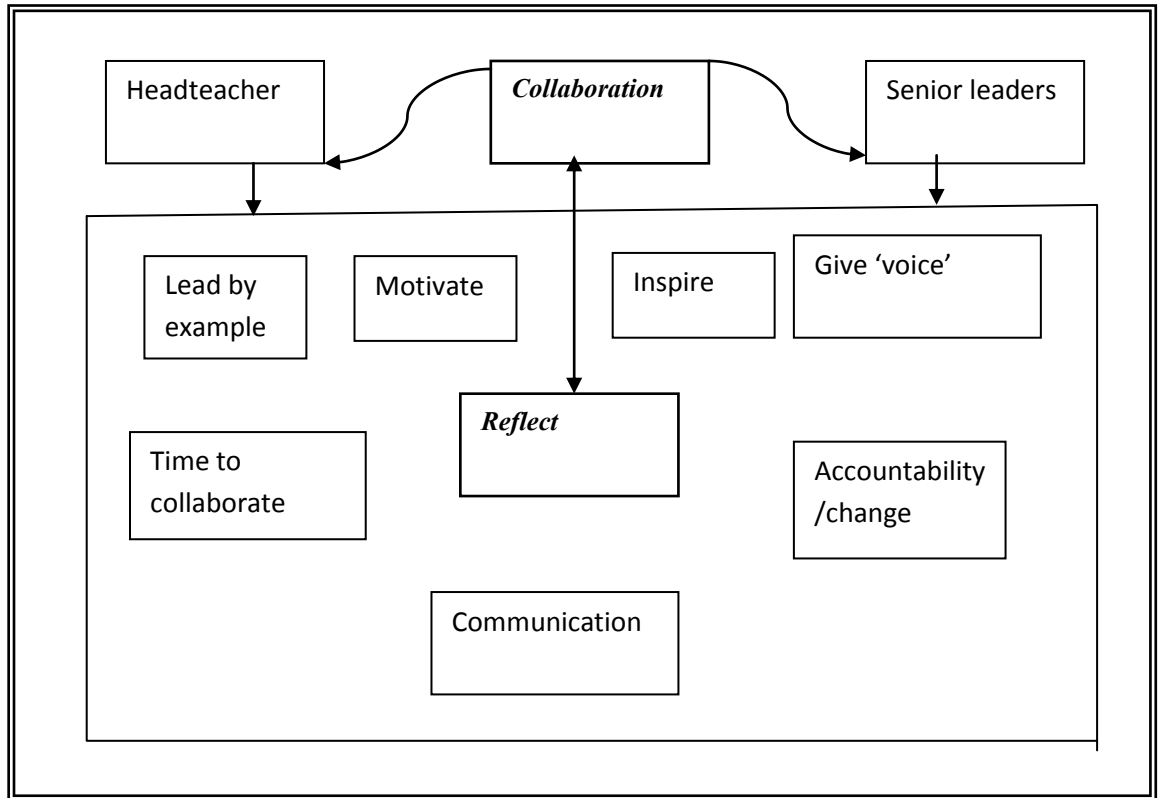
Diagram E tentative model to promote collaboration in a primary school

Findings in this study show that reflection may not always be included in the collaborative process. I suggest that if reflection becomes part of collaboration it will improve and may potentially improve teaching and learning. The key people are the senior leaders with the staff. At each stage of the collaborative process research and findings in this study identify strengths and weakness. The following model F provides an audit trail and record and this together with reflection may improve the collaborative process. The model presented forms a continuous process for effective collaboration.

Diagrams E and F are based on the findings of this study with Diagram F showing how collaboration could be developed. Diagram F seeks to develop collaboration further than Diagram E. When collaboration becomes integral to processes within the school then it can be more effective in improving teaching and learning. Diagram F shows collaboration

should include all staff within the primary school. Central to the collaboration is gathering evidence (an audit) of the collaborative process and reflecting on the effectiveness of collaboration. Identifying strengths and weaknesses and together refining and developing the collaborative process. This should take place at each level of collaboration – parents, other schools and governors. The collaborative process may from time to time include collaborating with both the LA and other agencies. Reflection on collaboration and the collaborative process will identify ways of improving the school however it will also allow staff to engage in the collaborative process effectively. The audits may have implications for leadership styles

Senior leaders (including headteacher

Collaborate to improve teaching and learning

Staff including those other than teachers

Research and audit and reflect on collaborative process

Collaborate with parents

Collaborate with other schools

Collaborate with governors

Collaborate with LA and other agencies
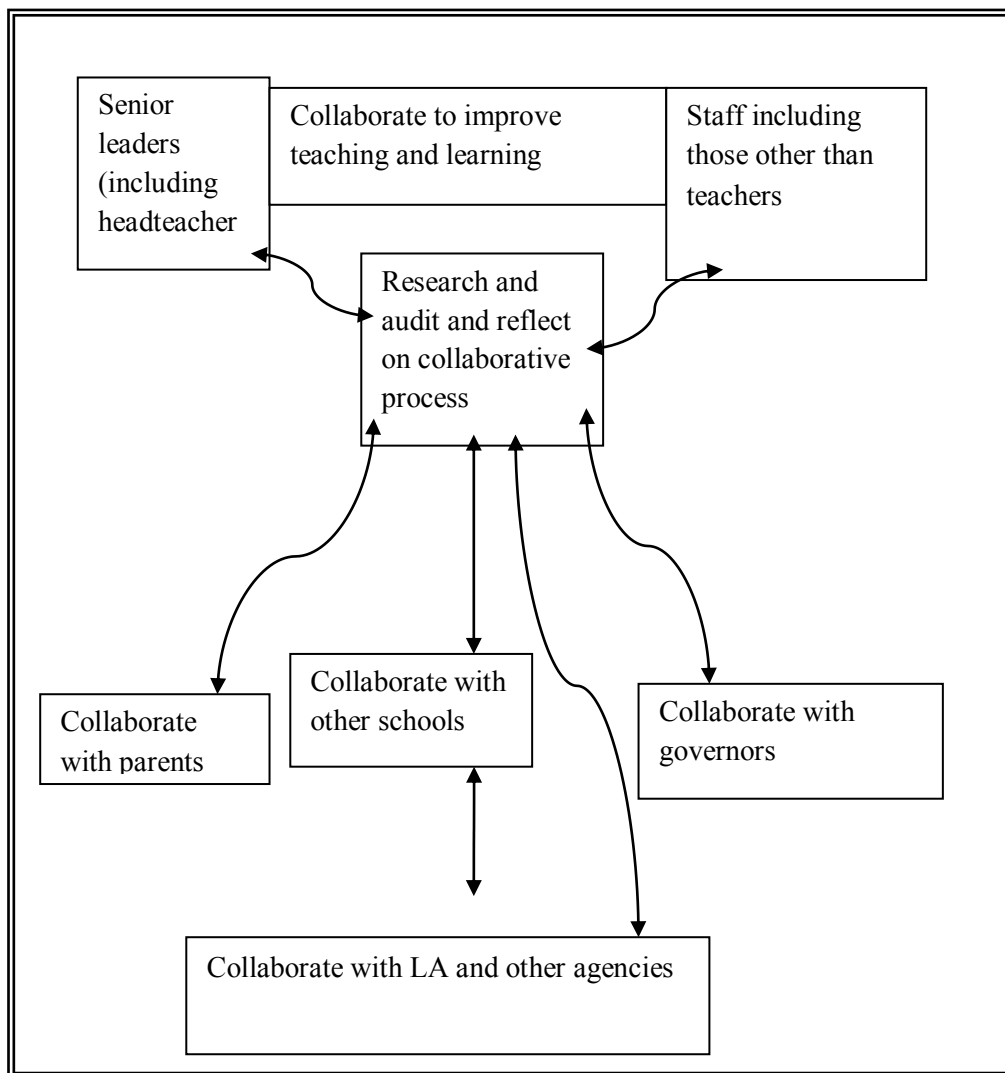
Diagram F Showing suggested changes to improve collaboration in a primary school (based on study findings)

Coleman (2011) argued that effective collaborative leadership should be 'rooted' in everyday aspects of the role the above potential models (Diagrams E and F) could be presented for discussion as starting point for developing effective collaborative leadership for collaboration within primary schools.

Whilst the above could be built into a training or inset day the most efficient way to change the present structure would be to work with the school themselves to implement changes. The collaboration between schools could be further developed by staff from schools where

the change has been made repeating the process in other schools. Thus sharing successes and challenges.

This study has contributed to knowledge by indentify collaborative practice from a senior leaders' perspective with a small sample of primary schools.

The data gathered for this study shows different stages of collaboration within the primary school. Diagram G presents a suggested ladder for different stages of collaboration moving forward from little or no collaboration to achieving successful effective equal collaboration. The first stage of collaboration being imposed by the headteacher. Tasks are delegated with little or no collaboration taking place. The next stage encourages collaboration, the leadership approach is at this stage considered to be distributed leadership. The collaborative process is developed by not only informing staff of initiatives to improve teaching and learning but also consulting them on how these initiatives will be implemented. Senior leaders allow sufficient freedom for staff to initiate and implement changes. The next stage moves the collaborative process towards equal collaboration. The vision of the headteacher for the school is supported by staff. Staff themselves may lead and initiate collaboration to achieve school improvement. Shared decision making and accountability together with reflection contribute to effective collaboration. Whilst senior leaders in this study consider they are at the distributed leadership stage of collaboration findings indicate this perception is not reflected by the data gathered. They are developing collaboration but are at the consult and inform point sometimes moving into freedom for people to initiate and implement collaborative processes.

Little or no voice

Loose if any accommodation of collaboration

Delegated tasks

HEADTEACHER IMPOSED

Consulted and informed

Developing collaboration

Allow sufficient freedom for people to initiate and implement

DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Lead and initiate

Moving towards effective collaboration

Share in decision making and accountability

EQUAL COLLABORATION
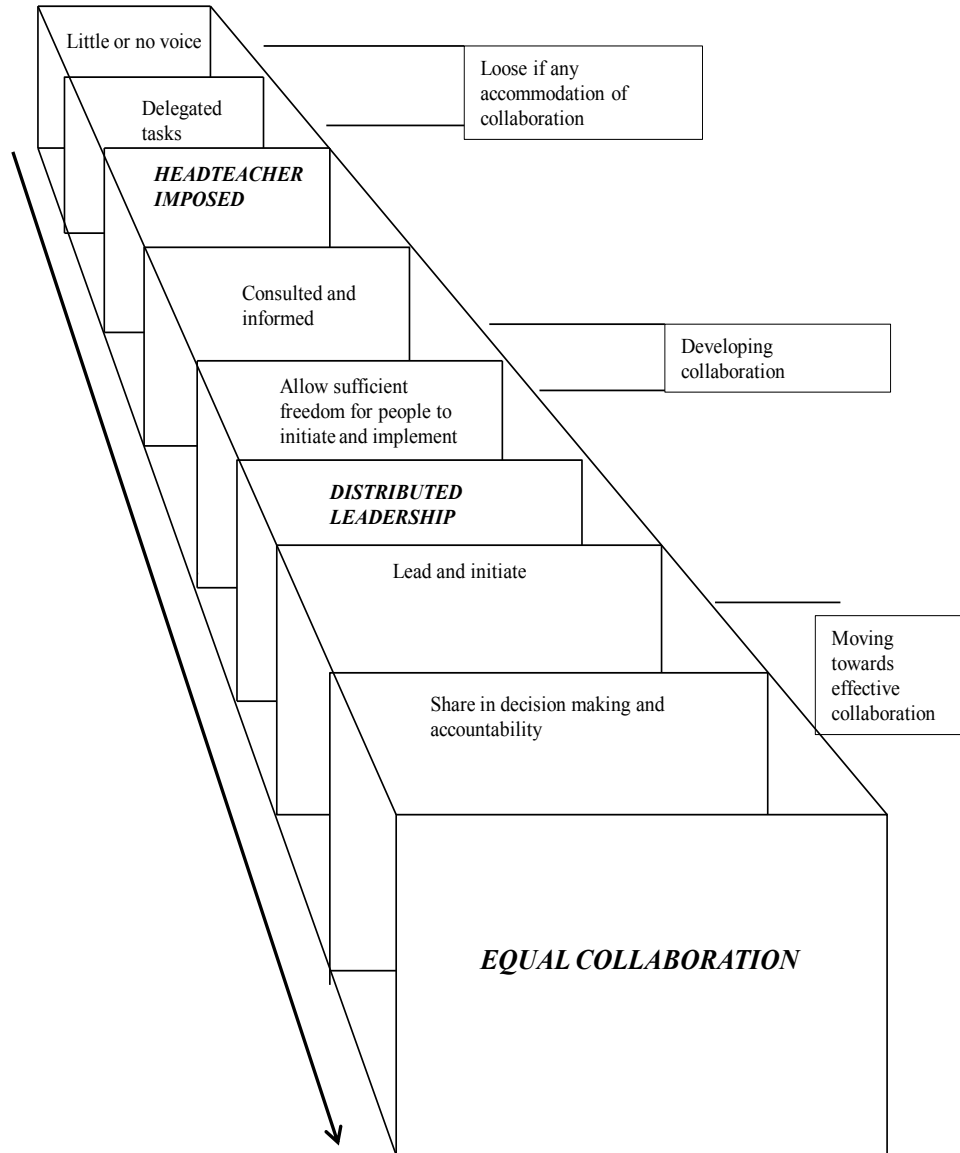
Diagram G showing suggested ladder for stages of collaboration moving forward from little or no collaboration to achieving successful effective equal collaboration.

Further research into the perceptions of others involved in the collaborative process for example governors, teachers and children would provide a more comprehensive understanding of collaboration in primary schools. Research into collaboration across primary schools, particularly the impact of federations would also be valuable in contributing towards the understanding of the complexity of collaboration.

Summary

The model (Diagram A) at the start of this study identified my professional perception of collaboration within a primary school. The research questions and themes indentified in this model were my starting point for the literature review. Undertaking the literature review deepened my knowledge and understanding of themes which are important to effective collaboration and school improvement. The initial model was based on understanding of collaboration following clear structures and processes. The research gathered evidence from senior managers to test this model of the collaborative process. The data, when analysed shows that whilst the elements identified at the beginning are all present in collaboration the structure is more fluid. From the original model the elements which proved to be relevant to collaboration are a clear vision from the headteacher supported by collaboration with senior leaders. Those who contributed to the study wanted effective communication at all levels with time given to discuss issues and have their voice heard. They acknowledge that accountability and change are important to developing collaborative process to improve their school but also consider reflection is a central element to achieving school improvement. This has implications for both practice and research into how senior leaders reflect on their practice. This study however, although based on a relatively small sample, indicates a potential way of developing effective collaboration may be to build reflection

into the process. I suggest for this to take place the structure of the senior leadership team may need to change.

This study has identified how the collaborative process is perceived by senior leaders. The findings indicate that collaboration is viewed as important but functions in a top-down model. Those involved, however, are of the opinion that all can initiate collaboration, not only those who are senior leaders. The study has added to the knowledge as it identifies that the collaborative process is considered by the schools, in this study, as important to raising achievements. The study, has suggested a need to create an understanding that for collaboration to be successful different elements need to be put in place, and reflected upon. Presenting a model of suggested leadership structure (Diagram E) and a model of how reflection can become an effective part of the collaborative process (Diagram F). The study concludes by presenting a ladder (Diagram G), identifying different stages collaboration may move through before potentially achieving successful effective equal collaboration to support the headteacher's vision of an outstanding school.

The study reflects the perceptions of senior management who whilst leaders of the school are just one of the many groups of people involved in collaboration for school improvement. Further work into other teams within the primary school for example teachers, governors would provide a different perspective of the collaborative process within a school. Exploring how these groups interact as a team and with senior managers would enable detailed comprehensive evidence to be gathered to add to existing knowledge relating to collaboration and the collaborative process within primary schools.

A summary of the findings of this study (maintaining confidentiality and anonymity) will be presented to each school who contributed and also the Midland's LA providing them

with knowledge to develop successful collaboration and thus improve teaching and

learning.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1:   Plan for Pilot Questionnaire

Appendix 2:   Pilot Questionnaire

Appendix 3:   Suggestions for Improving Questionnaire

Appendix 4:   Revised Questionnaire

Appendix 5:   Letter sent with Questionnaire

Appendix 6:   Reminder Letter/Thank You Letter

Appendix 7:   Pilot Interview Questions

Appendix 8:   Suggestions for Improving Interview Structure

Appendix 9:   Revised Interview Structure

Appendix 10:   Consent to Interview Form

Appendix 11:   Interview Transcript

Appendix 12:   Tables 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 (showing context and demographic date of responses to questionnaire)

Appendix 13:   Context of Interviewees (including school context, role and code relating to interviewee)

Plan for Pilot Questionnaire Structure

Study:

The importance of senior leadership team collaboration to raising standards of achievement with a primary school.

Aim:

Wallace and Huckman (1999) looked at criteria for effectiveness of SMT (p.194) – no link to collaboration, teaching and learning or raising standards. Their focus was on the team, my focus will be on how the collaborative actions of the team impact on teaching, learning and school improvement.

Format:

Keep each section to minimum specific questions. Vary way of answering to maintain interest – using appropriate format for gathering relevant data and efficient analysis.

Questionnaire Structure:

Short section on structure of team (context)

Small section on team/individual roles

Small section on culture

Main part to be on actions relating to collaborative process.

Specific Sections:

Section 1 – Context question

       Section 1 format – circle answers

Section 2 - Cultural context

       Section 2 format – grid rating

Section 3 – Part one: team. Part two: individual role

       Section 3 format – grid rating

Section 4 – Impact on teaching and learn.

Collaborative process e.g. meetings – when, length, agenda setting/thinking time? Who? Reflection? Pooling ideas, contributing to overview.

Implementation of decisions

How monitor impact on learning?

Section 4 format – own thoughts on impact

Section 5 – Own thoughts on issues not addressed in questionnaire

Section 5 format – blank for own comments

Additional Requirements:

Separate sheet with pilot questionnaire so that effective amendments can be made.

Each questionnaire to be numbered for identification at source.

Grid for tracking questionnaire through process (initial sending out and final return, reminder/thank you letters).

Pilot Questionnaire

The purpose of the questionnaire is to ascertain the extent to which the structure, focus leadership styles and collaboration within the senior leadership team within a primary school impact on the raising of standards.

The questionnaire is divided into 5 sections:

The first asks for general information about the structure of the senior leadership team.

- The second focuses on questions relating to the culture of the school
- The third is to ascertain what team/individual roles are undertaken
- The fourth focuses on how the actions of the team impact on learning.
- The last section is for you to add any additional comments you feel are relevant to questionnaire focus.

Section 1: Structure of Senior leadership Team

1. How long have you been a member of the SLT? _____

2. Have you been a member of a SLT prior to this team?   Yes/No

If yes please tell me what skills/experiences you have been able to bring to the present team.

_____

_____

3. What are your management responsibilities?

Tick any relevant statements and include relevant keystage, phase or subject area.

Keystage co-ordinator   _____

Phase co-ordinator   _____

Curriculum co-ordinator _____

Transition across keystages   _____

Other   _____

4. What is the size of your team? _____

5. Is the structure (a) permanent (a fixed structure) or (b) flexible in that different people are involved as appropriate? _____

If (b) briefly explain how this is operated.

_____

6. Please give a brief explanation of how the team was formed.

_____

_____

7. Please tick age category and gender:

 Male/Female

26-35 years   36-45 year   46-55 year   56+ years

Section 2: School Culture

Please read the following statements then indicate how far they match your perception of the school, in other words your own personal view of it. There is no 'right' answer I am seeking your opinion.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree?	Agree?	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	There is a shared goal 'we know where we're going'						
2.	There is a belief that everyone can and must make a difference.						
3.	We have high expectations of pupils						
4.	We work together for the success of the school as a whole.						
5.	We aim to improve practice but understand that it is not necessary or wise to develop everything all of the time.						
6.	There is a fundamental belief that learning never stops; there is always more to learn and pupils can only learn alongside adults who learn.						
7.	We learn by trying something new but it's OK if you don't get it right.						
8.	Senior leaders make time for other people are good listeners and supportive.						
9.	There is mutual respect individuals are valued 'as people'						
10.	The ability to speak one's mind and voice concerns is valued.						
11.	Criticism is viewed as an opportunity for self-improvement rather than a threat						
12.	We feel good about ourselves – people feel valued.						

Section 3: Team/Individual Roles

Please score your own team on each of the statements below, using the following grade criteria:

1 = always or almost always,   2 = pretty often,   3 = sometimes, 4 = rarely,   5 = never or almost never.

In our team….

1. We know our goals and how to achieve them.   **1   2   3   4   5**

2. We search for relevant information before making a decision   **1   2   3   4   5**

3. We have established sound operating processes   **1   2   3   4   5**

4. We as team members have clear roles, varied as necessary with changing tasks   **1   2   3   4   5**

5. We are confident in the use of a range of leadership styles
e.g. share, delegate   **1   2   3   4   5**

6**.** We give people opportunity and time to analyse new ideas   **1   2   3   4   5**

7. We use professional procedures for team meetings e.g. prepare agenda in advance (so people come prepared), write minutes which identify responsibility with deadlines set
arrive on time, finish meetings on time etc.   **1   2   3   4   5**

8. We review team performance regularly   **1   2   3   4   5**

9. Our team members have the professional skills to achieve the team goals
e.g. Teaching, organisation, setting and reviewing targets etc.   **1   2   3   4   5**

10. We as team members have the professional skills to maintain team processes e.g. giving and receiving feedback, team building, communication analysis,
time management etc.   **1   2   3   4   5**

11. We as team members communicate decisions to our staff effectively ensuring they are aware of the goals and how to achieve them.   **1   2   3   4   5**

12. We are willing to listen to ideas from outside the team and revise a team goal if conditions for the school team or an individual change.   **1   2   3   4   5**

13. We actively seek feedback from outside the team to help to evaluate
team decisions   **1   2   3   4   5**

14. We know the strengths and weaknesses of our staff and pupils   **1   2   3   4   5**

15. We encourage and acknowledge success   **1   2   3   4   5**

As an Individual:

1. I am aware of my leadership style and how it contributes both to my role in the SLT and as a leader of other staff.   **1   2   3   4   5**

2. I receive sufficient support and training to undertake my role as a Senior Leader.   **1   2   3   4   5**

3. I receive sufficient resources to enable my staff to achieve the agreed goals.   **1   2   3   4   5**

4. I am aware of factors which enable my staff to perform well or may hinder their performance.   **1   2   3   4   5**

5. As a Senior Leader I am able to motivate my staff to achieve the agreed goals.   **1   2   3   4   5**

6. I ensure that both my staff and myself continue professional development   **1   2   3   4   5**

7. I encourage reflective practice.   **1   2   3   4   5**

8. I ensure that success and achievement is celebrated.   **1   2   3   4   5**

9. I am prepared to listen to ideas and present them to the SLT.   **1   2   3   4   5**

10. I sometimes find my role within the SLT and that of team leader conflict.   **1   2   3   4   5**

11. I am able to talk through conflicts with other members of the SLT.   **1   2   3   4   5**

12. I feel a valued member of the SLT.   **1   2   3   4 5**

Section 4: Impact on Learning

1. How often do the Senior Leadership team meet?

_____

2. Is there an agreed structure to meetings?

_____

3. Who is responsible for the agenda?

_____

4. How do you decide on agenda items?

_____

5. How far in advance is the agenda circulated?

_____

6. Who is responsible for the minutes and ensuring deadlines are adhered to?

_____

7. How often do subject co-ordinators attend meetings to up date the SLT on progress or concerns?

_____

8. When goals, targets or other information is communicated to the staff is the process explained so that they have an overview of the task and how they will be contributing to it?

_____

9. How does the Senior Leadership Team ensure that school constructively engages with change as a challenge, while retaining a healthy scepticism of change for change's sake?

_____

10. How does the Senior Leadership Team ensure continuing progression with access skills such as literacy, numeracy, ICT?

_____

11. How does the Senior Leadership Team ensure that all staff and pupils are clear about the goal and the success criteria?

_____

12. What proportion of a SLT meeting is usually dedicated to teaching and learning?

_____

13. Please identify any areas or factors which you feel contribute towards raising standards.

_____

14. How and in what way does the Senior LeadershipTeam address the above?

Section 5: Individual Comments

Please use this space to comment on any further issues that may not have been addressed in this questionnaire.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____
_____

Thank you for your time and help.

Thank you for agreeing to help me with my questionnaire.

As the people who are piloting it for me I would ask you to:

- **Answer the questionnaire timing how long it takes you.**
- **Make any notes on how it should be amended-**
    Questions taken out or added

    Format changed or improved

    Any questions which are ambiguous or too complex

I appreciate your help

Lorraine

Suggestions for Improving Pilot Questionnaire

Following are the suggested amendments; these are presented in the order of the pilot

questionnaire (Appendix 2):

❖ Put explanation of the questionnaire format on the title page. This will clarify the structure of the questionnaire.

❖ Move question 7 (gender and age) to the beginning. This infers value is given to those responding.

❖ In question 3 add Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher as they are also members of the Senior Leadership Team. Put into boxes as this will make it easier to read. Add clarifying statements for – keystage co-ordinator, phase co-ordinator, curriculum co-co-ordinator and transition across keystages. This is important because each of these may involve different types of collaboration.

❖ Question 4 give options for team size. This will be beneficial when analysing context data.

❖ Question 6 provide statement clarifying question.

❖ Move Section 2 School culture to later in the questionnaire (section 4 in final questionnaire). It is better to begin with the individual, then move to team, then to school. Establishes importance of respondent in structure. Starting from School infers the opposite.

❖ Move Section 3 to earlier in questionnaire (section 2(a) and 2(b) in final questionnaire) – begin with individual roles, then team roles. (see above explanation for section 2 of pilot questionnaire). It would also be helpful to give some type of guide across to the numbers to be circled. This will make it easier for the respondents to follow statement across. Put explanation of grade criteria at top of each page for section 2(a) and 2(b)

- ❖ Make section 4 into section 3 as impact on learning follows on from individual and team roles.

- ❖ Finally it was suggested that section 5 (individual comments) should channel the focus of the participants by asking for what they considered three strengths of the senior leadership team and three areas needing development.

- ❖ Suggestions were also given for the colour of the paper to be used. This was important because it might affect whether it was answered or not. For example white would be lost in paperwork received by the senior leader.

Questionnaire

The purpose of the questionnaire is to ascertain the extent to which the structure, focus and leadership styles within the senior leadership team within a primary school impact on the raising of standards.

The questionnaire is divided into 5 sections and should take approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

- The first section asks for general information about the structure of the Senior Leadership Team to allow me to make comparisons.
- The second section is in two parts (a) is to ascertain individual roles
  (b) is to ascertain team roles.

- The third section focuses on how the actions of the team impact on learning.
- The fourth focuses on questions relating to the culture of the school.
- The last section is for you to add any additional comments you feel are relevant to questionnaire focus or the role of senior Leadership teams either in your own school or in general.
- Part of my research involves interviewing a random sample of people who completed the questionnaire. Please tick the box at the end of the questionnaire if you would be willing to be interviewed.

Section 1: Structure of Senior Leadership Team

 (*Senior Leadership Team is defined by) as 'members which represent a subgroup of the professional staff as a whole which includes the head, deputy or deputies and one or more teachers with a promoted post carrying substantial leadership responsibility; ' and are 'involved in making policy and administrative decisions on behalf of other staff.') (Wallace and Huckman, 1999)*

Please tick age category and gender:

Male/Female

26-35 years   36-45 year   46-55 year   56+ years

1. How long have you been a member of the SLT?   _____

2. Have you been a member of a SLT prior to this team?   Yes/No

Please tell me what skills/experiences you have been able to bring to the present team.

---

3. What are your Leadership responsibilities?

Tick any relevant statements and include relevant keystage, phase or subject area.

Headteacher	Deputy headteacher
Keystage co-ordinator (which keystage)	Phase co-ordinator (which phases?)
Curriculum co-ordinator (curriculum area of responsibility)	Transition across keystages (name keystages)
Other	

4. What is the size of your team? (Please circle appropriate statement)

   1-3   4-5   other

5. Is the structure:

(a) permanent (a fixed structure) or (b) flexible in that different people are involved as appropriate?

If (b) briefly explain how this is operated.

---

6. Please give a brief explanation of how the team was formed (i.e. headteacher appointed staff to this role. Position of responsibility means automatic inclusion on team)

Section 2(a) and (b): Team/individual roles

Please score your own team on each of the statements below, using the following grade criteria:

1 = always or almost always,   2 = pretty often,   3 = sometimes,   4 = rarely,   5 = never or almost never.

(2a) Your role as an individual within the team

1	I am aware of my leadership approach and how it contributes both to my role in the SLT and as a leader of other staff ……………...	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I receive sufficient support and training to undertake my role as a senior leader. (Which may include developing collaboration within the school)	1	2	3	4	5
3	I receive sufficient resources (e.g. human, physical, and time) to enable my staff to achieve the agreed goals.	1	2	.3	4	5
4	I am aware of factors which enable my staff to perform well or may hinder their performance. …………………………………...	1	.2	3	4	5
5	As a senior leader I am able to motivate my staff to achieve agreed goals.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I ensure that both my staff and I continue professional development. ……………………………………………………………	1	2	3	4	5
7	I encourage reflective practice. …………………………………...	1	2	3	4	5
8	I ensure that success and achievement is celebrated. …………….	1	2	3	4	5
9	I am prepared to listen to ideas and present them to the SLT. …..	1	2	3	4	5
10	.I sometimes find my role within the SLT and that of my other team leader roles conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I am able to talk through conflicts with other members of the SLT.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I feel a valued member of the SLT. ………………………………	1	2	3	4	5

(2b) Your role as a team member:

1 = always or almost always,   2 = pretty often,   3 = sometimes,   = rarely,   5 = never or almost never.

In our team….

1	We know our goals and how to achieve them. ………………………..	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
2.	We search for relevant information before making a decision. …….	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
3	We have established sound collaborative processes. ……………….	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
4.	We as team members have clear roles, varied as necessary with changing tasks. …………………………………………………	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
5	We are confident in the use of a range of leadership styles e.g. share, delegate. ………………………………………………...............	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
6	We give people opportunity and time to analyse new ideas ………..	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
7	We use professional procedures for team meetings e.g. prepare agenda in advance (so people come prepared), write minutes which identify responsibility with deadlines set arrive on time, finish meetings on time etc. ………………………………………….	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
8	We review team performance regularly. ……………………………	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
9	Our team members have professional skills to achieve the team goals e.g. Teaching, organisation, setting and reviewing targets etc.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
10	We as team members have the professional skills to maintain collaborative processes e.g. giving and receiving feedback, team building, communication analysis, time Leadership etc.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
11	We as team members are communicate decisions to our staff effectively ensuring they are aware of the goals and how to achieve them. ………………………………………………………………	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
12	We are willing to listen to ideas from outside the team and revise a team goal if conditions for the school, team or an individual change.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
13	We actively seek feedback from outside the team to help to evaluate team decisions. ………………………………………………………	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
14	We know the strengths and weaknesses of staff and pupils. …	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
15.	We encourage and acknowledge success. …………………………..	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Section 3: Impact on learning

1. How often do the senior leadership team meet?

_____

2. Is there an agreed structure to meetings?

_____

3. Who is responsible for the agenda?

_____

4. How do you decide on agenda items?

_____

5. How far in advance is the agenda circulated?

_____

6. Who is responsible for the minutes and ensuring deadlines are adhered to?

_____

7. How often do subject co-ordinators attend meetings to update the SLT on progress?

_____

8. When goals, targets or other information is communicated to the staff is the process explained so that they have an overview of the task and how they will be contributing?

_____

9. How does the senior leadership team ensure that school constructively engages with change as a challenge, while retaining a healthy scepticism of change for change's sake?

_____

10. How does the senior leadership team ensure continuing progression with access skills such as literacy, numeracy and ICT?

_____

11. How does the senior leadership team ensure that all staff and pupils are clear about the goal and the success criteria?

_____

12. What proportion of a SLT meeting is usually dedicated to discussing teaching and learning?

_____

13. Please identify any areas or factors which you feel contribute towards raising standards.

Section 4: School culture

Please read the following statements then indicate how far they match your perception of the school, in other words your own personal view of it. There is no 'right' answer I am seeking your opinion.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree?	Agree?	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	There is a shared goal 'we know where we're going'						
2.	There is a belief that everyone can and must make a difference.						
3.	We have high expectations of pupils						
4.	We collaborate together for the success of the school as a whole.						
5.	We aim to improve practice but understand that it is not necessary or wise to develop everything all of the time.						
6.	There is a fundamental belief that learning never stops; there is always more to learn and pupils can only learn alongside adults who learn.						
7.	We learn by trying something new but it's ok if you don't get it right.						
8.	Senior leaders make time for other people are good listeners and supportive.						
9.	There is mutual respect individuals are valued 'as people'						
10.	The ability to speak one's mind and voice concerns is valued.						
11.	Criticism is viewed as an opportunity for self-improvement rather than a threat						
12.	We feel good about ourselves – people feel valued.						

Section 5: Individual comments

In your opinion what are the 3 main strengths of the Senior Leadership Team?

1)_____

2)_____

3)_____

Which 3 areas in your opinion need developing?

1)_____

2)_____

3)_____

Please use this space to comment on any further issues that may not have been addressed in this questionnaire.

Would you be willing to be interviewed?   (Circle as appropriate)

Yes   No

 (Please put name and contact number if you agree to interview)

This will be confidential to my supervisor and me.

Thank you for your time and help.

Lorraine Cemm (Please return to:

Dear Colleague

<u>Ed.D. Research – Leaders and Leadership in education</u>

My name is Lorraine Cemm I am a teacher at ----------- school. I am at present researching in connection with my part time studies for a doctorate at Birmingham University. The focus of my research is senior leadership teams in primary schools; I am investigating whether an academic focus rather than an administrative one impacts on raising standards. I am writing to ask if each member of the senior leadership team would take time to complete the enclosed questionnaires for me. (I have enclosed four if you need any more or have any questions please contact me). It should take approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete. I should appreciate it if all the sections could be completed however if there are any problems please complete what you are able.

As a teacher in -------- I know that research is taking place in different areas of education and I believe my research into leadership in the primary school is an important aspect of research and as such will contribute to raising standards within our schools.

I have spoken to ----------- about my research and he has indicated that the Chair of the ----------- he has no objection to my collecting data from ---------Primary Schools and that the Authority is keen to encourage research which could help headteachers in their work. I have asked at the end of the questionnaire if there is any objection to my interviewing at a later date. This will only be random interviews, the purpose of these being to clarify and triangulate data collected. If you are willing to be interviewed please include your name, this will not be identifiable to anyone other than myself. The data collected will be analysed and used in my thesis, the results of which will be made available to you as participants and other interested bodies. However the information collected will not be traceable to any individual or school other than by myself and my university supervisor. If there is any aspect of the questionnaire or how the data is to be used that you want to ask please contact me.

I should like to thank you in advance for your co-operation as I know you are all busy people. Please return the questionnaire to me in the stamped addressed envelope provide by half term

Yours sincerely,

Lorraine Cemm

Dear Colleague

Ed.D. Research – Leaders and Leadership in education

The reason for this letter is to thank all who completed and returned my questionnaire. I appreciate the time you gave. Your contribution to my research is important and as such I will acknowledge the contribution of ------- schools in my thesis.

I should like to ask anyone who has not yet been able to complete the questionnaire if it would be possible for you to do so. The data is important but also your contribution would be invaluable to my research. If you need me to send another copy please contact me and I will send you one.

Once again thank you all for your support.

Yours sincerely,

Lorraine Cemm

e-mail

(School telephone:

 Home:

Pilot Interview Questions

1. One of the issues raised in the responses to my questionnaire was consistency in school practice. Including involving other staff i.e. LSA/LSs

What are your thoughts on this? PPA time means other people are involved in class teaching. How does that affect the senior leadership team's way of raising standards and ensuring consistency?

2. A second issue raised was measuring the impact of meetings –

How are decisions communicated accurately, and if appropriate discussed with staff

3. How do you ensure decisions are then acted upon?

4. The senior leadership team have a wide and varied role. How important is it that teachers and other colleagues within the school are aware of this and what the role involves.

5. Some respondents to the questionnaire indicated that sometimes they find my role within the senior leadership team and that of team leader conflict if you find yourself in that position how do you resolve it.

6. How does your senior leadership team communicate the reasons for decisions when these decisions may not appear to be necessary?

7. Should people who become part of the senior leadership team be given any specific training to become effective members of the team?

8. The relationship between leadership and learning is an important issue facing schools today. How does your senior leadership team raise the quality of teaching and learning within your school?

9. Reflection is considered an important tool in raising awareness of different aspects of teaching and learning. Do you have particular areas where you as a senior leadership team reflect on processes?

10. Have you actively sought feedback from outside the team to help to evaluate team decisions?

11. How do you motivate staff, and ensure continued professions development and well being.

12. Are senior leadership team people encouraged to develop their own academic skills not necessarily for the role but to extend their own learning and learning experiences?

13. Within the assessment for learning there is an element of reading relevant research I wondered if this idea of looking at research is part of the senior leadership team process.

14. How important are the middle leaders to the functioning of the senior leadership team.

15. What are the strengths of your senior leadership team?

16. Are there any issues which the senior leadership team find particularly challenging at the moment?

17. An important issue raised by respondents of the questionnaire is that of work life balance – how you deal with this.

18. Can you tell me about your own leadership style?

Suggestions for Improving Interview Structure

It was suggested that the number of questions asked were too many and although based on the previously filled in questionnaire seemed to have no logical sequence.

The interviewee suggested it would be easier for future interviewees if I grouped my questions with a brief explanation of the theme the groups covered:

- This would give the interviewee thinking time and a focus.

- This grouping would also give more flexibility for the interviewee to develop the discussion and may allow them the

It was also suggested that an opportunity for interviewees to give examples to support their thinking would enrich the research.

Interview Questions

Begin with opening statement:

The focus of this study is collaboration and the collaborative process in primary schools. How does collaboration within schools contribute to school improvement and teaching and learning? Particularly from the senior leadership perspective.

For some of the questions I will explain how the questionnaire informed the question being asked.

Q1: What is your understanding of collaboration and what skills or attitudes result in successful collaboration? (Context)

Q2: What value do you see in collaboration? (Research question C)

Q3: Can you give some examples of collaborative working? (Research question B)

If already provided examples ask for other collaborative ways of working.

Q4: How as a senior leader do you support collaboration? How do you facilitate teacher commitment and motivation rather than compliance to school goals? (Research question D)

One of the issues raised from the questionnaire I sent out was how to measure the collaboration which may take place at senior leadership meetings for school improvement. How decisions are made, communicated and if appropriate discussed with staff.

Q5: How do you ensure the decisions made are acted upon and involve staff collaboration and encourage accountability? (Research question B)

Q6: What is your perceived relationship between collaborative practice, school improvement and teaching and learning? (Research question A)

Q7: How do you and your leadership team collaborate to achieve change? (research question B)

Q8: Do you think that schools need to become professional leaning communities and create networks? (Research question A)

Q9: How do you motivate staff to collaborate and ensure they continue professional development? (Research question D)

The relationship between leadership and learning is an important issue facing schools today.

Q10: How do your senior leaders raise the quality of teaching and learning within your school and develop accountability? (Research question A)

Thinking about Reflection is considered an important tool in raising awareness of different aspects of collaboration particularly in school improvement and teaching and learning.

Q11: Do you have particular areas where you as a senior leadership team reflect on collaboration processes, structures you have in place, how you do things? (Research question C)

Q12: How do you encourage self awareness, self confidence a feeling of trust in the collaborative process so that feedback is proactive rather than negative? (Research question D)

Q13: As a leader how do you encourage senior staff in this school to develop their own collaborative and academic skills not necessarily for the role but to extend their own learning and learning experiences? (Research question A)

Working in a school where new initiatives are being introduced there is always the pressure of raising standards so that must evoke a range of emotions. For example you may feel passionate about something but in order to encourage everyone to collaborate you might have to keep that passion to yourself.

Q14: How do you manage that emotion but not deny it? (Research question A)

Q15: Are there any issues relating to collaboration which you and your senior leadership team are finding particularly challenging at the moment? (Context/general)

Q16: Finally how do you find the time to get the support you might need to fulfil your role? (Context)

Thank person for time given and content of interview

Research Interview Consent Form

Interviewer: Lorraine Cemm

Interviewee: _____

Date of Interview _____

Purpose of Interview:

This interview is part of my research for the award of EdD at the University of Birmingham.

Confidentiality

Research ethics will be observed at all times in the analysis and the use to which the data may be put. The data from the interview will only be available to the staff tutoring on the EdD programme at the University of Birmingham and, possibly, to the External Examiner for my thesis. Excerpts from the interview may be included as part of the final thesis, but your name will be excluded, and any identifying characteristics will be removed. The interview may also be used as part of written papers or books, but without your name and excluding any identifying characteristics, and subject to research ethics.

Acknowledgement

Please sign this form to show that we have agreed its content

Signed (interviewee) _____

Signed (Interviewer) _____

Date _____

Interview Transcript – Headteacher 06 (School B)

Not available in the digital version of this thesis

Context and Demographic Data Relating to Questionnaire Responses

(Tables 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7)

The following tables are included to demonstrate the context together with the breadth of the sample. The intention is to show the variety of perceptions used to inform this study. These tables also present (in percentages) an overview of the demographic data of the responses. The data shows that the sample of respondents is diverse and provides a broad range of responses to the research questions. The tables are given in the same order as the relevant questions on the questionnaire.

Table 3 shows the gender of the respondents, Table 4 their age, Table 5 the length of their service, Table 6 the team size and Table 7 the structure of the team.
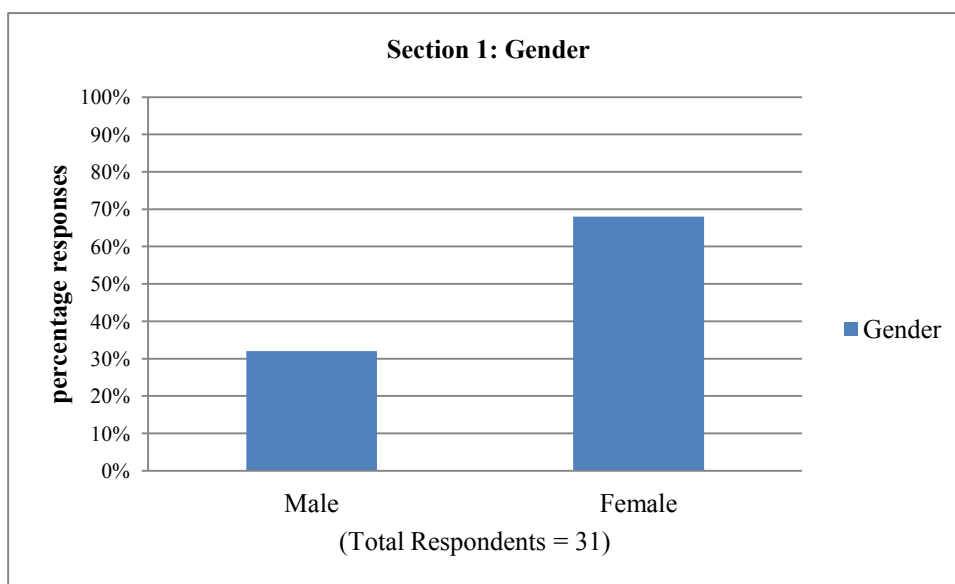

Table 3: Gender

In the Authority 39 percent of primary headteachers are male and 61percent are female. This would indicate that more than half of all the school's senior leadership team's main leader is female as shown in Table 3. The data on senior leadership team members is not as readily available as each school determines it's own structure of the senior leadership team.

The questionnaire response would suggest that each team may have more female than male members.

Age Groups

(Chart: percentage responses by age group, legend "Age groups")

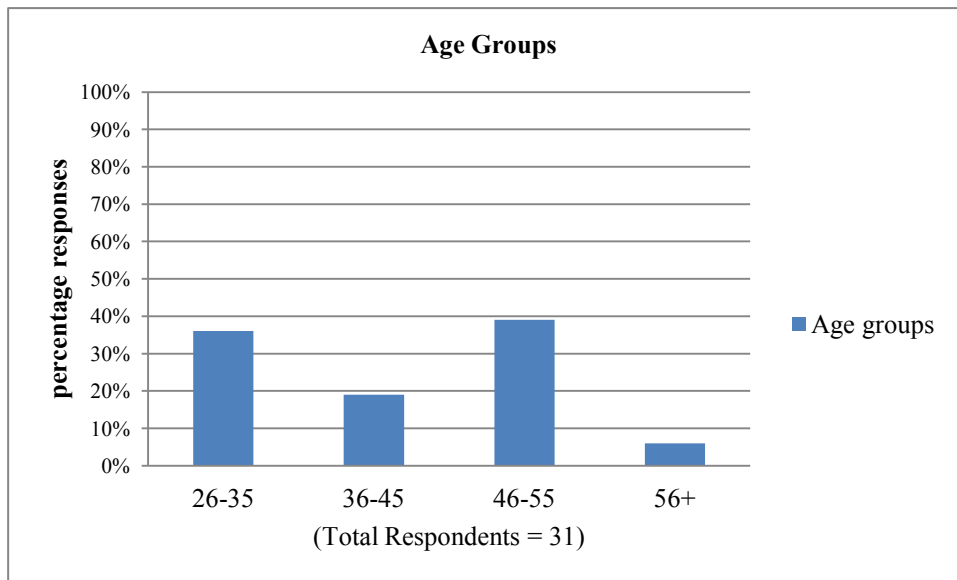26-35 ≈ 36%, 36-45 ≈ 19%, 46-55 ≈ 39%, 56+ ≈ 6%

(Total Respondents = 31)

Table 4: Age Groups

Table 4 shows that very few of the respondent senior leaders belong to 56+ age group. It could be that people may have chosen to take promotion to positions within the LA; they may have moved LA for promotion or may have chosen to take early retirement. The respondents in the 26-35 group appears high compared with the 36-45 group; indicating that people are taking on more responsibility much earlier in their career. The other two groups 36-45 and 46-55 show a spread which reflects the results expected. Table 2 establishes the diversity of the sample responses to the questionnaire.
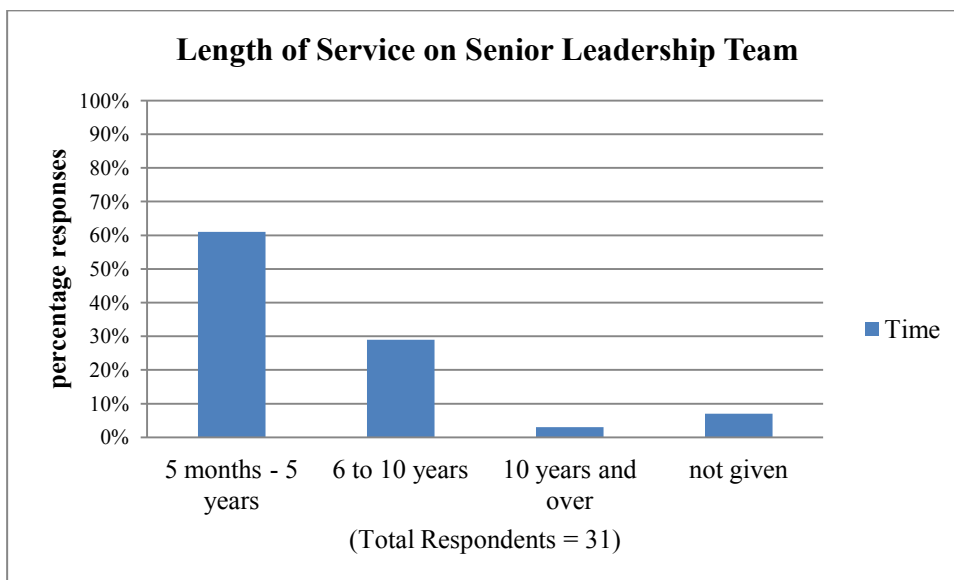
Table 5: Length of Service on Senior Leadership Team

The data reflects the previous results presented in Table 4 as there is a high percentage of respondents in the 26-35 category they could not have been in senior leadership for more than ten years. The older age group will achieve a longer service but this age group may be influenced by other factors such as promotion or retirement.
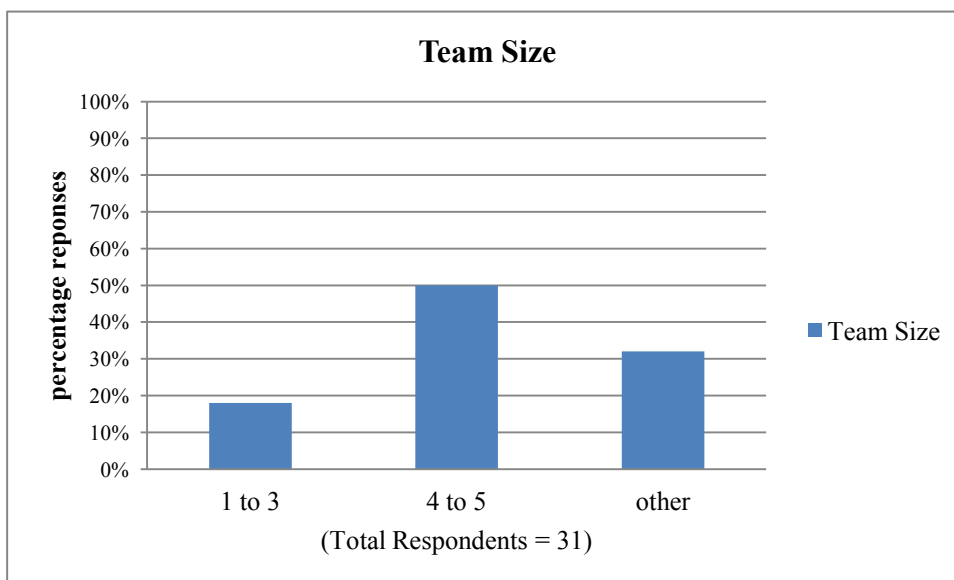

Table 6: Team Size

Table 6 shows the percentage for a senior leadership team of 4 – 5 is the highest; again the size of the school, arguably, influences the number on the senior leadership team.

The 32 percent (other) could reflect schools that include support staff within the structure to provide a wider representation of school staff. Team size may be an important feature of the senior leadership team, particularly when focusing on collaboration. A smaller team may work together more easily than a larger one. However a larger team might encompass several different viewpoints on issues which will allow more diversity so that decisions which may have been taken could better reflect whole school thinking.
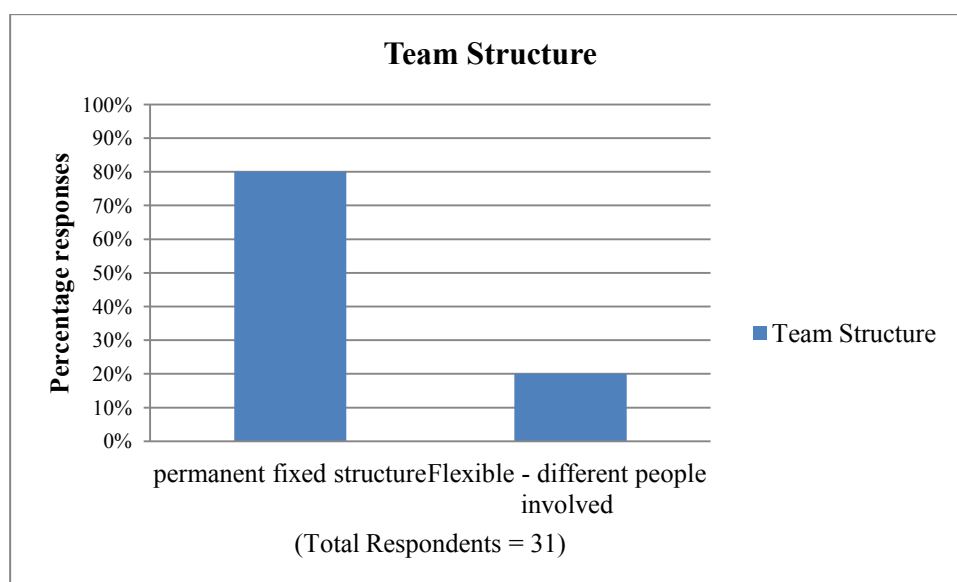

Table 7: Team Structure

Table 7 shows the majority of senior leadership teams operate a fixed structure that is the same people make the decisions. This could be positive in that these people may work well as a team taking decisions in order to move the school forward. It could have a negative effect if they work within a 'comfort zone' knowing how each person will react in different situations and not including sufficient diversity of ideas or opinions on key issues. In small schools this might be too exclusive resulting in 'them and us' situation between the senior leadership team and the rest of the school staff.

Context of Sample Interviewees

(Including School Context, Role and Code Relating to Interviewee)

Of the 31 respondents to the questionnaire 15 were interviewed the following table puts those interviewed into context using Ofsted information available at time data was collected (to ensure confidentiality full reference is omitted). All are senior leaders within their school.

Table 25: Context of Sample Interviewees

Code	Role	Gender	School*
01	Headteacher	Male	A
02	Coordinator	Male	A
03	Headteacher	Female	C
04	Assistant head	Female	B
05	Deputy head	Female	B
06	Headteacher	Male	B
07	Assistant head	Female	B
08	Coordinator	Female	D
09	Deputy head	Female	D
10	Headteacher	Female	D
11	Headteacher	Female	E
12	Coordinator	Female	E
13	Deputy Head	Female	E
14	Coordinator	Female	E
15	Coordinator	Male	C

*context and characteristics of school shown below

School A:

Type of school	School category	Age range of pupils	Gender of pupils	Number on Role
Primary	Voluntary aided	3 to 11	Mixed	183

Characteristics of the School:

Pupils come from an area of considerable social and material deprivation. Turnover of pupils is high. Attainment on entry to nursery is well below average with limited social and English language skills and often extreme anti-social behaviour. The school is a one form entry.

School B:

Type of school	School category	Age range of pupils	Gender of pupils	Number on Role
Primary	Community	3 to 11	Mixed	472

Characteristics of the School:

A large primary school in mixed socio-economic area. Less than one-fifth of pupils are eligible for free school meals. English as an addition language is higher than most schools. The general level of children's attainment on entry to nursery is below average. There are significantly more boys than girls in the school which is a two form entry.

School C:

Type of school	School category	Age range of pupils	Gender of pupils	Number on Role
Primary	Community	3 to 11	Mixed	213

Characteristics of the School:

The socio-economic background is above average. One quarter of pupils are from Asian or Black Caribbean background less than one per cent of pupils are learning to speak English as an addition language Pupils attainment on entry is better than in most schools. This is a one form entry school.

School D:

Type of school	School category	Age range of pupils	Gender of pupils	Number on Role
Primary	Voluntary aided	4 to 11	Mixed	207

Characteristics of the School:

A wide range of socio-economic groups. Percentage eligible for free school meals is six percent. The large majority have English as first language. Attainment on entry for most pupils is above average. This is a one form entry school.

School E:

Type of school	School category	Age range of pupils	Gender of pupils	Number on Role
Primary	Voluntary aided	3 to 11	Mixed	222

Characteristics of the School:

Urban, multi-ethnic school with three-quarters of pupils from backgrounds of considerable social disadvantage. A higher than average pupils have a language other than English as their mother tongue. Pupils enter school with expected levels of attainment. This is a one form entry school.

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