COLLABORATION:

STILL VIABLE IN THE CHANGED LANDSCAPE?

A STUDY INTO THE STATE OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN ACADEMIES AND MAINTAINED SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND

by

CHRISTINE TINKLER

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Abstract

This small scale qualitative study interviewed 33 maintained school headteachers and academy principals to identify their attitude to and perceptions of effective school to school collaboration. The research has been informed by Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) model of the collaboration process and by Coleman's (2011) model of collaborative leadership.

Evidence of the anticipated linear nature of Hall and Oldroyd's model was not found, rather there is evidence that frequently collaborations slip back to earlier more confrontational stages of development. Whilst this in some cases can derail the collaboration totally, in others it can galvanise the group into developing more effective partnership working than might otherwise have been the case. The study has been able to explore the various elements of Coleman's leadership model and contends that there needs to be an elasticity in the way in which the elements are utilised to maximise effectiveness. This has implications for future leadership development.

As with all qualitative research, the findings have raised some interesting questions beyond the main focus of the study which need further exploration. One such question concerns the increasing political emphasis placed on the importance of academy chains and the implications of their role in the educational landscape. As chains take on many of what would have been Local Authority functions, will they become the new 'middle tier' of accountability superseding the Local Authority organisation? As the educational landscape in England continues to change, there remains a need for balanced, in-depth research into the impact and implications of the change.

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CONTENTS PAGE

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The academy initiative (state funded independent schools) was announced in 2000 by the then Labour Government and was hailed as the way in which the government would break the cycle of failing inner-city schools (DfES 2004a, b). However, alongside this, the Government required all secondary schools to increasingly collaborate to deliver the full extent of the 14-19 curriculum changes, the 17 new diploma lines and such initiatives as Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships.

Academies were originally set up by strong entrepreneurial businessmen to be independent of the Local Authority (LA), appointing Principals who wanted to 'do things differently'. They are now being expected to work with maintained schools that are under different regulations. The 14-19 curricular developments are designed to give all young people appropriate pathways into continuing education and then work. The new qualification (diplomas) requires considerable skill and resources for their delivery both in terms of staff and equipment. For an individual school to deliver all 17 would be very expensive and not good value for money. There is a presumption that within a geographical area (the size of which would vary according to locality), schools would share the development and delivery of diplomas. Students would therefore travel to schools other than their home school for lessons in their chosen diploma. For this to be effective, schools need to work in partnership agreeing such potentially 'contentious' issues as common

timetables, times of the school day, the implications of differing school uniforms in one building and who will discipline a student should this be necessary (the home school or the school where the incident took place). If in a small geographical area, a proportion of schools are outside this partnership working, the opportunities on offer for all students will be reduced.

Both these initiatives are designed to improve the outcomes of all pupils, particularly those most vulnerable. But are they at loggerheads with each other or is it possible for such differing institutions to develop working relationships which are mutually beneficial? Is it possible in this context for two such different institutions to enter into collaboration in any meaningful way? This study will examine whether academies and schools view collaboration as an effective means of school improvement in a changed educational landscape and identifies methods of making that relationship more effective.

The concept of 'collaboration' has been seen as a mechanism to support school improvement over the past few years. However, the term can be used differently. Huxham (1996) described collaboration as:

> a very positive form of working in association with others for some mutual benefit (pg. 7).

Roberts et al (1995) made use of the term 'partnership' when describing a formal, sometimes contractual, inter-organisational arrangement engaged in over a period of time. Bennett et al (2004) concluded that partnership involves the use of elements such as collaboration, mutual accountability, voluntary commitment and

equality in pursuit of shared aims and objectives. Whilst the terms 'collaboration' and 'partnership' can be used interchangeably, in the context of this study looking at the way in which schools are able to work together in a changed educational landscape, the term collaboration has been used throughout. Based on previous research my definition of collaboration is:

an agreement (verbal and written) between the leaders of educational institutions within a defined geographical area to work together to deliver an agreed purpose supporting pupil achievement and attainment;

and

that collaboration could be deemed to be successful when students from all institutions in the area (both maintained and academies) move freely across institutions to access courses appropriate to their needs and aspirations;

and

when the national indicators for attainment in such shared courses for the area show continuous improvements at or above national levels.

The focus of the research

The study is formed of two interview Phases. The first concentrates on the interrelationship between the headteachers of maintained schools and the principals of academies in one Local Authority. It establishes the extent of the current working relationship between the two groups, the drivers and inhibitors, and the impact of that relationship on the opportunities for young people in the

area. The second Phase focuses on the way in which academy principals are able to work collaboratively within their 'family' of academies (chains) or with other academies and maintained schools in their area and to what extent collaboration is taking place in practice. Phase 1 took place in the early stages of a period of increasing change. By the time Phase 2 interviews took place, state education in England had changed significantly and so this study sought to understand the impact of these changes on a school's willingness to collaborate with other schools. The study seeks to expand on previous research findings and identify areas for future research. The research questions chosen arose out of gaps in the literature relating to collaborative working.

The research questions are as follows:

1. How can collaboration be explored and its effectiveness judged in an educational context?

2. How can collaboration be conceptualised?

3. How might the conceptual model be developed to increasingly support a model for collaboration (including 14-19) across maintained schools and academies?

The context of the research

In the early stages of the academy initiative, most academies were formed from the closure of existing failing or poorly performing schools serving very deprived areas. The first three announced in 2000 were opened in 2002. The Labour Government stated that the intention of the academy movement was to break the cycle of deprivation and enable young people to achieve their potential. This

would be through: a state of the art building; strong leadership and the financial and professional support of the sponsor who was by definition already 'a success' albeit in a field other than education. For clarity Type 1 academies is the term used to describe sponsored academies who contributed financially to the setting up of the academy, Type 2 academies have a sponsor but the financial requirement had been removed and Type 3 academies are those outstanding and good schools encouraged to 'convert' to academy status under the Coalition education policy (see Fig. 1 Time Line pg. 6)

Academies were set up as publicly funded independent schools outside the control of the Local Authority within which they were based and governed by private or voluntary sponsors. Although many of the freedoms given to the first academies have been amended over time, they remain independent of the Local Authority. The Coalition Government has broadened those able to become academies and removed the need always to have a sponsor.

Some are new start schools with no predecessor school(s), others are formed from the closure of one or two schools that were reasonably successful but who served very deprived communities. It is therefore no longer possible to band them all together as a homogenous group for research purposes. The antecedents have a major impact on the likely quick and long term sustainable success of pupil outcomes. Those without the 'baggage' of an (relatively) unsuccessful predecessor school staff are likely to have a better chance of being successful more quickly and for longer than those where most, if not all, of the staff of a

Phase 2 Interviews	2011
Coalition Government Converter Type 3 Academies	2010
Phase 1 Interviews DCSF White Paper	2009
14-19 diplomas	2008
Type 2 academies	2007
DfES 5 year strategy for children	2004
Type 1 Academies launched Labour Government	2000
GM abolished—became Foundation Schools Labour Government	1998
Grant Maintained schools Conservative Government	1988

Fig. 1: Time Line

failing school are moved across to the academy under Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE). Direct professional experience has shown me that where schools in Ofsted categories have to either remove inadequate teachers or shift teaching to at least satisfactory take longer to raise standards than schools where this is not the case.

There has been some comment on the success or otherwise of academies from organisations opposed in principle to academy status but there has been very little research so far into the inter-relationships between academies and maintained schools. This research is intended therefore to add to the body of knowledge (Ball, 2009; Glatter, 2009; Curtis et al 2008) which already exists about the impact of academy status on education in England and supports moving our understanding of the field forward. If secondary schools are going to deliver the other major thrust of current government policy (at the time of writing), that of transforming 14-19 education with new examination pathways, there will have to be strong collaboration between institutions within a geographical area. It will not be financially viable for a school or even a small group of schools to 'go it alone'. The factor of 'independent' academies within that collaboration will require some careful negotiation to achieve success for all.

Much emphasis has been placed on the way in which the new qualifications (diplomas) will transform secondary education and enable young people to compete in the 21st century world market place. They are designed to give opportunities to many who might otherwise not have access to training in a broad range of skills and competences, breaking the cycle of deprivation. This matches

the stated intention of academy status. However, in practice it is clear from the articles published to date that many perceive academies as having an unfair advantage over maintained schools both in terms of finance and freedoms (Chitty 2008; Titcombe 2008; Hatcher and Jones 2006; Gillard 2008; Sinnott 2008).

My interest in this area of research arose from my professional life. As Assistant Director, Head of Schools Provision in a unitary Children's Services Authority in the south of England, I was responsible for all services interacting with schools. We had one academy formed from a FreshStart school that had been set up following the closure of two schools in special measures. From the summer of 2007, we had been in discussions with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), elected members and the community to change the status of one of our National Challenge schools (where fewer than 30 per cent of its pupils gained 5+ GCSE A*-C including English and maths in 2007) into an academy. This came into being on 1st September 2009. Hence 2 out of 10 schools became academies and changed the group dynamics within the authority.

Overview of the literature

As the topic is relatively new, the research literature is not yet extensive and consists largely of articles in a number of journals and the PriceWaterhouseCooper (2003-08) evaluation reports commissioned by the DCSF. Much more is being undertaken that will build into a vibrant resource for future developments. The final report from PriceWaterhouseCooper found that there was some increase in the level of collaboration between academies and

their partner primary schools to support raising standards and with secondary schools in relation to the 14-19 agenda but that this was not consistent across the small number of academies in the survey. Forum have published a number of articles which in the main take an oppositional stance as have those commissioned by the Centre for the Advance of State Education (CASE). (e.g., Chitty 2008; Titcombe 2008; Hatcher and Jones 2006; Gillard 2008; Sinnott 2008)

These articles predominately, take as their starting point that the academy initiative was flawed based as it was on the charter school system from the United States and on the Conservative initiative of City Technology Colleges (CTCs). The charter school system, the articles maintain, has not proved over time to sustain the radical improvement for students it claimed at the outset. The CTCs proved to be very expensive, did not generate the financial support from sponsors that had been hoped for, proved to be divisive in terms of access and curriculum, impacting on neighbouring schools and were quietly allowed to fade away. A significant proportion of the research published in these journals has been commissioned by teacher unions who appear to be fearful that academies will erode their influence over what happens in schools and the power they can exert over proposals for changes to teachers' working conditions. It is therefore important that other research is undertaken which is not bound by any one position to balance these views.

I have also considered the research pertaining to the ways in which organisations work together to achieve common aims and objectives. Much research has been carried out into the ways in which schools work collaboratively (in networks /

partnerships/ clusters). National initiatives have encouraged this for many years, e.g. Excellence in Cities; Excellence Clusters; Education Action Zones; the Leadership Incentive Grant partnerships; Primary Strategy Learning Networks; Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships to name but a few (e.g. Veugelers and O'Hair 2005; Connolly and James 2006; Glatter 2003; Rutherford and Jackson 2006). But these initiatives have all been set in a climate of competition fuelled by league tables and public perceptions. Currently the development of the 14-19 agenda for secondary education is demanding significant partnership working not only between schools but also between schools and other providers of learning.

Research by Davies and Hentschke (2006) shows the way in which educational organisations are experimenting with voluntary networks characterised by alliances more normally seen in other fields. Many arise from a deficit model – where something is not working through the current support mechanism, there is a need to form other partnerships which will help to 'fix it'. The academy movement was set up to 'make good' the disadvantage experienced by some pupils by introducing expertise from a range of business or philanthropic organisations who will have had little or no experience of 'education' themselves except that they all went to school at some stage in their lives. Smith and Wohlstetter (2001) have developed a typology of public-private partnerships as a way of mapping this emerging field of organisational activity in the educational sector.

Looking beyond the partnerships academies form as part of their setup, I have considered the impact of organisational culture on the way in which sometimes

disparate organisations or sections of organisations can come together to achieve broad goals. I believe that looking at how non-educational organisations seek to work together in order to boost productivity can offer insights into the way in which an organisation such as a 14-19 Strategic Partnership could operate. Research by Trompenars (1994) looks at the ways in which norms and values influence the ways individuals are able to work together and how this can be managed to ensure effective working practice. There is a perception that the values of academies are very different from that of maintained schools and therefore working together will be very difficult. This research sought to establish whether this is in fact the case or a misconception and has looked at ways in which collaboration can be supported more effectively.

The research design

The empirical part of this research entails a qualitative research study in two Phases. The first Phase draws on the views and perceptions of the majority of the secondary headteachers (10 in total of whom 2 are academy principals) in one Local Authority through face to face interviews. It was important to interview all heads in the authority in order to gain a broad picture of the inter-relationship within the group. The second Phase of the research involved interviewing 23 academy principals across England. This stratified sample was chosen to represent the range of academies now in existence: i.e., those set up under the original Labour Government policy (Type 1 academies); those part of a chain (such as ARK, ULT, Ormiston) (Type 1), those with no links to other academies (Type 1) and possibly without a financial sponsor (Type 2); and those outstanding

and good schools converting to academy status (Type 3) under the Coalition Government's policy. In the event, 9 headteachers / principals were interviewed in Phase 1 and 23 principals in Phase 2.

As Anderson and Arsenault (1998) state

> qualitative research explores the phenomena in their natural settings and uses multi methods to interpret, understand, explain and bring meaning to them (pg. 119).

The stance I have taken in this study is a post positivist one in that I wanted to take into account, and give significance to, the values and perspectives of those involved to offer a holistic view of the evidence. I am seeking to 'identify and assess the causes that influence outcomes' (Creswell 2009, pg. 7) in terms of the way in which the relationships between headteachers / principals may have affected the outcomes for young people. Gathering data from a range of individuals will lead to the identification of common themes which will inform my conclusions.

The methodological approach used was a survey, which is an appropriate method for a first study gathering a variety of perceptions and the method, in depth semi-structured interviews. Cohen et al (2000) suggest that surveys are useful for; gathering standardised information; ascertaining correlations; supporting or refuting hypotheses and generating accurate instruments for further research.

Interviews, however, place human interaction at the centre of knowledge production and emphasise the importance of the social situation in the analysis of research data. The research interview can be described as:

a two person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-related information (Cannell and Khan, 1968, pg. 527).

The intention is to use the findings to draw conclusions that will inform researchers and practitioners about the relationships between schools and within Local Authorities. Through the findings I am seeking to support the ongoing development of collaborations and partnerships between schools whatever their status to support pupil achievement and attainment.

Structure of the study

This introductory chapter sets out the research focus of the thesis. In Chapter Two I explore in greater depth the knowledge field as seen in the current literature. This examines the current view of academies from both supporters and opponents, and the impact seen elsewhere from partnership working between similar organisations and those governed by different regulations. Chapter Three outlines the research methodology and tools used to gather the evidence. Chapter Four discusses the findings from the research leading to analysis in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 identifies conclusions that can be drawn from the analysis and possible further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter explores a range of pertinent literature associated with the areas being researched. It brings together the findings from a number of research projects previously undertaken to form a foundation for my own research. The first section concentrates on the academy movement and the development of the curriculum for 14-19 year old pupils and its implications for institutions. Further sections look in more detail at the collaboration between schools (maintained and academies) either formally or informally and the organisational culture necessary for change. This provides a conceptual framework for the research currently taking place to investigate mechanisms for maintained schools and academies to deliver effective collaboration.

The survey of the relevant literature began with an internet search including the British Education Index of key words and phrases such as 'academy movement', 'anti-academy movement', 14-19 curriculum changes', 'diplomas', 'networks', 'collaboration', 'partnerships', 'organisational culture', organisational change' and 'group dynamics'. The literature concerning academies is less extensive at this stage than that for collaboration. The reason for this may be as Gleeson (2011) referring to Needham and Gleeson (2006) suggests:

> With few exceptions research access to academies, compared with mainstream schools, has been something of a no-go area, reflecting the political sensitivity associated with the 'goldfish bowl' effect of early academy development (pg. 200).

However, the search yielded a useful range of academic research into all three areas of interest that continued to grow throughout the course of this study. Some references were located in professional journals, others in books. I considered the number of citations of individual articles and books had received to give an initial filtering process. I was able to access journals via the eLibrary facility at Birmingham University. I also looked at relevant DCSF (or DfES) documentation detailing the government's ambitions regarding the setting up of academies and for school partnership working. Evaluations undertaken by the National College of School Leadership (NCSL) and by PriceCoopersWaterhouse have also been included. It has been particularly useful to consider the evidence presented in recent EdD theses from Birmingham University on networking in primary schools and current research being undertaken by the research community into the effectiveness of academies. It became clear from my reading of research literature that some concepts occurred more regularly than others giving them greater significance. I have therefore used these concepts to present the data that I gained thematically to help begin to understand the current knowledge field as it relates to my study.

The Academy Initiative

Background

The academy initiative started in March 2000 forming part of the Labour Government's drive to raise standards in secondary education in England. The areas perceived to be in greatest need were targeted first with a focus on schools that had been in special measures for some time and which were not showing

sufficient improvement. The initiative began as, and has remained, a highly political movement in that now all of the three main political parties are committed to ensuring improved outcomes for children and young people through the use of academy status. However, as Beckett (2011) pointed out:

> They tell you very little about education, but a great deal about New Labour political ideology. They are, essentially, a political construct, not an educational one (pg. xxi).

Those involved in the initiative have found and are continuing to find that there is also a need to be political in the way in which they interact and respond to the external and internal pressures placed on them through being part of the academy movement. To a certain extent those involved in leading educational establishments have always needed to be political with a small 'p' to ensure that their organisation was able to remain focussed on the primary aim of raising standards. But the external political pressure for academies to succeed has increased this need.

Initially academies were independent non-fee paying schools that had a private sponsor who made a contribution of £2 million to the cost of the new build (Type 1). As such they were at the 'forefront of moves to facilitate diversity, innovation and the blurring of the public / private boundary'. The Labour government aimed for 400 by 2010. Support has continued from the Coalition Government with over 1,500 open by January 2012 (Type 2 and 3).

In his speech at the launch, the then Education Minister, David Blunkett stated that:

In some of the most challenging areas, we believe a more radical approach is needed. Over the next year, we intend to launch pathfinder projects for new City Academies. These Academies, to replace seriously failing schools, will be built and managed by partnerships involving the government, voluntary, church, and business sponsors. They will offer a real challenge and improvements in pupil performance, for example through innovative approaches to management, governance, teaching and the curriculum, including a specialist focus in at least one curriculum area (2000).

There were a number of objectives for the Academies programme which all contribute to the 'radical' approach to raising standards. Curtis et al's (2008) evaluation for the Sutton Trust, reported that academies are a mechanism for driving up standards by raising achievement levels of pupils, their family of schools and the wider community by breaking the cycle of underachievement and low aspirations in areas of deprivation with historical low performance. Academies would be part of local strategies to increase choice and diversity in education, would use innovative approaches in a number of areas and would be inclusive, mixed ability schools.

In the early stages, sponsors were drawn from successful entrepreneurial businessmen who wanted to support others in achieving 'success'. Innovative approaches, as Blunkett (2000 above) had stated, in management, governance, and teaching and learning were introduced through a relaxation in a number of regulations controlling maintained school that it was asserted would bring real change.

The concept of academies was drawn from the Charter movement in the United States where non-educational institutions took over failing schools and turned

them into successful enterprises. It began following a challenge issued by the then president of the American Federation of Teachers, Albert Shanker, to reform the country's public schools. By 1995, 15 states had charter schools. The schools operated like private businesses and were free from some of the regulations imposed on other public schools. They are expected to be innovative in their pedagogy and be accountable for the performance of their pupils. Academies also mirrored to a certain extent the City Technology Colleges (CTC) of the previous Conservative Government that had also invited businesses to become sponsors of schools. The colleges were seen as a half way house between state schools and independent schools. Each college had increased funding and were independent of the Local Authority (LA). Both initiatives had not been entirely successful with limited sustained success in the United States and a lack of sponsorship over time for CTCs in this country.

However the view taken by the Labour Government at the time is epitomised by Lord Adonis, the then School's Minister in a speech to the National Academies Conference:

> Academies flowed partly from a frank assessment of the number of inadequate secondary schools being run on traditional lines, particularly in London and our other cities; partly from an analysis of the unambiguous success of the 15 City Technology Colleges run on independent lines with business and voluntary sector sponsors; partly from conversations with these sponsors and other excellent potential school promoters keen to be given the opportunity to make a difference; and partly from international evidence – not least from Sweden with its progressive society and political culture – that an independent state school model could harness new levels of parental engagement and support, and new energy and dynamism in the leadership and management of schools (2008).

Ball (2007) suggests that:

> Academies indicate a re-articulation and a re-scaling of the state; they are part of a new localism and a new centralism; they encompass new kinds of autonomy and new forms of control: controlled decontrol (pg. 171).

This can be seen in the level of freedom from legislation academies were given as independent institutions (there has been some drawing back of this over time). It gave academies increased local autonomy. There was initially no requirement, for instance, for early academies to follow Teachers Pay and Conditions, the National Curriculum, or organisation of the school day. As Ball (2007) puts it:

> their remit is to think and act 'otherwise' about learning and organisational practice and to escape the 'limitations' of traditional organisational ecologies (pg. 172).

The only central control was that written into the Funding Agreement – a legally binding document drawn up by the DCSF in conjunction with the sponsor that removed Local Authority control.

It has been these freedoms that have given rise to some concern, in particular from teacher unions. The National Union of Teachers (NUT) allied itself with the Socialist Workers Party to form the Anti-Academies Alliance to oppose the formation of academies sometimes through court action. There have been a number of articles (e.g., Chitty 2008; Titcombe 2008; Hatcher and Jones 2006; Gillard 2008; Sinnott 2008) funded by unions that have sought to reflect these concerns and the way in which academies, they believe, are damaging the delivery of education overall for pupils in England.

The DCSF commissioned PricewaterhouseCooper to undertake a longitudinal (5 year) evaluation of academies, the final report being published in 2008. The study looked at 27 academies that had come into existence over a 4 year period (2004-08). The Institute of Education, London has also carried out an evaluative study of academies on behalf of the Sutton Trust published in 2008. Since then the body of knowledge is growing about the makeup and effectiveness of academies, being carried out by academics and practitioners, which seeks to give a balanced view of the movement (for instance, Gorard, 2005, 2009; Hatcher 2008a, 2008b; Woods et al 2007).

Impact

Much of the negative press academies have received since their inception has been generated by those (in particular the Anti-Academy Alliance) who might have a cause to fear change, published in articles that contain, at times, emotive language. This 'upsurge of opposition …demonstrates that democratic politics is alive' (Gunter 2011 pg. 233). In many LAs, unions hold a significant influence over changes to practice both at the school level and at the LA level. This has included class size (beyond KS1 where it is statutory), the use of contractual hours and the extent of classroom observations. For many seeking to innovate in order to accelerate improvement, this has been a frustration.

Titcombe (2008) for example, stated that freedom from the National Curriculum spelt the end of a broad and balanced curriculum that should be the entitlement of all pupils. He believed that in the rush to raise standards, an academy would use

this freedom to teach only a narrow range of subjects which would ensure an increase in the percentage of pupils gaining 5A*-C GCSE grades (now 5A*-C The ability of sponsors to influence what was taught was equally felt to be a concern. including English and maths). He stated that:

> Academies are independent schools and despite being paid for by the taxpayer the sponsors have had complete power to dictate how and what pupils learn… Much bizarre and educationally doubtful experimentation is taking place based on the whims and prejudices of sponsors (pg. 56).

Chitty (2008) also writing for the Anti-Academy Alliance, sought to raise concerns about the integrity of sponsors and therefore their suitability to lead the development of the next generation. He cites police investigations into the previous activities of some as well as what he believed to be the 'misplaced' belief that being a success in one field automatically results in the ability to be a success in another unrelated field.

The NUT response to academies is set out in an article by Sinnott (2008). It raises concerns about the governance of academies in which the sponsor is able to exercise control by determining the composition of the governing body to the exclusion (he felt) of what would have been the usual community representation. This could have a knock on effect on such issues as admissions and exclusions. Both of these areas, he believed, could allow the academy to skew the intake to such an extent that the increases in GCSE results are meaningless when compared to the results from any predecessor school. Astle and Ryan's (2008) research did not find a deliberate manipulation of intake in this way. They found that academies tended to have a broad intake but the proportion of children from

low income families could be lower than that in the predecessor school because the academy was no longer undersubscribed.

The PricewaterhouseCooper report in 2007 indicated that academies in existence at the time had 'significantly higher proportions of pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), have English as an additional language (EAL), and have Special Educational Needs (SEN)' (pg. v). Many of the early academies were founded from failing schools. It was perhaps unreasonable to expect rapid and dramatic change in the attainment at GCSE level. Research and my own professional experience suggest that it takes time for a change in management to result in sustained higher attainment. Ofsted's Annual Report 2007 indicated that:

> inspections of academies are beginning to confirm a rising trend in effectiveness: there are examples of strong and effective leadership having a positive and sometimes transformational impact on pupils' progress and achievement often from a low base (pg. 31).

What started as a Labour Government initiative has gained all party support. The Conservatives see it as a natural extension of their own City Technology programme and the Liberal Democrats align it to the 'free school' movement in Sweden. There are now a number of sponsors with multiple academies such as the United Learning Trust (ULT), Absolute Return for Kids (ARK) and the Harris Trust.

There have been changes to the original freedoms given to academies over time. New academies are now required to teach the National Curriculum in core subjects for example and maintained schools have increased flexibility in how

they operate. However, Astle and Ryan (2008) believe that what is different about academies is that they make much more use of the freedoms available to them than maintained schools do. This perhaps says more about the quality of leadership attracted to academy principalship than about the academy movement itself. Academy leaders for example, appear to be more inclined to vary the school timetable, have a longer school day, and change staffing structures and pay. Many have been readier to innovate with the curriculum or school organisation.

The final PricewaterhouseCooper report on academies (2008), reported that leadership is fundamental to school improvement and that without strong leadership the outcomes for young people do not improve. Most principals appointed to the early academies had already been successful headteachers in other situations. Many had turned round failing schools. In other words they had 'learnt the craft of headship' before becoming a principal of an academy, thus freeing them up to be entrepreneurial in the way they approached the challenge of this new model of schooling. Pupils were very positive about the accessibility of their Principal. Staff perceptions reported that poor teacher performance was dealt with rigorously and that they believed the Principal could make a difference to outcomes for young people.

As many academies (Type 1) replaced failing schools with low prior attainment, low morale and low aspirations, the requirement for them to break that cycle not only within their own institution but also within the family of schools to which they

belong, can be a major leap. The pressure for this does not always seem to be based on purely altruistic values:

> it seems that academies are expected to deliver dramatic and speedy changes to student outcomes, in ways that are about justifying the policy politically as being worth the investment (Gunter 2011 pg. 213).

Staff from predecessor schools are normally TUPEd (Transfer Undertaking on the Protection of Employment Regulations 2006) across bringing with them the practices and understandings of that school. To turn these around takes time and can be very challenging when under the national spotlight as a 'pathfinder' for a perhaps controversial governmental policy. Some academies have tackled this by using the powers available to them of refusing to take pupils whose previous record indicates poor attendance or poor behaviour. This has fuelled the belief that academies are not inclusive but are 'engineering' their intake to improve results.

Many academies do not have what was traditionally known as a 'catchment' area for admissions as many maintained schools still do. Such academies have distance as their main admissions criteria. A neat circle around the school may well exclude pupils from more disadvantaged backgrounds who would have been part of the predecessor school's catchment area. Some use a banding system in which pupils wishing to apply for places in year 7 sit a national test such as the NFER Cognitive Ability Tests (CATS). This allows pupils to be placed in broad bands of ability enabling an academy to select a percentage of pupils from each band. Academies must follow the national code for admissions, but it would

appear that some have found ways of ensuring that they are not disadvantaged while they build their reputation for success.

The fourth PricewaterhouseCooper Evaluation Report (2007) comments on the performance of pupils in the academies studied compared to similar schools and those nationally. Overall, the performance of academies at both key stage 3 and 4 was below that seen nationally although there were some notable exceptions where performance was significantly above national levels. Also within the overall picture, it is clear that early academies (Type 1 opened in 2002 and 2003) improved key stage 3 results faster than the national average. At key stage 4, the eight academies which opened in 2003, improved on average at least at twice the rate schools improved nationally (pg. 27-42). However, there are still a significant proportion of academies where attainment falls below the key stage 4 benchmark of 30 per cent of pupils gaining 5A*-C grades including English and maths (later increased to 35 per cent). Machin and Wilson (2009) argue that it is still too early to fully evaluate the effectiveness of academies in raising standards and therefore that it would be wrong to dismiss or applaud them at this stage.

It is clear that radical approaches are not an instant panacea for reversing many years of low attainment and low aspirations. It takes time to overcome the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding and the impact of poor teaching and leadership can have, not only on the student population, but on the community as a whole. However, Ball (2007) argues that these radical approaches give schools:

a new narrative …, that is new ways of expressing themselves to themselves and others, new ways of constructing plausible performances and to be taken seriously and to be seen as succeeding (pg. 145).

Becoming an academy often enabled a school to present and celebrate itself in new ways both internally and externally.

Needham and Gleeson's report in 2006 for the NASUWT on academies, working with Catalyst and Public World, advocated that the government suspend the academies initiative and instead use the academies already in existence as pilots for a longitudinal study to evaluate their effectiveness. It would, they felt, then be appropriate to return to expanding the number of academies when the evidence was available to support it. However, the Education and Skills Select Committee (2005) reported that:

> We cannot wait five years. These children only get one chance in life and we can't afford to wait that long before we make a radical break with the past, which academies represent (2005).

Collaboration with maintained schools / Local Authorities

During the 1990s, the actions of the Conservative government created a type of school structure that removed from LA control those wishing to participate. The Grant Maintained movement established a framework through which schools were funded directly from central government rather than the LA. This meant that some LAs, where the majority of secondary schools opted for Grant Maintained status, had to reconsider the ways in which they worked in partnership with schools. Although the Labour Government removed Grant Maintained status (to become

Foundation status), the changed relationship between schools and LAs has inevitably had an impact on the way in which LA/school partnerships are able to develop. The level of trust and dependency in many areas had been lost. Bennett et al (2004) found:

> partnerships create a new form of accountability between their members which rest primarily on trust. A history of mistrust or hostility between all or some of the partners is likely to make the effective operation of their partnership difficult to achieve (pg. 218).

Partnerships are not in existence to ensure survival of the participants but the collective achievement of an outcome that is beneficial to all participants. The advent of the academy movement further complicated this relationship. Larsen et al (2011) state that:

> in the early stages of the programme, the independent nature of academies and their freedoms outside the local authority contributed to an uncertainty in delivering …polices which are predicated on the basis of collaboration within and across schools (pg. 108).

Much of the literature about academies stresses the independent nature of their constitution and the freedoms this offers. But this emphasis exacerbates the fears and concerns of those outside the movement, i.e., parents, the local community and neighbouring schools. The LA still has the statutory responsibility of ensuring that there are an appropriate number of school places within its area but does not control some of those institutions delivering the places. Burroughs (2005) reported that there were fears that academies would destabilise overall educational provision in an area or push problems into neighbouring schools (pg. 5).

West-Burnham and Otero (2004) argue that school improvement will plateau without significant social capital and that lower socio-economic areas are more

likely to suffer a lack of social capital due to a lack of networks, trust, engagement and shared values and aspirations within such communities. Although sponsorship has the potential to develop this within communities, it is not achieved by finance alone and needs to have the commitment of the sponsor to develop a community based learning environment.

The academy initiative is perhaps the most radical aspect to date of governmental policy in terms of control – central and de-central. Central control had been in the past exercised through content control – stipulating what should be taught and the expectations of what success would look like (e.g., the introduction of the National Curriculum and Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs)).

More recently this has extended into structural control with schools being encouraged, and in some situations forced, into formal collaborations, federations and now academy status. In the case of academies, control has been removed from local government to be retained by central government with the complexity for Type 1 and 2 of the involvement of private sponsorship. Sponsorship has brought with it different 'success' expertise that has given academies a different view on school improvement. The world of business does not appear to have been as hide-bound as education by rules and regulations and so seems to be able to take action quickly when not succeeding. For a headteacher to remove an underperforming teacher from the classroom takes considerable time whilst children continue to be taught by less than inspiring teachers. Academies have

the opportunity to look at how the business world operates and make use of similar strategies.

Academies (Type 1 and some Type 2) have the opportunity to deliver education in 'state of the art' buildings fit for the demands of the 21st century and enabling personalised learning. Many buildings have won architectural awards for their design although not all prove to be effective learning environments. A new purpose-built building makes a clear statement about the value placed on those who use it, 'this group of pupils are worth taking notice of and will go places when they leave'. For many of the early academies (Type 1), set up in very deprived areas, this was of great importance and probably was the first time any of the pupils and their families had been given the opportunity to believe in themselves in such a tangible way.

So what does this mean for the way in which schools and academies can begin to have meaningful partnership working? There remains, over ten years after the launch of the academy initiative, significant concern from those outside the movement as to its ethics and effectiveness (Chitty 2008; Titcombe 2008; Hatcher and Jones 2006; Gillard 2008; Sinnott 2008). It could be argued that some concern stems from external pressures on the teaching profession more generally than the academy initiative itself. Some might argue that a profession where qualification at masters level is being encouraged, should expect to be contracted to work for more than 1265 hours per year, coming into line with other professions working at a similar level. For some, the concern may be more about the

'unknownness' of sponsor control rather than LA control. There have been instances where sponsors have sought to influence curriculum content in a way which is not acceptable to some (e.g., faith sponsors encouraging the teaching of creationism).

The final PricewaterhouseCooper Evaluation report (2008) raises questions about the position of academies in the new educational landscape. Academies sit on the boundary between state and independent schools. They are state funded but not managed by the LA and are independent but not in receipt of fees (pg. 220). In some authorities where the proportion of secondary schools that have become academies is over 50 per cent, it has had significant impact on how the LA can fulfil its statutory duties in terms of school accountability, challenge and support.

It has also, more importantly for the purpose of this study, required a re-evaluation of the relationship between schools and academies in partnership working, for instance, for the delivery of the 14-19 curriculum and Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships (PricewaterhouseCooper 2008, pg. 220). As has been shown above, academies have attracted negative press from the outset. Some of this has been factually inaccurate but can still influence perceptions. Many academies have started life following the closure of failing schools and have been under considerable pressure to show rapid improvements. Both can result in a 'balkanisation' mindset which leads to the institution becoming totally insular.

In a small authority such as the one in which Phase 1 of this study took place, where two schools had become academies at the time of the interviews, any isolation fuels the misconceptions and false accusations that are still in the press. Many maintained schools believe that academies are funded significantly above the levels of other schools. In fact the funding formula is based on that of the LA in which the academy is placed, although they do receive the LA 'holdback' which can be as high as an additional 10% of their budget. A Type 1 and 2 academy may have access to additional funding streams from the sponsor.

Much has been made of the way in which academies have managed to 'skew' their intake from that of predecessor schools in order to be able to raise attainment (Chitty 2008, Sinnott 2008, Machin and Wilson 2009). One of the policy implications set out by Curtis et al (2008) suggests that academies would have more influence if they were to co-operate with neighbouring schools in terms of admissions and exclusions (pg. 77). They also suggest that as academies have used their freedoms and independence to innovate in leadership, staffing, curriculum and pedagogy, there should be a role for academies in sharing good practice perhaps following the model of Professional Development Schools (pg. 77).

14-19 Curriculum reform

There was much criticism in the 80s and 90s of the way in which education prepared young people for the world of work. There was growing dissatisfaction with the qualifications achieved and the number of young people entering further

and higher education. There was also a growing awareness of the distinctiveness

of 14-19 learners from younger learners and also the non- homogeneity within the

14-19 group. It seemed that there were an increasing number of disaffected and

excluded young people who were not successfully accessing learning or were not

being supported to access learning. De Pear (1997) found that:

> it might not be a fact that these pupils had no wish to take responsibility in
> the learning situation but that some teachers dealing with these pupil-
> subjects, prior to exclusion, gave them little opportunity to succeed (pg. 20).

The 1970s saw increasing concern that the existence of two examination systems

was educationally and socially divisive. In 2007 the Labour Government set out its

intention to deliver quality provision for all children and young people in the first

Children's Plan (DfES 2007). Within this and reiterated in subsequent documents

e.g., DCSF 2008, there were three major goals:

- That all young people participate in education or training up to the age of
  18 by 2015
- That all young people have the knowledge and skills needed by employers
  and the economy
- To close the achievement gap so that all have an equal opportunity to
  succeed (DCSF 2008).

There had been earlier indications of reform particularly concerning qualifications

in the 14-19 Education and Skills White paper (DfES 2005a) and the subsequent

14-19 Implementation Plan (DfES 2005b). Hatcher (2008b) states that:

> The 14-19 agenda combines an educational and economic rationale: that a
> more practical and work-related curriculum at Key Stage 4 is capable both
> of meeting the skill needs of employers and of motivating young people
> and enabling them to succeed in ways which the traditional academic
> curriculum cannot (pg. 667/8).

The Nuffield Foundation has undertaken an independent review of all aspects of 14-19 education and training since 2003. The final report (Pring et al 2009), sets out what it has seen as the implications of governmental policy and makes recommendations for future changes. In particular there are concerns about the way in which the government has tried to bring what it sees as industrial methods of working into the educational context and enhance the relationship between business and education. Mansell (2009) writing in the Guardian states:

> The assumption behind much of education policy – that performance targets are set for teachers in the form of pupils' test and exam success, and the means by which they reach them is less important – is borrowed from industry.

The review also found that the policy aspect that has been the most difficult to implement has been to deliver change to <u>all</u> young people. Some success has been achieved with some groups of disaffected young people by developing a curriculum that engaged their interest for longer. There have been improvements in the way in which young people are stretched to achieve higher A Level results and therefore access to university places. But there are groups in between who have not felt significant change and are at risk of becoming more marginalised.

Pring et al (2009) argued that an education for 'all' would provide:

- The knowledge and understanding required for the 'intelligent management of life';
- Competence to make decisions about the future in the light of changing economic and social conditions;
- Practical capability – including preparation for employment;
- Moral seriousness with which to shape future choices and relationships;
- A sense of responsibility for the community (pg. 3).

The Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training (2003-2009) has been able to look in depth at various aspects of the reforms now in operation. Issues Paper 2 (Hodgson and Spours 2007) concentrated on 14-19 partnerships. It concluded that:

> one particular difficulty is that the Government urges institutions to collaborate while, at the same time, encouraging them to compete for pupils, funding and resources in the pursuit of school improvement (pg. 1).

Hatcher (2008b) argues that no school would be able to deliver more than one or two diplomas therefore requiring students to travel between schools to achieve real choice (pg. 668). This view supports that of Hodgson and Spours (2006), stating that it is 'accepted policy and practitioner wisdom' (pg. 1). The governmental directive which raises the participation in education and training to 18 by 2015, places even greater emphasis on the need to collaborate.

> If one hundred per cent of learners are expected, by statute, to participate in some form of education and training up to the age of 18, then serious thought will have to be given to how all providers – education, work-based and community-based – can work together to offer the wide range of learning opportunities required to meet the needs of all learners in a locality (Hodgson and Spours 2006 pg. 1).

However, their contention is that at this stage most 14-19 Partnerships around the country are 'weakly collaborative' (Hodgson and Spours 2006 pg. 3), which could impede further developments. They found that where collaboration did exist: it focussed on a relatively small number of learners (often the disaffected); a small number of the possible number of institutions; there was varying degrees of commitment; and there was little involvement of parents or governors. Frequently governmental policy worked against collaboration through aspects such as league tables, institutional inspections, funding and qualifications. However, their

research showed that in a time of financial constraints, all could gain more benefit by moving towards a 'concept of a local learning system which showed genuine regard for the efficient use of resources for the benefit of all learners' (Hodgson and Spours 2006 pg. 8).

LAs and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) have been charged with ensuring: that the full 14-19 entitlement is available to all young people in an area; have a duty to produce a 14-19 Prospectus preferably online that sets out all courses and support available in that area; and a Common Application process linked to the prospectus so that it is easier for young people to access education and training. This places a requirement on institutions including schools, colleges and training providers within the area to work together. In particular for an area that has one or two academies amongst a majority of maintained schools, there could be a significant impact on the academies if they did not take part in terms of student popularity and possible outcomes. Where there is a more equal balance in terms of number of academies / maintained schools, it would be possible for each group to go their own way, thus creating even smaller local areas. This again potentially would reduce the range and choice available to young people.

The Labour Government brought in a new curriculum for secondary schools that required schools to deliver at key stage 4 (from aged 14):

- Core – English, maths, science;
- Foundation – Information Communication Technology (ICT), Physical Education (PE), Citizenship;
- Work related learning and enterprise;
- Religious education;
- Sex, drug, alcohol and tobacco education and careers education;

- A course in at least one of the arts, Design Technology (DT), the humanities, Modern Foreign Language (MFL) (all 4 if they wish)

There are now four routes young people can take to gain qualifications:

- Apprenticeships – with an entitlement to a place for all suitably qualified 16 year old by 2013;
- Foundation Learning Tier – with an entitlement by 2010 to study one of the progression routes;
- General qualifications – GCSEs and A levels; and
- Diplomas – with an entitlement by 2013 for all 14-16 year olds to the first 14 diplomas and for 16-18 year olds to all 17 diplomas.

There has been a perception amongst employers for some time that examinations such as GCSEs do not give students the kind of literacy and numeracy skills necessary in the workplace. Therefore schools are now required to embed what has been termed 'Functional Skills' in English, maths, ICT and personal and thinking skills across the curriculum so that young people are able to demonstrate their ability to apply their knowledge and skills in 'real' situations.

The new qualification of diplomas was launched to be delivered across a consortium of schools and LAs. The understanding and skills gained through studying diplomas are closely linked to those needed in employment. They are not however a replacement for the current vocational qualifications. For example the diploma in Construction and the Built Environment does not teach young people how to lay bricks as City and Guilds Bricklaying had done for many years. Rather it gives a broad understanding of how construction companies have to operate in order to deliver a new development as well as practical understanding of building processes. As no one school will be able to deliver all 17, consortia will be essential. Each diploma will require institutions and training providers to consider

how they can share staff, facilities, and timetables in order to maximise opportunities for young people.

The next section of this chapter will consider in more depth what constitutes partnership and how its effectiveness can be measured.

Networking

With the return to power of the Labour Government in 1997, their focus on education sought to stress the importance of school improvement and school effectiveness as a mechanism for raising standards. The Green Paper – Excellence in Schools (DfEE 1997) firmly placed the responsibility for raising standards on schools themselves rather than external mechanisms.

Much research has been carried out into the ways in which schools work collaboratively (in networks / partnerships / clusters). National initiatives have encouraged this for some time, e.g. Excellence in Cities; Excellence Clusters; Education Action Zones; the Leadership Incentive Grant partnerships; Primary Strategy Learning Networks; Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships to name but a few (Veugelers and O'Hair 2005; Connolly and James 2006; Glatter 2003; Rutherford and Jackson 2006). But these initiatives have all been set in a climate of competition fuelled by league tables and public perceptions. The development of the 14-19 agenda for secondary education demands significant partnership working not only between schools but also between schools and other providers of learning.

However, as Evans et al (2005) point out, there were early signs that partnerships between schools could be a useful mechanism for schools to use particularly when they were facing challenging circumstances. Crowther and Limerick (2000) found that:

> developing partnerships facilitates interactive learning for problem solving and community building (pg. 28).

Education Action Zones, Excellence in Cities and Excellence Clusters were all formed in areas of deprivation so that groups of schools had additional support mechanisms to help them change aspirations and achievement. Research undertaken by Ainscow et al (2006) into collaborations between schools facing significant challenges found that although collaboration was not something that was simple to introduce, it could show significant gains for students.

The academies initiative appears to run counter to the growing focus on collaboration. As independent state funded schools responsible directly to the government, they are outside all other school organisational mechanisms. This independence was seen in many instances by maintained schools as a threat to their own viability. The premise on which they were set up was that they would turn round the opportunities of deprived communities. In small LAs there might be only one secondary school that fitted this criterion. However, that school was likely to have been less popular with parents than other more successful schools in the area making those schools oversubscribed. Any change to the fortunes of the least successful would inevitably have an impact on parental perceptions and could mean that the rest of the secondary schools would lose some of their intake.

As time has progressed and more academies have come on stream, many authorities have more than one academy therefore impacting on the ways in which they can deliver services across the area and how they can work proactively with all schools to deliver the 14-19 agenda including diplomas. As academies are funded directly by the government not through the LA, funding to the LA is reduced, having implications for the employment of central staff who work with schools. This study is seeking to identify the difficulties inherent in the inter-relationship between maintained schools and academies within the context of the need for collaboration 14-19 and subsequently collaboration in a broader context.

School partnerships

The field of education has been subject to a constant range of initiatives and innovations for many years. If education for all matters, if the outcomes of that education for all matters, then the quality of what happens during the education process is vitally important and the need for continuous improvement (however that is measured) became a reality. As Glatter (1986) pointed out innovation for the sake of doing something 'new' is meaningless without the concept that that the 'newness' would bring 'improvement'.

The DfES set up the Innovation Unit in 2002 seeking to bring about an innovative system rather than individual innovative schools. But there is a need to recognise the difference between innovation in a commercial setting and in an educational setting. In a commercial setting, risk is an accepted feature of innovation and

failure is part of the market process. However, failure in an educational context has serious consequences for students and therefore some risks are viewed as unacceptable.

McMillan (2004) stated that innovation is one of the properties which may emerge from a complex range of activities which unsettle traditional norms and support change. Hargreaves (2003) in a speech at an IPPR conference stated that:

> transformation can either mean significant improvement or something more profound which involves intensive innovation- the second definition is one to which we should aspire (pg. 5).

However, Elmore (1996) concluded that because individuals are heavily influenced by institutional structures, these will have a greater influence on practice than innovative ideas. Reforms therefore need to take account of how people learn to do things differently and in reality teachers often need compelling reasons to change their practice.

One definition of innovation put forward by Glatter et al (2005) is:

> a significant change in processes, provision and / or organisation intended to help meet educational goals more effectively or to promote new goals (pg. 384),

which considers innovation in terms of a particular range of activities rather than an abstract concept. It separates innovation from 'change' or 'reform'. Change can be taken to mean any alteration in circumstances whatever the cause or reason. Butt and Jackson (2007) showed that successful leadership of change necessitated a commitment to building relationships at all levels and a commitment to working in partnership with other institutions. Reform may well have a stated purpose but covers a number of innovations which may or may not

be connected. Glatter, building on March's work (1999), supports the view that innovation does not have to be entirely new and novel. It is not always about 'exploration' but can equally be about 'exploitation' that is introducing practice which is believed to have been effective elsewhere.

One such innovation has been that of collaboration, for example; Excellence in Cities; Excellence Cluster; Primary Learning Networks and Professional Learning Communities. Hall and Wallace (1993) referring to earlier research by Wallace (1988) looking at a group of primary schools working together as a cluster reported that:

> developing collaboration between autonomous institutions is a major innovation. If implementation is to be more than superficial and transient, those presently concerned and any newcomers have to learn new practices and change their beliefs and values in a way which cannot be imposed (pg. 108).

All the examples cited above were based on the premise that working together achieved better results than working alone. Such collaboration would also build capacity within and between institutions to ensure any improvement would be sustained.

In looking at the setting up of Education Action Zones, Jones and Bird (2000) found that what was being asked of schools and other agencies required a major mind-set change. This was because:

> The range of partners is greater, its organisational arrangements more flexible; its accent falls on decentralisation rather than central administration; on inter-agency working rather than departmentalisation; innovation rather than the rule-following characteristics of bodies established in the corporatist period (pg. 492).

This was further supported by Butt and Jackson's (2007) study that:

> learning communities and social partnerships cannot be achieved overnight, they require major cultural change for many schools (pg. 95).

Despite the complexities, Stoll and Fink (1996) believed that:

> because the school in most communities is the central social agency, it is in a unique position to create a partnership web with all individuals, groups, organisations and institutions which share responsibility for the growth and development of pupils (pg. 134).

Hannon (2004) when she was Director of the Innovation Unit said that:

> service providers will have to ask; who are you, and what do you need?...more personalised modes of delivery (mean that) services must be collaborative and networked if they are to address the complex and changing needs of individuals (pg. 4).

A number of research studies have found that collaboration can be a more effective way of meeting individual needs (Bennett et al 2004, Hutchinson and Campbell 1998). Cribb (2009) when looking at collaboration stated that:

> collaboration advantage occurs when objectives are met that could not have been achieved by organisations working on their own (pg. 5).

The study by Stoll et al (2006) gives a definition of a learning community based on research by Mitchell and Sackney (2000); Toole and Louis (2002); King and Newman (2001):

> a group of people sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way, operating as a collective enterprise (pg. 223).

Hall and Wallace (1993) stated that:

collaboration in an organisational context describes a way of working where two or more people combine their resources to achieve specific goals over a period of time (pg. 103).

Building on the work of Hord (2004) and Louis et al (1995), Stoll et al (2006) found that there were five elements which seem to be fundamental to effective collaboration within a learning community. They are:

- Shared values and vision;
- Collective responsibility;
- Reflective professional inquiry;
- Collaboration;
- Group as well as individual learning is promoted (pg. 226-227).

They would also suggest there needs to be mutual trust, respect and support amongst members and an inclusive membership. Placing these elements in the context of secondary schooling in England over the past few years when competition between schools has become the norm, it is interesting to see how far teachers and school leaders feel the ideal is possible. In 1993, Hall and Wallace found that:

collaboration between schools and colleges is currently being promoted in a least a few areas as a local strategy which may subvert the competition engendered by central government (pg. 101).

Schools function because parents choose to send their children to them; high performing schools attract more pupils, leaving the less successful with fewer pupils, often from families for whom education may not be a priority, possibly reducing the school's ability to improve. Poorly performing schools may then be closed and the pupils transferred to expanded higher performing schools.

It is highly likely therefore that many school leaders feel a pressure to attract pupils who will enable them to achieve high results. The concept of collaborating

with less successful colleagues and taking collective responsibility for the pupils in the group does not sit comfortably with that. The independent factor of academies and their (presumed) additional funding may be a source of contention amongst schools leading to increased pressures within the group. Market accountability and competition are not always felt to be compatible with each other.

Collaboration within schools

If the government is seeking to advocate collaboration as a mechanism for school improvement, then collaboration may well need to start within a school before it can be effective between schools. James et al (2006) undertook a research project based in Wales of 18 primary schools which consistently achieved high results whilst serving socially deprived communities. It would normally be expected that the attainment in such schools would be below the national average, but these schools were judged by their LAs and inspection regimes to be achieving higher than anticipated. The research project was set up to find out why. I have included this research evidence in this chapter because it demonstrates one example of an effective collaboration which impacted on pupil outcomes. Teachers often work together for example within a department or across a year group but it is not as common for <u>all</u> staff to share a common purpose to the extent the researchers found in these 18 schools.

The research concluded that in all the schools involved it was possible to identify common features. There was a strong highly inclusive culture focused on the primary task and six key characteristics that contribute to and sustain the core

feature. They all worked to that primary task – that of ensuring they delivered teaching for learning for all pupils that is effective, enriched and improving and further enriching teaching for learning for all pupils. Therefore they sought to do the best they could for their pupils and then to work hard to do that even better.

Within the schools studied, there was a strong sense of joint endeavour. All staff were working together towards clearly known priorities in a thoughtful and reflective manner. This involved support staff as well as teaching staff who although they might have different roles and responsibilities, were all valued for the contribution they were able to make. It did not mean there was no disagreement about the 'how' but there was sufficient trust within the organisation to be able to confidently put a point of view and work though to a resolution.

The key characteristics were:

- leadership – the leading role played by the headteacher in setting and keeping the inclusive culture and in developing leadership throughout the organisation;
- the mindset – all staff were empowered, motivated, aspirational, and cared about what they were doing;
- the teaching team – a strong sense of accountability, trust and collaboration;
- the engagement of pupils and parents – strong student voice and valuing of parents;
- efficient and effective organisation and management – highly structured with roles, systems and processes which had been thought through;
- mutual support – this came from within the school and from outside. (pg. 15-16).

This evidence is relevant to the ways in which collaboration between schools operates. The key role played by the headteacher in directing and empowering staff and the shared sense of accountability and trust has implications for how a

group of schools need to agree on who will take on this key role, not an easy thing for heads to do.

Collaboration between schools

For some time the emphasis has been on 'stand alone' schools, each seen in isolation from its neighbour, each competing to achieve the best results. The priority given to quantitative attainment targets ensured schools looked only within their own institution with little regard for what was happening to others. However, it became clear that this drive for improvement had reached a plateau from which it was difficult to progress (Levacic et al 2005). The DfES began to promote collaboration as a means of getting beyond the plateau.

> Supporting effective learning networks of primary schools will be the single most important way in which we will build the capacity of primary schools to continue to develop and improve, and in particular to offer better teaching and learning and a wider range of opportunities to pupils and to their communities …We intend this to be the foundation for a far wider range of networking activities in future (2004a pg. 4).

Networks (learning communities, collaborations) have been seen to serve several functions, they bring a moral bond to those participating lifting the day to day activities of teaching into something with higher aims (Leiberman and Miller 1999) and they also are able to provide the necessary structure for organisational change (Hopkins 2001). They can support the delivery of a broad aim of teacher and school renewal through creative pedagogy.

The study by Day et al (2003) based on Primary Schools Learning Network (PSLN) highlighted a number of factors that influenced the effectiveness of the

collaboration. These were: the importance of adult learning; active teacher participation; critical reflection; learning from others; collaboration inside and outside the school; linking learning with structural and cultural change; linking learning with the development of capacity within schools; the need for learning to be linked with personal and professional development for individual teachers; sustained support over time and trust in professional judgement. Alongside these is the value placed on risk taking and the importance of emotional intelligence.

Haeusler, Director of the South East England Virtual Education Action Zone (SEEVEAZ), produced a report of the work of this collaboration (2003). In it the key elements which have been found to be essential for the effectiveness of the EAZ are set out. They are:

- Collaboration succeeds when participants are willing and committed to share in an atmosphere of trust, mutual respect and support; giving and receiving as equals;
- Leadership of any collaboration is a key factor to success;
- Members of the network must be actively engaged in decision making and proactively embrace the opportunities it offers;
- Collaboration is sustained when members benefit personally and professionally, and can identify a positive impact on their school, teachers and students;
- Effective collaboration in a climate conducive to change leads to sustained school improvement (pg. 3).

The first of these, that 'participants are willing to share in an atmosphere of trust' is an area which has been the focus of research for some time (e.g., Dasgupta 1988; Bigley and Pearce 1998; Coulson 1998; Bryk and Schneider 2002). Some have been reluctant to define what trust is because of the complexity of social interaction but Covey's (2006) definition is helpful in the context of this study.

Simply put, trust means confidence. The opposite of trust - distrust – is suspicion. When you trust people you have confidence in them – in their integrity and in their abilities. When you distrust people, you are suspicious of them – of their integrity, their agenda, their capabilities and their track record (pg. 5).

Bennett et al (2004) found that collaborations between schools were successful when everyone involved could sense there was a mutual advantage to being in the collaborative, when participants trusted each other, when there was an organisational maturity and when the collaboration was two way (pg. 220).

Collaborating schools have been more successful when there has been a complete focus on the learning of all students. Effectiveness depends on all those involved sharing the same aim and knowing that what they do as part of the partnership, will be supported by colleagues reinforcing agreed objectives (Hord 2004). It therefore follows that because objectives have been agreed and actions planned together, there is also a shared ownership of the outcomes, a collective responsibility for how successful the project / pupils are. Newmann and Wehlage (1995) found that peer pressure and a sense of accountability with collective responsibility helped to maintain commitment to the project.

The research of Newmann and Wehlage (1995) and Louis et al (1995) found that opportunities for conversations that were about serious educational matters or about problem solving for particular learning situations were mechanisms which supported the embedding of a collaborative relationship between staff. These might take place within one institution but they were even more important when staff from a number of institutions tried to work together. The ability to articulate

deeply held beliefs about the why and how of learning, and have those conversations treated with serious careful consideration, an acceptance of their validity and a desire to support solution finding, gives staff a renewed sense of self-worth in the activities they are pursuing, which in turn builds commitment to the process. This needs to be set in a context that allows all staff to voice their own concerns or feelings of inadequacy without fearing negative consequences.

The ability to have this ongoing conversation leads to collective learning through collective knowledge creation (Louis 1994). Issues are raised, discussed, thought through, acted upon, evaluated, interpreted and distributed amongst others, thus consolidating relationships within the group and moving towards achieving the shared aim.

The collaboration itself must be accepted as something more than giving help and assistance to a colleague. If there is a shared aim and objective that is embraced by all those involved as the 'only thing that matters', then collaboration will mean that debate is robust, honest but professional. There will be conflict but in a true collaboration this is managed effectively and often leads to improved outcomes. Hargreaves (2003) points out that:

> professional learning communities demand that teachers develop grown-up norms in a grown-up profession - where difference, debate and disagreement are viewed as the foundation stones of improvement (pg. 163).

This aspect is of real relevance to this study where a somewhat 'forced' collaboration such as that for the delivery of the 14-19 curriculum has within it, institutions which see themselves potentially on opposing sides.

Collaboration is most effective when it is inclusive, when it encourages all within the community to become involved and values contributions from all. The mutual trust and respect between participants from varying professional and non-professional backgrounds help to limit the potential for some to work against the stated aim.

In seeking a model of collaboration which best represented the focus of this study, I needed to take into account the particular opportunities and constraints in place. This study is formed of two phases and took place over a 12 month period. It therefore included institutions which had been involved in collaborative activities for differing lengths of time. It was important to consider a conceptual model which took development over time into account. The study began by looking at how school / academies were working together to deliver the 14-19 initiative. As this was an externally imposed intiative, it was important that I did not only consider those models which were based on schools choosing to work together voluntarily. Hall and Oldroyd (1992) model of collaboration (see Fig. 2 below) arose from research into the effectiveness of collaboration to deliver the Technical and Vocational Educational Initiative (TVEI). This initiative was initiated by government in 1983 and required schools to work together and with local businesses to support the development of work related skills post 14. In many ways TVEI was

similar to the introduction of the 14-19 agenda and diploma qualifications. Both

initiatives were imposed externally, both required schools to work together without

the element of choice and both could use funding as an incentive. These

elements together with the concept of development over time made it an

appropriate model to consider in this study.
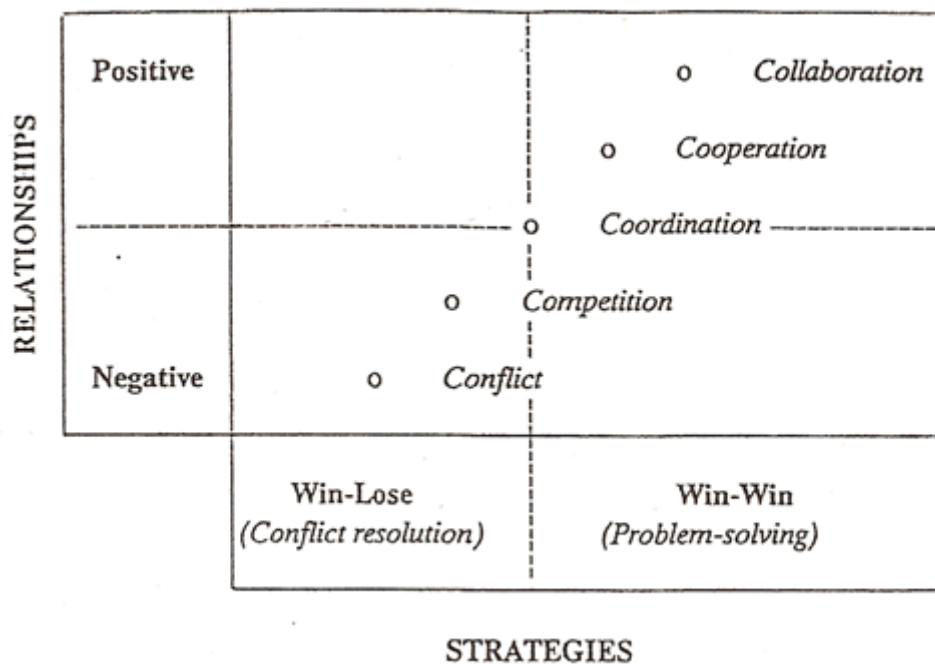
**Fig. 2: A continuum of ways of working (Hall and Oldroyd 1992) in Hall and
Wallace 1993 (pg. 105).**

The model seeks to identify how the strategies employed by a collaborative can

either support all involved to achieve success (win-win) or support some at the

expense of others (win-lose). The second dimension of their model identifies the

impact of relationships both positive and negative on the success of the group as

a whole. The model acknowledges that institutions are unlikely to arrive at a

mature collaborative relationship instantaneously but that there are developmental

stages both in the strategies used and the ability to have due regard for relationships within the group. This model has significant relevance for the development of the collaboration in Phase 1 and for the varying collaborations discussed in Phase 2 of this study. This study will seek to identify ways of taking this model forward in the light of the findings.

In Hall and Wallace's view (1993):

> collaboration is to a significant degree a voluntary partnership, distinguishable from a relationship of domination and compliance (pg. 105).

Some schools have been required to become an academy with a more successful school and perhaps did not feel at the start it was a 'voluntary partnership'. However, it is only when participants are able to value the collaboration as fundamental to the success of their own institution as well as others in the group and are prepared to commit time, energy and resources that it can be said the group have moved from co-operation to collaboration. This study will seek to identify whether the collaborations experienced by the respondents have become fully collaborative in this sense.

One of the areas that many research projects into effective collaborations have commented upon is that of the leadership of the individual institution within the collaborative and the leadership of the collaborative as a whole. The leadership displayed by the head and senior staff have a significant impact on the school culture – giving it a predisposition to collaboration or the opposite. The word 'predisposition' is key here, the leader cannot make it happen, he/she can only put in place the conditions which support its occurrence. A leader who tries to do

more than this may find themselves creating something they did not expect or want (Hargreaves 2004; Wallace 1996). Boccia et al (2000) found that it was the:

> consistency of leadership in the partner organisations which ensured continued commitment to the collaboration and credibility amongst the stakeholders (pg. 187).

In considering some of the available research into leadership styles which had been seen to impact positively on pupil outcomes, I needed to consider which models were able to conceptualise the complexity of leading a number of independent organisations. For some, the concept of distributed leadership has been viewed as more effective than that of the 'heroic leader'. Although a 'heroic' leader may be able to galvanise others into the necessary actions for improvement, there is a fear that when that leader leaves, the organisation is often unable to sustain momentum. Research studies would argue that in organisations where leadership is distributed, i.e., where people 'work together', the result is 'an energy which is greater than the sum of their individual action' Bennett et al 2003 pg. 7). In considering the research undertaken by academics such as Harris (2004) and Spillane (2000, 2005) that distributed leadership describes practice rather than roles, it became clear that the concept did not encompass all aspects of the leadership necessary for collaborations to be effective as fully as I wished to see. However, Coleman (2011) in his study looking at the leadership of school based collaborations identifies a range of leadership styles and behaviours that are necessary for effective leadership of collaborative working (see Fig. 3 below pg. 55) which seemed to represent a more

encompassing approach. This study will seek to identify from the findings further developments to this model.

Coleman contends that leadership of a collaboration is significantly different from that of leadership of a single institution or a number of institutions when one is in control of the others. Therefore he states that:

> the key point is…not which of these is preferable for partnership working per se, but rather what is the most appropriate mix of these elements for the specific context within which they are to be manifest (pg. 302).

He goes on to say:

> The effective practice of collaborative leadership involves the skilful combinations of these various elements, such that each manifestation is a bespoke construction, sensitive to the unique demands of the context within which it resides and upon which such tensions may be resolved (pg. 312).

Fig 3: Elements of Collaborative leadership (Coleman 2011 pg. 303).

Authentic leadership
the values based performance of leadership

Relational leadership
the connection between leader and follower

Constitutive leadership
constructing the contextual meaning for followers

Distributed leadership
leadership as pluralistic endeavour

Political leadership
understanding the macro, messo and micro political climate

An authentic leader demonstrates consistently the link between values and actions. In other words he / she 'walks the talk' and can be depended on to do so day in day out. Such actions give rise to respect from staff, a sense of empowerment and trust. It engenders commitment amongst followers and a willingness to put effort into achieving identified goals. A limitation of this aspect of leadership however, is that there could be times in a collaborative setting when the leader would have to act counter to his /her own known values because of the interests of the rest of the group.

A leader cannot be a leader without followers, therefore leadership must be relational. There must be within that relationship, concern for the followers' wellbeing both personally and professionally. As was seen in Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) model of collaboration, relationships form a vital dimension to the overall success of the venture. Negative relationships give rise to conflict, positive ones find solutions to problems. To be able to form strong relationships with others and to nurture those relationships as the collaboration develops is an important aspect of leadership in this context. Relational leadership does not need to be hierarchical or autocratic and is frequently democratic and open. Coleman (2011) indicates that this aspect plays an important part in 'models of post-heroic leadership' (pg. 306). Although heroic leadership may have fallen from favour to a certain extent, his research found that:

> many leaders achieve major contributions to children's lives by demonstrating a heroic focus on promoting the needs of children at all times, regardless of the degree to which such a pre-occupation may have negative consequences for personal relationships in the short term (pg. 306).

Distributed leadership places leadership within professional capacity not a hierarchical position. Within a collaborative setting, there will be many organisations and groups. It is not possible therefore that all of the leadership can reside in one place all of the time. It requires a level of trust that others will deliver the aspect they have been assigned with competence and expertise. This trust in individuals helps to generate trust within the group as a whole.

The ability to be aware of a broad range of policy agendas at national, local and immediate levels and to be able to manipulate that knowledge in order to achieve the aims of the collaborative requires a particular leadership skill. Such activities may conflict with some of the values and ethics which most heads and principals hold dear and can therefore be problematic for leaders to use. In Coleman's (2011) view the:

> more thorny issues of how leaders proactively use politics as a means for pursuing their aims has received little attention (pg. 308).

Constitutive leadership involves the ways in which leaders make explicit the 'values, rights and responsibilities' (Coleman 2011 pg. 309) which apply in the particular context of a school or collaboration. It can be described as the way the professionalism of the group is articulated. Some values may well be common to most school leaders but others will be particular to the set of circumstances and pressures the school or collaboration find themselves in. It requires strong communication skills to ensure that others understand what values, rights and responsibilities operate in their context and also highly developed listening skills so that the leader is very clear how other members are reacting to the message.

Coleman's (2011) model of collaborative leadership is a complex one and, as he reports, needs to continue to be tested through other research studies but its level of complexity is why it is relevant to this study. A model of collaborative leadership should not be about one element, a collaboration leader needs to be able to utilise a number of elements to maximise outcomes. The changes to the ways in which the education system is being driven at a national and local level over the past

few years, means that the perhaps simpler more straightforward concepts of leadership used in the past can no longer deliver the drive and motivation necessary to continue to raise standards. It is therefore apposite to consider his model in relation to this study.

Learning in a school context cannot only be about pupil outcomes and achievements, it must also be about the learning teaching and support staff have gone through and continue to go through in order for that pupil learning to take place (Law and Glover 2000; Louis et al 1995; Leithwood et al 1999). There needs to be the conditions for growth in teachers' professional development so that institutions and any collaborations of which they are a part become self-sustaining. This means that the notion of one 'heroic leader' who holds sway over all, who maintains a tight grip on all decision making and trail blazing, is no longer appropriate. Effective collaboration sees leadership across the group – not only to 'get the job done' but also to ensure that there are those appropriately trained to take on the full leadership at the right time (succession planning). A number of authors have supported the notion of such leadership over time (e.g., Gibb 1958; Gronn 2000; Spillane 2000; MacBeath 2005).

In learning partnerships there will be many times when it is more appropriate for a teacher to lead the project while the headteacher takes a subsidiary role. Crowther (2001) suggests that this pedagogic leadership runs in parallel with the strategic leadership of the headteacher. This is not always a comfortable position for headteachers to find themselves in. The emphasis on autonomous, self-governing schools over the past few years has given headteachers, particularly

secondary headteachers, more control that had not been experienced previously. Many secondary headteachers developed such experiences by taking Grant Maintained status outside of much of the control of the LA. Whilst the Labour Government's decision to transmute this to Foundation Status brought them some way back into LA control, it did not remove the knowledge and experience gained during this period.

However, Harris's view (2003) is that:

> if we are serious about building professional learning communities within and between schools then we need forms of leadership that support and nourish meaningful collaboration among teachers. This will not be achieved by clinging to models of leadership that, by default rather than design delimits the possibilities for teachers to lead development work in schools (pg. 322).

One aspect impacting on effective leadership of schools and collaborations is that of the relative power relationships with the group. This may be just within the school, those staff who appear to hold more sway than others and can therefore be felt to have the opportunity to influence the decisions being made than others. Or it can be within a group of schools, where the power relationships between the group of headteachers mean that some schools feel at a disadvantage compared to others. Sarason (1990) put forward the view that many educational reforms are not successful because too little account is taken of the relative power relationships within the group. Focus needs to be placed on the interaction of 'sub-cultures' which may be operating below the apparent stated intentions of the collaboration. Martin and Frost (1996) make allowance for this and seek to identify how members of the collaboration cope with any dissent and therefore their ability to achieve the goal. This area is of significance to this study. Phase 1 of my

research takes place in one LA that had only 11-16 schools with two FE colleges. Any change to this through the opening of 11-18 academies (as in fact two did) could have a significant impact on the relationships within the group. I anticipate that there could be a number of 'subcultures' operating within a group of institutions who have come together to deliver the 14-19 agenda.

The impact of a common goal, shared accountability and responsibility and mutual respect and trust has been shown to be paramount for collaboration effectiveness. Whilst 'collaboration' or 'partnership working' has been demonstrated as a powerful mechanism for school improvement, it is still a fragile entity which depends to significant degree on the personalities of those involved. With a change in leadership in one or more of the institutions concerned such partnerships can easily disintegrate.

There are significant difficulties in 'requiring' schools to work together when other factors impose competition. There needs to be 'grown up' responses to challenging issues particularly relating to relative power bases within the group. The need for strong leadership of the group of institutions as a whole does require other successful leaders to be prepared to take a back seat impacting on the power base within the group. Research has shown it is essential that there is an acceptance of the accountability of all involved for the success of any initiative that includes taking ownership of and offering support to the least successful member of the group. These aspects will be explored with the headteachers / principals involved in the study. This section has sought to identify the ways in

which collaboration can be successful in terms of pupil outcomes and achieving goals. The study seeks to show whether it is possible to achieve this in the context of academies and maintained schools.

The next section of this review considers in more detail the organisational culture necessary for real collaboration to take place and change to happen and what are the barriers and drivers to collaborative success as seen in the literature.

Organisational Culture

It is important to consider what makes organisations effective within the context of this study. Each school / academy is an organisation in its own right with its own ethos, belief systems and ways of working. However, each of these organisations within a geographical area are now being expected to develop an identity as a whole that could have values and beliefs to deliver 14-19 which could be at odds with the way an individual institution operates.

At the outset of this study, the context was that of the need for educational institutions to work together in order to deliver what was required by the developing 14-19 curriculum. There was an expectation from central government that all institutions within a geographical area (possibly but not exclusively that of a LA) will work together to take strategic decisions that impact on the way in which all young people in the area can access a broad range of curriculum opportunities suited to their individual needs post 14. Johnson et al (2005) describe strategy as:

> the direction and scope of an organisation over the long term, which achieves advantage in a changing environment through its configuration of

resources and competences with the aim of fulfilling stakeholder expectation (pg. 9).

Whilst in the context of schools and academies working together as a single entity, it may seem bizarre to regard such a group as an organisation that would need to have a strategy. But this definition does have relevance. The group needs to be able to articulate the direction they intend to take for many years to come in an environment that will most certainly be changing due to factors within the political and economic world. Each individual member of the group has resources that need to come to the table now and in the future if stakeholder's (student's) expectations are to be fulfilled.

Gaining an advantage over others is a concept which whilst initially was alien to the field of education, has grown to be accepted over recent years as the marketisation of education has increased even though it may not be articulated in this way. League tables have enabled some schools to demonstrate their 'superiority' over others – greater examination success has become a clear measure by which parents select where to send their offspring. This has in some areas led to the downward spiral of some less successful schools to eventual closure or transformation into an academy. For small authorities (perhaps more than larger ones), the concept of border drift can be an ongoing preoccupation. The LA involved in Phase 1 of this research for example, lost the equivalent of a cohort of pupils (180+) across its boundaries at the start of secondary education each year. Students crossing the authority boundary to attend post 16 institutions

can have a significant impact on what can be made available internally. Stopping that drift creates significant advantage to all institutions within the boundary.

Strategic decisions are complex and often have to be made in periods of uncertainty about the future. This is particularly relevant to this study in that institutions are being required to make very complex decisions about delivery of a curriculum that is just being developed, is highly likely to change in the near future and has no proven track record. The decisions made within a 14-19 strategic partnership will affect operational decisions as each institution will need to amend / change their current ways of working in order to meet the requirements of the whole.

There needs to be an integrated approach to decision making so that all participants have ownership and relationships within and without the partnership can remain strong. But fundamentally, the strategic group has to accept the need for change and a willingness to participate in change in order for the whole group to achieve success. This implies that changes may need to occur to the power base within the group. Moore and Kelly's (2009) research into primary networks showed the power of influence within the group:

> The influence that participants had within and between groups in the networks in this research – whether positive or negative – affected the 'bottom up' response made to the 'top down' authority (pg. 393).

If maintained schools and academies in a particular geographical area are to act strategically in order to deliver what is required for students 14-19 as has been expressed above, then some thought needs to be given to the organisational

culture that might exist within such a group. Current research into organisational cultures has arisen from that into organisational climate during the 1970s. Climate was regarded as something within an organisation that is not transient, and is experienced by employees to such an extent that it influences their behaviour. One of the ways in which some explanation can be given as to why one organisation is more successful than another is the way in which the organisational cultures differ. The study of organisational culture offers as Brown (1998) points out a 'non-mechanistic, flexible and imaginative approach to understanding how organisations work' (pg. 3) and can offer insights into their relative successes.

A number of academics (e.g., Schwartz and Davis 1981, Schein 1985) have developed definitions of organisational culture over the last few decades. Almost all agree that it concerns the understanding of how an organisation operates (its values and beliefs) held by those who work within it. One straightforward definition by Drennan (1992) is that:

> Culture is 'how things are done around here'. It is what is typical of the organisation, the habits, the prevailing attitudes, the grown-up pattern of accepted and expected behaviour (pg. 3).

Buchanan and Huczynski (2004) describe two main theory groups in relation to organisational culture, that of managerialistic / functionalistic perspective (something the organisation 'has') and a social science / shared cognitions perspective (something the organisation 'is'). The implication of the first of these is that culture can be changed but in the second, it is much more difficult to see how

the culture can be changed without a complete change in organisational membership. There is also the implication that sub-cultures can arise with smaller groups working in 'silos'. The interaction between these different parts of an organisation are often complex and can be conflicting (Green 2007).

Brown (1998) describes values as those 'moral and ethical codes which determine what people think ought to be done' (pg. 26) and beliefs as those things which people believe are or are not true. Often the two are closely linked so that it is difficult to say whether a characteristic (e.g., honesty) is valued for its own sake or because operating a business in an honest manner enables the business to be more effective (a belief). When values are put into operation and are seen to be supporting the organisation over time, they come to be held as a belief. Over time such beliefs can become so ingrained that they are regarded as basic assumptions. A basis assumption is a belief which has become so much part of the 'way we do things around here' that it is held unconsciously and is therefore often difficult to articulate or debate. Attitudes are often influenced by prejudice and stereotypes instead of factual information but they can be held for considerable periods of time and therefore can have a significant impact on staff motivation.

It is possible that the values and beliefs contained in an organisation's documentation are different from that held by the workforce. This dichotomy was described by Arygris and Schon (1978) as the difference between 'espoused theory' and 'theory–in–practice'. When such differences are marked, it can lead to

confusion both within and outside the organisation. For some people within the organisation, such confusion is not a hindrance to their working successfully but for others it is and the overall effectiveness of the organisation is hampered. There are very few organisations where there is total acceptance of the espoused theory (except perhaps very small organisations where communication between leader and employee is frequent, open and trusting). In larger organisations there will be different interpretations between groups / layers and subcultures. However, as Buchanan and Huczynski (2004) point out to enable organisations to survive (improve effectiveness) they:

> require employee commitment, mere compliance or 'following the rules' is not enough (pg. 206).

This emphasis on the commitment of employees was central to the concept of Total Quality Management promulgated in the 1990s. This approach empowered people at all levels to support the effectiveness of the organisation as a whole:

> People's behaviour is constantly controlled but by themselves through their own self- monitoring (Buchanan and Huczynski 2004 pg. 838).

Group working

The Labour Government required all headteachers in a geographical area to form a strategic partnership so that the full range of new opportunities available for students aged 14-19 are accessible. There has not been the requirement to co-operate or to deliver as a collective entity, in fact to a large extent the opposite has been the case. Secondary schools have been encouraged for many years to market themselves as if they are in competition with neighbouring schools to

attract more and brighter students so that examination results are increased, often through such initiatives as specialist school status.

The establishment of an entity called 'The 14-19 Strategic Partnership' in all LAs across the country therefore called for a major change in behaviours and a letting go of many long held beliefs. Values and beliefs (as described by Brown 1998) had not been articulated for the group, although each individual headteacher might well have deeply held values which were very similar to those held by others. So how can a set of individuals become a group in any meaningful sense?

For the purposes of this study the term 'group' is used to refer to people who consider themselves to be part of a visible unit, who interrelate in ways that have meaning for the identified expected outcomes and who share dispositions through a shared sense of collective identity. Steers and Porter (1991) outlined the characteristics of a group as:

> shared beliefs that are held by group members and guide their behaviour,… members have specific duties or roles within the group… and have acknowledged control procedures …and patterns of communication (pg. 196).

Mullins (1989) found that formal groups were created to achieve 'specific organisational objectives' and were concerned with the 'co-ordination of work activities' (pg. 373). This resonates with 14-19 Strategic Partnerships, as they have been created for a very specific purpose and the individuals concerned may well not have been prepared to become a 'group' as defined above without this requirement. The purpose of the partnership is to ensure that activities take place

which deliver the objectives of the strategy. The group will remain in existence so long as the requirement is there although the membership will vary as individual headteachers / principals move on to other posts. Mullins also suggests that formal groups are able to form smaller work groups for a specific purpose to meet the needs of part of the overall objective.

Buchanan and Huczynski (2004) stated that there must be a 'shared sense of collective identity' (pg. 286). Members must identify with the other members and not see themselves as acting independently but participants in the group's activities. They need also to believe that they have 'complementary goals' (pg. 287). They must believe that the goals of their individual institutions are sufficiently similar to those of others in the group to be best served by working collaboratively. This is particularly relevant to the way in which 14-19 Strategic Partnerships function. Each educational establishment will have objectives about delivering to the new requirements for post 14 students. However, the requirements are such that it would be difficult economically for any one establishment to cover all possible options now available. Therefore working as a group to deliver the full range across the geographical area in which they are based enables them to give their own students access to a wider choice.

In the context of this study, the work of Tuckman (1965) and Tuckman and Jensen (1977) is of particular importance. Their research showed that groups do not come into existence as complete successful entities but go through some clearly observable stages of development. The most successful groups (in terms

of desired outcomes) were those that had gone through four of the possible five stages. Some groups do not and are never as productive as those which do. The speed at which groups move through the stages varies considerably but this does not seem to impact on eventual outcomes. It was also seen that the stages can be cyclical so that groups can revisit a stage in its progression through them. The stages identified by Tuckman and Jensen are: forming; storming; norming; performing and adjourning.

At the forming stage, the group has not yet formed a strong bond, each member needs time to find out about the beliefs and values of others and there is a need for a leader to give some structure to the group and clarify the task before them. The storming stage is the uncomfortable period when members jockey for position within the group and the relative value of their own individual aims and objectives within the aims of the group. Members may resist the control of other members and can show hostility either overtly or covertly. How conflict is managed at this stage is crucial to the eventual effectiveness of the group. If it is not managed, the group could at worst disintegrate or at best remain stuck in unresolved conflict. The norming stage is when the group becomes more cohesive with the conflicts of the previous stage resolved and with the working rules established. Members are usually willing to be more open with each other and have a greater sense of belonging. This leads into the performing stage when the group has developed an effective structure and are getting the 'job' done. There is a high commitment to the objectives, roles are well defined and problem solving is the normal mode of working. The final stage of adjourning is when the group disbands either because

the task is completed or because members have left so the group can no longer function. There may well be a sense of uncertainty about separation at this stage.

This concept of group formation is of particular interest in the context of this study because its purpose is to investigate the ways in which disparate individuals (headteachers of maintained schools and principals of academies) are able to form a cohesive group to deliver an agreed set of objectives. All have been used to being the leader in their own institutions. The research into group dynamics shows that leadership is vitally important to the eventual success of the group but there is no obvious 'leader' in the context, for example, of 14-19 Strategic Partnership group. For this to be one of the headteachers /principals, the rest of the group need to accept the particular individual having this power. In some local authorities, there could be one head who had been in post much longer, or had improved results and so could be presumed to have the right to take this role. But in many cases, rather than give rise to conflict immediately, LA officers involved in supporting the 14-19 curriculum development or the Director of Children's Services took this role in the first instance. This however, could give rise to another occasion for conflict as the group moved through the Tuckman and Jensen (1977) stages of group development.

It was also interesting to see in the interviews with headteachers / principals how far the incentive of being involved in the delivery of a new and exciting development for pupils was outweighed by the demotivating factors of the norming / storming phases of group development. Demotivation can be seen as 'a

reduced driving force for thinking, feeling or acting' (Kuper 2008 pg. 42). Andersson and Pearson (1999) describe demotivated behaviour as that which is 'non-goal or goal-consonant' 'counterproductive work behaviours' including 'aggression' or 'incivility' (pg. 452-454).

The 14-19 agenda has forced the creation of a new tranche of groupings and inter-relationships. Having looked at some of the evidence of successful organisations, it is clear that most if not all 14-19 Strategic Partnerships across England will have exhibited the processes required to form teams that work effectively together. I will be seeking evidence through the interviews of whether it is recognised that this process is taking or has taken place, how successful it has been and whether there is any sense in which each individual feels a collective responsibility for the eventual outcomes of the group. The factors which impact on the formation of a group such as the 14-19 Strategic Partnership can be seen to be important from other organisational research when all participants work for one organisation. In this instance, there are clear divided loyalties which can make the outcome less certain.

Summary

This chapter has sought to identify relevant research that has already taken place and bring together themes that are pertinent to my study. Consideration has been given to why and how the academy initiative started from a highly political base and the way it is now perceived by varying groups within the world of education. There are clear indications from all political parties that the academy movement

will continue although some of the practical details may vary. That being the case, there will continue to be a diverse system of education in this country although indications are that change will be faster than might have been anticipated. The impact of the academy initiative is felt across a broad spectrum of individuals and groups and this complexity requires significant political awareness to be able to navigate successfully. For those leading academies and especially those leading collaborations of academies and maintained schools, the demands can be considerable and could possibly create a distraction from the task of raising standards. This has implications for the continued success of their own institution.

I have also sought to highlight the positive outcomes for children and young people that have been shown to occur when schools work collaboratively together either. Whilst it is clear that collaboration is not always easy to achieve when operating in a competitive market, those who take part report that the benefits far outweigh these difficulties. In the context of this study, there are many obstacles to collaboration but I would suggest, based on my professional experience, it will not be possible for any school (maintained or academy) to 'go it alone' and continue to raise standards.

Because bringing together individuals who are strong leaders in their own right is fraught with difficulties, it has been interesting to look at the ways in which effective groups are formed. Conceptual models have been explored and Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) model of the development of collaboration is of particular interest. It will be used as a basis for framing the interview responses and I will be

seeking to identify whether the responses give further insights into how their model can be expanded. The development of collaborations has been considered in the light of organisational culture. Coleman's (2011) model of collaborative leadership will also be considered in terms of how heads and principals describe their own leadership. I will be exploring with each interviewee, how they perceive the process of collaboration in their own authority or group is progressing and what part they feel has contributed to its success. I will consider whether this adds further insights into Coleman's model.

The next chapter will look at the research processes undertaken for this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

This study sets out to identify attitudes and behaviours within an identified group of headteachers / principals related to a particular aspect of their work and therefore the research sits within the qualitative paradigm and required empirical research to help answer the research questions. Fairbrother (2007) stated that:

> the fundamental purpose of qualitative research is to capture the research subject's perspective and views of values, actions, processes and events (pg. 43).

The research questions have been addressed in the following ways (see Table 1).

- A review of the current literature on collaborations between schools for a variety of purposes, organisational culture necessary for collaboration to take place and on how academies and maintained schools have been and are operating

- The study of the inter-relationships between headteachers of maintained and academies in an LA in the context of the 14-19 agenda (Phase 1)

- The study of the inter-relationships between academy principals either within their own chain (family) or other academies and schools (Phase 2).

Table 1: Where research questions are addressed.

Research question	Literature review	Phase 1 and Phase 2
How can collaboration be explored and its effectiveness judged in an educational context?	√	√
How can collaboration be conceptualised?	√	√
How might the conceptual model be developed to increasingly support a model for collaboration (including 14-19) across maintained schools and academies?		√

Wider Frameworks

All research whether quantitative or qualitative is about seeking knowledge. It is helpful however to give a typology to that knowledge. Mitchell (1979) claimed that:

> a typology is no more than a classification. A classification may be ad hoc…where the categories are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive (pg. 232).

Hartley (2008) using Habermas (1971) broke this into three types of 'human cognitive interest'. These are technical, practical and emancipatory. Hartley argues that different forms of knowledge relate to each interest and require different methods of enquiry. Technical interest requires an empirical and analytical form of knowledge gathered through empirical approaches, practical interest requires an interpretive form of knowledge gathered through Hermeneutic type approaches and emancipatory interest requires a critical form of knowledge gathered through critical theory approaches.

When these three interests are looked at in the context of educational research, it can be seen that there are a number of factors that must be taken into account. Technical interest seeks to manipulate what is around us to meet our material needs. When applied to education, it implies that what we understand as 'the curriculum' or 'assessment' can be defined in such a way that everyone accepts as the 'truth' with no differing interpretations and can therefore be audited against that definition. In most educationalists' experience this is rarely the case. Practical interest seeks to identify what society takes for granted as 'normal'. This implies that education is a social activity and that one system is not appropriate for

everyone so those involved need to exercise a degree of professional judgement. It identifies what is, but this can be distorted by subjectivity giving a misrepresentation of reality. Emancipatory interest takes the practical interest to another level by moving beyond identifying what is into how can what is be improved. What is the next step needed to make a difference for those involved? This self-reflection leads to enlightenment so that emancipation becomes possible.

Gunter and Ribbins (2003a) identify six knowledge provinces, i.e., what is being asserted as constituting the truth underpinning the intention behind any leadership activity. The conceptual provinces requires us to think through fundamental issues that shape 'doing' in the interplay between agency and structure (Gunter and Ribbins 2003b). Later the six provinces became eight and were linked into four knowledge groups (see Table 2 below).

Table 2: Knowledge provinces (from Gunter and Ribbins 2003b)

Province	Knowledge group
Conceptual	
Descriptive	Understanding meanings
Humanistic	
Aesthetic	Understanding experiences
Axiological	
Critical	Working for change
Evaluative	
Instrumental	Delivering change

This study sits within the last of these. The research questions are designed to explore the nature and complexity of leadership and the effectiveness of interactions at various levels on collaborative working and processes. Analysis of the responses to the questions seeks to be able to provide leaders with effective strategies to further deliver organisational goals.

Philosophical Approach

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) suggested that ontological assumptions lead to epistemological assumptions that then lead to methodological considerations and methods of data collection. Therefore any research project needs to be seen in the context of the researcher's own ontological and epistemological stance. Mason (1996) points out that it is only by recognising that alternative ontological standpoints can give rise to differing enquiry results that the researcher can begin to see their own ontological view of the social world as a position that should be established and understood. Is social reality something that imposes itself on our consciousness from outside or is it something which comes from within an individual?

Epistemology looks at the relationship between the researcher and that being researched. It involves the exploration of how researchers come to know about the phenomena they study, how this knowledge is structured and the grounds on which those knowledge claims are based (Kincheloe and Berry 2004 pg. 12). It considers how different kinds of knowledge claims can be regarded separately and what kind of evidence can qualify knowledge as knowledge. As an

experienced practitioner, my epistemological stance has been built up over many years and been refined by what I have seen as effective and not effective in terms of school leadership, management and practice. This will need to be borne in mind when developing interview questions and interpreting responses so that my own view of what is effective does not dominate.

Aczel (2002) contends that the traditional concern of epistemology has been the problem of how to find out how things are, what the world is like. Knowledge can be constructed by groups and by individuals both of which will have been influenced by earlier theories. In epistemological terms, knowledge can be communicated as something which is:

> hard, real and capable of being transmitted in a tangible form or softer, more subjective, spiritual based on experience and insight of a unique and essentially personal nature (Cohen et al 2000 pg. 6).

Qualitative research, unlike quantitative research, makes use of the researcher as the 'measurement device': therefore the researcher's own social background, values, identity and beliefs will impact on the interpretation of the data gathered (Denscombe 2007 pg. 250). Within qualitative research it is possible to take differing stances as a researcher. A normative paradigm would suggest that human behaviour is essentially governed by rules. However an interpretist approach seeks to identify 'behaviour-with-meaning' (Cohen and Manion 1994 pg. 36). My research fits in the interpretive paradigm as it seeks to understand how individual headteachers / principals inter-relate with each other for the furtherance of a common goal. Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggest that interpretive researchers start with individuals and set out to understand how they see their

world. Individual perceptions may vary but all have value as they arise from their own understanding of their world. Theory grows out of that analysis, it does not precede it.

Research Strategy

This study makes use of a phenomenological research strategy in which I have sought to:

> identify the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants (Creswell 2009 pg. 13),

and is dealing with the views of individuals rather than actions or events. It seeks to understand and articulate the participants' perceptions of what has and is happening to them. People act in ways that fit their interpretation of a given situation which may be different from the objective reality of that situation.

Denscombe (2007) describes phenomenology as an:

> umbrella term covering styles of research that do not rely on measurement, statistics or other things generally associated with a scientific approach (pg. 75).

It is, he says:
- subjective (rather than objective);
- descriptive (more than analysis);
- interpretation (rather than measurement);
- agency (rather than structure).

A phenomenological approach puts the ideas and reasoning of the individuals being researched at the heart of the investigation. It accepts that people interpret their experiences to actively create an order to their existence. It means therefore

that there can be differing accounts of what 'is' without this impacting adversely on the validity of what is being said. This study is seeking to articulate the perceptions of headteachers of maintained schools and principals of academies of the ability of both groups to work together. In doing so it was vital that as a researcher I kept my own experiences as a practitioner / researcher outside the research so that I could understand those of the participants as suggested by Nieswiadomy (1993). I will be seeking to identify emerging themes from the evidence gained in the light of the themes identified in the literature.

Research Methodology, methods and management

> If methods refer to techniques and procedures used in the process of data-gathering, the aim of methodology then is ...to help us understand the process itself (Cohen et al 2000 pg. 44-45).

A number of methods of data collection were considered so that the most appropriate could be selected for this study. For example:

Focus groups

Focus groups began in the 1920s as a market research mechanism but are now widely used to gather views on a range of topics affecting individuals. They are a group interview on a specific topic. The participants are normally selected because they have a view on the given topic (both positive and negative). However, within a group discussion it is not always possible to ensure everyone participates and as Robson (2002) points out:

> silence may indicate consent but it could reflect an unwillingness to express dissent (pg. 228).

As this study sought to identify how headteachers interacted with each other, a focus group was not felt to be a suitable method to enable each headteacher to speak freely.

Questionnaires

Often the reason for choosing to use a questionnaire is the need to collect routine data from a significant number of participants who may be in several locations. However, their construction needs careful consideration to ensure they will yield the information required to answer the research questions.

> Developing a questionnaire requires thought, care and time but the end product can be satisfying (Anderson and Arsenault 1998, pg. 182).

Questionnaires designed to gather facts are made up of closed questions that require short sometimes one word answers. The presentation of those questions is important: the respondent is led through the questions in a logical manner so that the relevant information is gained (Robson 2002 pg. 238). It is also important that the wording of the questions does not give rise to any ambiguity. If questions can be responded to in different ways because the meaning is not clear, the researcher will not be able to analyse 'like with like' so invalidating the findings to a significant degree. However, they should also not be so 'straightforward' as to be banal as this will not encourage respondents to take the research seriously. Wording needs to be neutral rather than reflecting the researcher's own standpoint as this can lead the respondent into giving the answer he /she thinks the researcher is looking for.

Questionnaires can also be used to gather 'opinion' in which case, the respondent is often asked to select from a number of options, the one which best reflects their view (e.g. using a Likert scale) or is presented with a 'free text box' in which to give an opinion on a topic. The former enables the researcher to analyse the resultant data in a quantitative as well as a qualitative manner (Denscombe 2007 pg. 155).

However, questionnaires do not allow for follow up questions as the researcher is not present. Often questionnaires have a low response rate. Headteachers receive many such research questionnaires on a regular basis and these are frequently put in the bin even before the topic has been ascertained. For this study to be effective, I needed to gain the views of all the heads / principals in each phase. The risk of not having as complete a set of data as possible was not worth taking.

Observations

It would be possible to answer the research questions by the researcher taking on the role of observer at, for instance, the 14-19 Strategic Partnership meetings within each LA and any other collaboration meetings.

As Robson (2002) points out:

> data from direct observation contrasts with, and can often usefully complement, information obtained by virtually any other technique (pg. 310).

However, in relation to this study, observing meetings could equally mask true feelings as much as reveal them in terms of headteachers interrelationships. The professional face put on in meetings may be very different to the personal face and it is frequently the personal face which drives behaviour. This method therefore ran the risk of giving partial information. It could have been used to balance other information gained but on reflection, it was felt unlikely to add significantly to the depth of information gained.

Semi-structured interviews

> An interview can be viewed as an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest and emphasises the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production and social situatedness for research data (Cohen et al, 2000, pg. 267).

Interviews allow interviewers and interviewees to talk through their interpretations of the world in which they live.

A structured interview mirrors a questionnaire in that the format of the questions are set in advance and not deviated from during the course of the interview. Therefore as with questionnaires, it is not possible to follow up on interesting responses from the interviewee. Unstructured interviews give the interviewee the freedom to say whatever they wish on a given topic. This can give some significant in-depth insights but may not address the key questions the research is investigating.

A semi-structured interview falls between these two extremes, gives a level of freedom to the interviewee but can be held within the parameters set up by the interviewer. It also allows the question order to be varied and explanations given

where necessary to elicit the data. They enable digressions, expansions, and even new avenues to be explored and probed. Interviewing headteachers on a one-to-one basis gives them the opportunity speak freely on the topic, knowing that they would not be identified in the final analysis but also enables the interviewer to keep the conversation on the areas of interest to the thesis, what Powney and Watts (1987) described as a 'respondent interview'. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that in interviews it is possible to present a construction of events, a reconstruction of past experiences and a projection into the future which verifies, amends and extends the data.

After careful consideration, I decided that the methodological strategy to be used was that of a survey which is an appropriate method for a first study. Surveys are often used for large scale research, they can give a breadth of view and can generate a wealth of information from which further research can be undertaken. However, it is also an appropriate methodology for small scale research when it can be used to generate detailed insights into the area being studied. Fink (2002) identified four types of data collection used in a survey methodology. These are self-administered questionnaires, interviews, structured record reviews and structured observations. Denscombe (2007) points out that surveys require talking to the people involved. The researcher has to actively seek out relevant data. They give an inclusive coverage so that it is possible for generalisations to be drawn from the evidence collected (pg. 31). This study will involve face to face interactions and will include all possible respondents in the given sample.

Following careful consideration of data collection methods (pg. 80-84) it was decided to use semi-structured interviews with headteachers /principals in one LA (Phase 1) and academy principals around the country (Phase 2). The interview questions used are set out in Appendix 1a and 1b. Survey methodology allows the understanding of the reality for one headteacher viewed against the reality for another and seeks to identify the theory from the sets of meaning discovered (Cohen et al 2000). The following sections outline briefly these considerations.

Management

The role of the researcher in a semi-structured interview is significant. The interviewer can steer the conversation picking up cues from what is being said. It is however important that the 'steering' is not allowed to exert undue influence on the conversation. It would be possible for the interviewer to ensure he gained the answers he wanted to prove his point that might not reflect what the interviewee really believed. I also needed to ensure that my own epistemological stance as an experienced practitioner did not unduly influence the way in which the questions were framed. Therefore considerable thought needs to go into the planning of the open ended questions for the interviews and the level of prompts used before the interviews are undertaken.

In order that relevant data could be gathered to gain the evidence necessary to answer the specific research questions, it was useful to use broad statements that could then be narrowed down to the specifics required as well as direct yes / no responses, using a scale to 'measure' agreement. Careful consideration was

given to the impact of 'interviewer effect' as I am known to all headteachers / principals in the LA used in Phase 1. This was discussed with them prior to the decision to use the authority in which I worked so that I could be as sure as possible that they had considered whether they would feel free to answer the interview questions fully and honestly. In order to support the validity of the research a pilot of the interview questions was trialled with a headteacher outside the sample group and necessary amendments made (see Appendix 1a and b). This was particularly important to ensure that the questions were not phrased in such a way so as to 'lead' the interviewee to respond in a certain way inappropriately. Leading questions can 'skew' the evidence gained to support the premise being put forward (Morrison 1993) but they can also help to elicit information that the interviewee is trying to conceal (Kvale 1996). Questions must be clear and unambiguous so that there is no confusion in the minds of all interviewees what is being asked.

The purposive sample group for Phase 1 was all 10 headteachers / principals in one LA. To gain a view of how the group worked together it was necessary to include all schools in the sample. A stratified sample of 23 principals from around the country were chosen in Phase 2 to gather the views from the range of academies now in existence (sponsored, chains (both Type 1 and 2), and convertors (Type 3)). All interviews were recorded and then transcribed. As Phase 1 involved the authority within which I worked, the research raised significant ethical concerns which are discussed below. However, choosing it did give ease of access to headteachers and I was able to speak to 9 out of 10 in the LA. One was not able to take part due to other commitments. The sample for Phase 2 was

chosen to cover academies set up under the previous Labour Government's policy, those part of sponsor chain or families (Type 1 or 2), those who have a single academy sponsor (Type 1) and those 'outstanding' schools now converting to academy status (Type 3) under the Coalition Government's policy. It was important to ensure that the research covered the range of academies in existence so that different perspectives could be gleaned. As Denscombe (2007) points out that qualitative research can:

> get the 'maximum variation' in the data to be collected … this accords with the spirit of quantitative research and its quest for explanations which encompass complexity, subtlety and even contradictions (pg. 30).

There is always a risk with social research that the interviewee will not share as fully as the interviewer requires for sufficient evidence to be gathered. To overcome this weakness in the design, it was decided to undertake the research in two Phases.

Reliability / validity

Reliability is the level to which the research instrument is neutral in its impact and would be consistent when used repeatedly. Validity relates to the accuracy and precision of the data (Denscombe 2007 pg. 296). It is not possible to apply the same kinds of reliability and validity measures to qualitative research as can be applied to quantitative research. For example, it is not possible to replicate the circumstances of the investigation exactly in order to demonstrate the same results can be obtained by a different researcher. When using interviews that seek to elicit the emotions and personal views of individuals on a given topic, it is not possible to measure the validity of the evidence gathered as can be done with a

scientific experiment. The interviewer and the context in which the interview takes place will have an effect that can impact on the reliability of the evidence gained (Denscombe 2007 pg. 203). Also it is important to use irrefutable evidence of what was said during an interview (that is taped interviews) rather than relying on notes taken at the time as these can be interpreted by the particular bias of the person analysing the data. However, this does not mean that knowledge gained through qualitative methods is invalid or unreliable.

> Reliability can be regarded as a fit between what researchers record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting being researched, i.e. a degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness of coverage (Bogdan and Biklen 1992, pg. 48).

As each interview was recorded and transcribed, this allowed each interviewee the opportunity to read the transcript and agree it's factually accuracy. A pilot of the interview questions was undertaken to ensure that they would reliably give the level of data required.

Insights gained from carefully researched evidence are 'true' for that group of individuals in that situation and will have some transferability to other similar situations. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the use of the term 'credibility' (rather than 'reliability') as a better mechanism for demonstrating the verification of social research. It is important to be explicit about the research procedures and the reasons behind research decisions taken so that other researchers can see they are 'reputable and reasonable' giving them 'dependability' and validity. The purpose of choosing two phases rather than one was explicitly to check the similarities and differences in the responses and demonstrate what could be transferable, what was specific to one group only and give respondent

triangulation. The piloting of the questions helped to triangulate the process and give validity to the outcome. The data gathered was also balanced against that which had already been gathered by other researchers in the field through the analysis of published research findings.

Data Analysis

The data derived from qualitative research can be extensive even in small scale projects. It was therefore important that consideration was given at the outset as to how the data would be analysed and interpreted. All interviews were recorded and then transcribed by someone other than the interviewer. The purpose of this is to ensure that the transcribed words are a verbatim account of what was said, not an interpretation. The interview tapes were listened to again to ensure the inflections and emphasis placed on the words by the interviewee were understood as these have a bearing on their relative importance. Each interviewee had a chance to check the record of the interview to verify its accuracy.

The reasoning behind the selection of the type of analysis used in this study is now discussed.

Narrative analysis

This approach takes the data gathered in its entirety and analyses it as a whole rather than interpreting each section. This method is most frequently used when researching life histories. It would have been possible to take this approach as the interviews with headteachers involved looking back over time at how the relationship between maintained schools and academies had changed. However,

it was felt that the danger of missing important aspects that could be discovered by a more detailed analysis was too great.

Discourse analysis

This tool takes into account how things are said as much as what is being said.

> In these approaches, it is not only the substance of what is said that is important but the styles and strategies of the language users – how they say things (Robson 2002 pg. 365).

The use of this analysis could demonstrate barriers (including unconscious ones) that impact on the way in which the interviewee responds to the questions. However although this study was interested in the inflection interviewees used in response to questions, the study as a whole was interested mainly in discovering common aspects and therefore this method was discounted.

Grounded Theory analysis

Glaser and Strauss (1967) introduced the concept that theory should arise out of researched data i.e. be 'grounded' in what has been identified. It was developed to counter the prevalent view at the time that any study needed to start with a theory which could then be proved or disproved.

Robson (2002 pg. 192) helpfully sets out some advantages and disadvantages of using grounded theory.

Advantages:
- Provides explicit procedures for generating theory in research;
- Presents a strategy for doing research which, while flexible, is systematic and co-ordinated;
- Provides explicit procedures for analysis of qualitative data;
- Particularly useful in applied areas of research, and novel ones, where the theoretical approach to be selected is not clear or non-existent;

- Wide range of exemplars of its use in many applied and professional settings now available.

Disadvantages:
- It is not possible to start a research study without some pre-existing theoretical ideas and assumptions;
- There are tensions between the evolving and inductive style of a flexible study and the systematic approach of grounded theory;
- It may be difficult in practice to decide when categories are 'saturated' or when the theory is sufficiently developed;
- Grounded theory has particular types of prescribed categories as components of the theory which may not appear appropriate for a particular study.

It is clear that grounded theory analysis could have been applied to some of this study. However, there were important aspects of the data to which it did not and so it was decided not to use this approach.

Thematic approach

After careful consideration of the varying methods of data analysis discussed above and the way in which research literature highlighted some aspects (themes) more than others, it was felt that a thematic approach would make the best use of all the data collected in this study. Miles and Huberman (1994) describe analysis as 'data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing / verifying' (pg. 10). Data reduction refers to the selecting and focusing of the evidence gained into manageable chunks or themes. This will continue throughout the process of data collection. The term data display simply refers to the way in which the researcher sets out the evidence gained so that conclusions can be drawn. This naturally leads into conclusion drawing / verification of findings. Miles and Huberman (1994)

stress that this can be done in a number of ways – from 'fleeting second thoughts' to 'reviewing with colleagues' and attempting to find similar data sets (pg. 11). I have been able to discuss early findings with fellow EdD students to aid my thinking.

As the researcher becomes familiar with the data gathered, it is possible for linkages to be made between individual pieces of data forming themes. This will enable a clearer focus on the key implications arising from the data leading to the key concepts supporting the generalised conclusions (Denscombe 2007 pg. 293/4, see Fig. 4 below). Having read the transcripts of Phase 1 and 2 through in depth, it became clear that those aspects highlighted as important in the literature where being referred to regularly. I therefore decided to take these as my themes and began the process of analysis (see Appendix 4 for flowchart and tables of analysis).

Fig. 4: Data analysis by themes (Denscombe 2007)
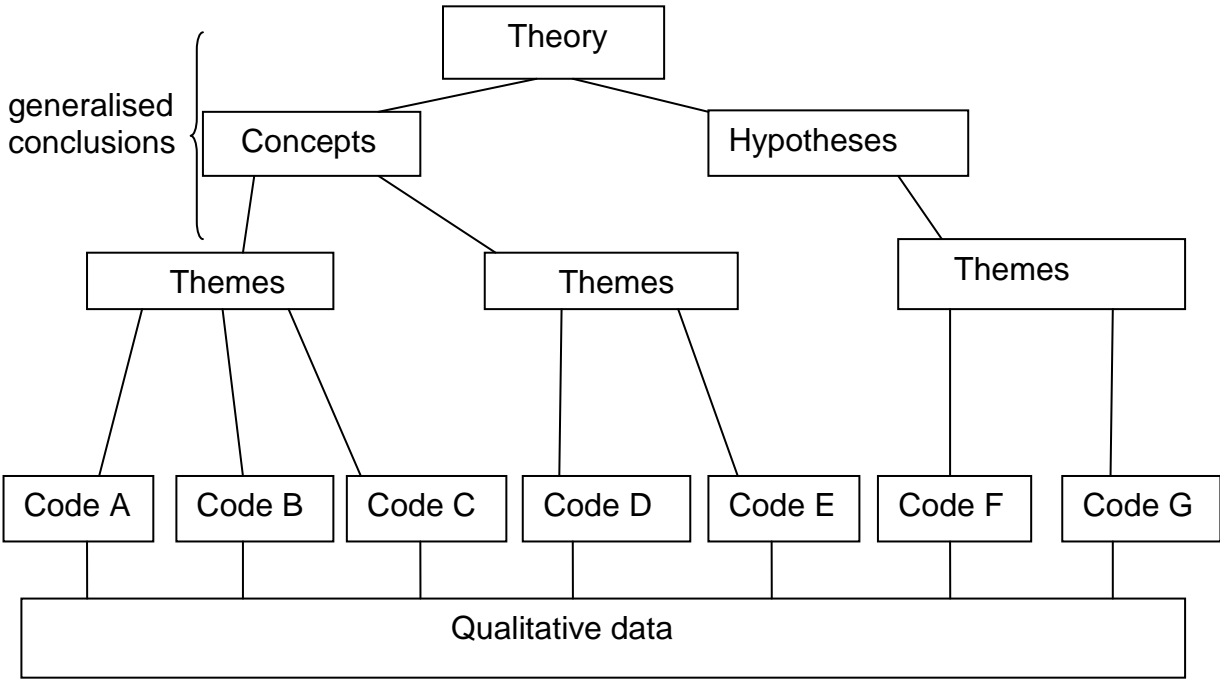
Ethics

Research which involves people either as individuals or groups should be based on the principle that those individuals or groups should be protected from researchers who might be prepared to use any means possible to find evidence which would further their particular view of the world. Mason (1996) pointed out that:

> privileged data can be used in ways which have wide ranging impacts, outside of the specific research relationship which generated them (pg. 166).

Denscombe (2007) gives three principles on which all social research should be based. He states that researchers should:

- Respect the rights and dignity of those who are participating in the research project;
- Avoid any harm to the participants arising from their involvement in the research;
- Operate with honesty and integrity (pg. 141).

These principles, alongside those set out in the BERA Guidelines for Educational Research (2004), shaped how I gathered the data required for this study. When the interviews for Phase 1 took place I was Deputy Director with responsibility for schools in the LA being used meaning my position as researcher was a sensitive one. The headteachers who were involved needed to be comfortable with the concept of me as an independent researcher asking questions about inter-relationships and practices that as an officer I might view from a different perspective. To try to obfuscate this, I sought permission to undertake the research with them through a third party so that there was less likelihood that any felt they could not refuse my request. Once this had been given, each headteacher / principal was asked individually if they would take part in the

research. Even though permissions had been given, I was mindful throughout each interview that there could be a reluctance to respond freely to questions regarding for example, the effectiveness of the LA's 14-19 strategy. I sought to evaluate whether this had impacted on responses by comparing responses in Phase 1 with those in Phase 2 where I was an unknown researcher.

Working with academy principals around the country did not involve the same sensitivities but those involved needed to be assured that they would not be individually identified in the final report. Whilst assurance can be given quite easily that this will be the case, it can still remain a concern. As Mason (1996) points out:

> given the full rich and personal nature of the data generated by qualitative interviews…(it) can usually be recognised by the interviewee and they may also be recognised by other people (pg. 56).

When framing my research questions, I also needed to consider how the possible outcomes could impact on those involved in the research. Seeking to identify how the two groups (maintained schools and academies) were working collaboratively or working co-operatively could either cement or fragment that relationship. If it were to fragment, there could be significant implications for the kind of educational experiences young people might have. Was the fact that the probing undertaken as part of this research might make things worse, worth the risk?

It is not possible for a qualitative researcher to be completely impartial in the way in which a quantitative researcher can be. I brought to the process my own understanding of how schools can work together effectively to raise standards, of the concept of 'academisation' and of changing group dynamics when some

schools become academies within an area based on my professional life as a practitioner. Throughout the interview process I needed to be aware that heads and principals could legitimately hold different views to me and that although the interviews were semi-structured, I needed to ensure the responses were freely given and not influenced unduly by me.

Piloting the interview schedule

> A pilot study is a small-scale version of the real thing, a try-out of what you propose so that the feasibility can be checked (Robson 2002 pg. 185).

This not only ensured that the way in which the questions are phrased are clear to those being interviewed and will give the level of information needed to answer the research questions but also that the theoretical framework in which the research is based is sufficiently sharp.

The questions for the pilot arose from themes and concepts identified in the literature review. The pilot used an experienced headteacher from a voluntary aided school in an LA not included in the research project. It is clear that the way in which words were used in the questions was important to the respondent. Suggestions were made that led me to make changes to give greater clarity. The word 'geographical' was felt to be unusual and that this should be changed to LA. This was interesting to me as within my own authority, there are four geographical areas into which schools have self-divided even though the authority is small. Equally the term 'agreed purpose' in the definition was felt to be problematical. The view was put forward that schools work together only when it benefits them.

Schools have to 'fight their own corner' and will only enter into collaborative arrangements when they can see a clear benefit for their own pupils: being idealistic about education no longer exists.

For the question 'how would you quantify an effective collaboration?' the response indicated that 'quantify' is not as helpful a word as it might be to give the level of detail the project needs to gather. The terms 'recognise' or 'evaluate' were suggested as being more appropriate. As this was to be delivered through a semi-structured interview, it is possible to expand if any uncertainty is perceived.

The response to the question regarding the impact of academy status on the effectiveness of collaboration was interesting in that it was felt that parental perceptions of the school(s) to be collaborated with was of greater importance than whether the other school was an academy. It was not a response anticipated and my first reaction was that it was a digression the research should not follow. The responses did give me however, information relevant to the research about the effectiveness of collaborations in the experience of the respondent and of the inter-relationship between maintained schools and academies. It was possible to follow up on responses so that more in-depth evidence was gained without prompting unduly.

Conclusion

Careful consideration of the relevant literature concerning research methodology led me to the decision to use semi-structured interviews as the best fit for this first

small scale study the answers the research questions. In order to gain the maximum data from the interviews a thematic approach to data collection and organisation was felt to be the most appropriate. The feedback from the pilot supported that decision whilst also giving useful clarity to the use of some of the wordings (revised schedule of questions Appendix 1b).

The next chapter sets out in more detail how the data was collected and the main findings from the data using a thematic approach.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

Both the previous Labour Government and the current Coalition Government have promulgated the message that schools need to work together, to collaborate, and to work in partnership in order to promote school improvement. Alongside this, academies have been set up as autonomous independent institutions. As the proportion of academies grows, the landscape of state education in this country is changing and it is possible that this will impact on a school's willingness to collaborate. To reiterate, the research questions investigated are:

- how can collaboration be explored and its effectiveness judged in an educational context?

- how can collaboration be conceptualised?

- how might the conceptual model be developed to increasingly support a model for collaboration (including 14-19) across maintained schools and academies?

This chapter sets out the findings arising from the 9 interviews with headteachers and principals in Phase 1 based in one LA and the 23 interviews with academy principals in Phase 2 from around England. Phase 1 sought to discover the way in which an established group of headteachers were able to adjust to the introduction of academy status schools into their collaboration. The sample chosen for Phase 2 sought to ensure there were examples of academies with

sponsors that were either part of a chain or those with a single academy sponsor (Types 1 and 2), and those that had 'converted' (Type 3) under the new regulations brought in by the Coalition Government in 2010 that required no sponsorship. Within Phase 2, there are 11 academy chains represented. The term 'chain', refers to a sponsor who has opened a number of academies all of whom have at least support mechanisms in common, some have more than this. Across the country there are now some very large sponsor chains with (at the time of writing) between 15 and 20 academies within a single chain. Some are in a close geographical area, other are wide spread. This purposive sampling was felt to be important to see whether the way in which the academy was set up influenced the way in which they considered working with other institutions. Note was also taken of the gender and length in post of each respondent to ensure a broad sample (see Appendix 2). An in-depth analysis of gender differences in responses was beyond the scope of this study.

The interviews were recorded with the respondents' permission and then transcribed to enable the findings and analysis to take place. Copies of the transcripts were sent to each headteacher / principal to ensure that it was factually accurate before it was used in the study. None of the 9 Phase 1 headteachers / principals requested any changes, and only one of the 23 Phase 2 principals returned the transcript with minor amendments. In comparing the amended transcript with the original, it is clear that the changes corrected names etc. and did not affect the findings in any way.

A thematic analysis of the transcripts was undertaken using themes based on findings from previous research. Reviewing the literature related to areas such as academies, collaboration, and leadership led to the identification of a number of recurring themes. The transcripts were analysed to see if the responses also reflected those themes and whether they were able to add any further insights into the models discussed (see Appendix4). It was also possible to identify those themes which occurred in both Phase 1 and 2; any which only occurred in Phase 1 and any which only occurred in Phase 2 (see Table 3 below). There was only one theme which was reflected in Phase 1 and not in Phase 2 and there were no additional themes arising from Phase 2 only. When the interview questions were trialled in the pilot, it became clear that the pilot respondent felt parental perceptions were an important factor in whether schools were prepared to work together. Therefore, the semi-structured interviews in both Phase 1 and 2 sought to elicit whether heads and principals also felt this to be significant. The two themes on which virtually all principals wished to comment were the processes and structures of collaboration and the factors that impede that collaboration being fully effective. Each theme will be considered using responses from both Phases. This enables the similarities and differences between the two phases to be discussed.

Table 3: Themes identified by Phase

Theme	Phase 1	Phase 2
Trust, honesty, openness	√	√
Leadership	√	√
Clear vision	√	√
Process / structure of collaborations	√	√
Impediments to collaboration	√	√
Current links between maintained schools and academies	√	√
Role of the LA in supporting collaborations	√	√
Quality assurance processes	√	√
Implications for collaboration of being in a chain	√	√
Response to 14-19 initiative	√	√
Time	√	
Parental perceptions	√	√

In order to give consistency to the findings from each phase, the following arbitrary terminology has been used throughout (Table 4 below):

Table 4: Terminology used

Percentage of interviewees who mention the theme	Terminology used in the text
0% - 25%	few
26% - 45%	some
46% - 65%	many
66% - 100%	majority

These divisions are not based on quartiles but on the frequency and proportionality of the responses.

The first Research Question:

- How can collaboration be explored and its effectiveness judged in an educational context?

was explored through interview questions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. The responses to these questions gave rise to five encompassing themes, namely:

- Trust, honesty and openness;

- Leadership;

- Clear vision;

- The process or structure of collaborations;

- The impediments to collaboration.

The ordering of these themes was based on the relative importance placed on them in the literature review (see Chapter 2).

Trust, Honesty and Openness

This theme appeared to be of greater importance to the heads and principals in Phase 1 than those in Phase 2 based on the number who commented (majority in Phase 1, many in Phase 2).

Respondents in both phases commented in similar ways however, for example, on the negative impact caused by a lack of trust:

> There has been an environment of competition which has been a barrier to effective collaboration – a lack of trust (Phase 1 Int. 2 A Type 1).

> For the first couple of years I think there was a lack of trust but not from our perspective. But obviously as time's gone by and it's recognised that we are not a threat then I think that, you know, there is more and more willingness to collaborate now (Phase 2 Int. 3 A Type 1).

Both recognised that a lack of trust militated against effective collaboration although the reasons behind the lack of trust were different. Both are principals of sponsored academies but for one the lack of trust was an element of the pressures applied to all schools, for the other it was more about how it felt to join an established group of heads from the 'unknown' quantity of an academy.

Both phases also felt that this is not something that comes automatically – it has to be earned.

> You learn about trust, don't you, you learn about whether the person's word is what they actually do, and when it comes to some difficulty as to whether or not they are straight with you or not (Phase 1 Int. 3 F).

Bryk et al (1999) noted that:

> by far the strongest facilitator of professional community is social trust among faculty members (pg. 767).

It is possible however, to develop a relationship within the group that is 'comfortable' and then it is much harder for real challenge to be given and received effectively. The group is likely to stagnate and become little more than a 'talking shop'.

> Professional trust is really important and that comes through not just sitting down and talking to people but actually experiencing what's delivered on the ground (Phase 2 Int. 14 A Type 2).

This kind of trust between institutions resulted in action and the achievement of goals. Respondents indicated that this was one of the deciding factors in whether they felt a collaborative commitment was real or not.

Another head (Phase 1) stressed the place trust plays in making sure objectives are achieved:

> So I keep coming back to this thing about trust and then sitting there and saying OK so we are going to achieve x, y and z and be clear about what you are doing, you are not just kind of meeting up for the sake of meeting up (Phase 1 Int. 7 F).

and (Phase 2):

> There are difficulties and I think the final one is the trust we place on whether our students are getting the same deal at another school. I think its small groups who share the same ethos, the same values, the same desire of delivery that can work together, trust each other and deliver on the ideals and goals for the betterment of the students (Phase 2 Int. 5 A Type 1).

Respondents expressed the view that trust is maintained and grows when actions are accomplished and when those actions result in improved outcomes for students. When trust within the group had been able to develop over time, it was flet to be more likely to be able to withstand any disagreements which might occur.

However, those who chose to comment on the issue of trust had clearly experienced some situations where trust had not been evident:

> Trust is the basis of all interactions and one pitches ones relationships on the degree of trust that you believe exists, you can have in them, confidence you can have in the relationship (Phase 2 Int. 21 A Type 3).

It is clear therefore that overall the majority of those interviewed believed that without trust and openness between participating institutions, collaboration might be set up but was unlikely to be successful. Factors that may have influenced the varying level of response to this theme between Phase 1 and 2 will be considered

in more detail in the next chapter, in particular that it is possible for collaboration to exist in name but without it being successful in terms of achieving its desired outcomes.

Leadership

The majority of the respondents in Phase 1 made some reference to the importance of leadership in ensuring successful collaborations. They recognised, however, the difficulty associated with bringing together a group of people who are used to 'running their own show' and expecting them to do what someone else asks them to do.

As one put it:

> Heads want strong leadership so long as it's them being the strong leader (Phase 1 Int. 9 VA).

However, it was clear that respondents believed that without strong leadership, the collaboration could just become a 'talking shop' with very little result.

> I think where the opportunity is being missed here is the identification of the need for the style of leadership or the nature of leadership that's required to get headteachers to discuss and debate openly on key issues, which in my view is the role of a skilled facilitator (Phase 1 Int. 4 F).

Whilst only a few respondents in Phase 2 commented explicitly on leadership of collaborations, those that did equally felt leadership of the right kind was necessary for success:

> Within the group of collaborating schools somebody needs to take the lead and I think there has to be a general consensus that the lead is OK, you know, not a leader that sort of thrust themselves forward necessarily or

perhaps you have to do that a bit but also perhaps a leader that is more sensitive to the circumstances of other schools (Phase 2 Int. 11 A Type 2).

There are models I have seen where there is a kind of first amongst equals principle… That nobody actually runs it because the collaboration is believed in… I don't believe that works. I think you have to have somebody who is accountable … because if you don't have that, the equality actually can breed discontent because it's not equality because no matter how much you do it there is always going to be winners and losers (Phase 2 Int. 23 A Type 2).

The second respondent does not believe a collaboration can work successfully without leadership in some form. To achieve the agreed aim it is not possible for everyone to 'win' all the time. Some decisions which support the overall aim may mean that some individual institutions 'lose' for a time. It is also interesting to note that the link was made between leadership and accountability. One might have presumed that within a collaborative arrangement, all participants would feel they were accountable for the outcomes of the group. These respondents clearly feel that there are an additional range of individuals and groups for which the leader needs to take on responsibility to ensure the group functioned successfully as well as achieving the desired outcomes.

Headteachers and principals expressed the view that collaboration was less successful when it operated as a committee that allowed the focus and direction to shift and fluctuate in response to pressure from differing factions within the group. Having a strong leader that all participants had agreed should lead was one mechanism to stop this happening, keeping the group 'on task'.

As has been stated previously, Phase 1 took place in one LA where two schools had recently become academies. The impact of this on the group may be one

factor which led to the higher proportion of responses from this Phase than from Phase 2, many of which were longer established as academies. A number of leadership factors identified by respondents echo those found by Coleman (2011) and although the terminology of his conceptual model (see Chapter 2) was not explicitly referred to, there is some evidence across the interviews of practical examples of the elements he included. For example one principal described constitutive leadership in terms of:

> It's about being motivational…you have to create a culture they value (Phase 2 Int. 2 A Type 1).

Many principals and heads talked about the values and ethos they were trying to develop within their institution in terms of what they wanted for students. One said for instance:

> We see it as our duty to equip kids with the skills that will take them out to that wider world with an opportunity to compete and to compete fairly in an open market place (Phase 2 Int. 17 A Type 2).

Another implied his use of political leadership in saying:

> We manipulated the system for our own needs rather than let something good fold. We don't worry to ask permission first – we seek forgiveness afterwards (Phase 2 Int.10 A Type 2).

All elements of the model will be examined in more detail in the next chapter.

Clear Vision

Closely linked to leadership in respondents' minds was the importance of having a clear vision or aim or strategy for any collaboration. The majority of Phase 1 heads commented on the need for this.

> You have to have clarity of outcomes. It has to have a sense of purpose, direction and an outcome that meets the agenda of all the people involved (Phase 1 Int. 3 F).

This may well reflect the journey that the group were on in terms of forming collaborative links at the time of the interviews and many were relating their responses directly on the way in which the 14-19 agenda was being delivered in their authority. Having a clear aim for setting up a collaboration gives the individuals within the group a sense of purpose, a reason for being part of the group and ultimately the satisfaction of achieving desired outcomes.

Rutherford and Jackson (2006) in researching the setting up of school partnerships in Birmingham refer to Rudd's research (2003) in which key factors for success were identified as:

> Developing clear aims, ownership of what they decide to focus on, good relationships and face to face working and effective communication systems (pg. 441).

Whilst again only a few respondents in Phase 2 commented on the need for a clear vision, it was obvious from those that did that they believed that having a clear vision was a significant factor in supporting the willingness to work together. By the time these interviews took place (see Fig. 1 Time Line pg. 6), the 14-19 agenda had ceased to be a major factor in school development and therefore the responses from this phase focussed on a more broad interpretation of vision.

> Where there is a clear aim and a clear, if you like, mission to be accomplished then I think people work together very very positively (Phase 2 Int. 9 A Type 2).

A lack of a clear vision was seen as one of the reasons why collaboration was not working well. Without it, people were seen to be pulling in different directions, thus dissipating the energy of the group as a whole. One said:

> I think that what we don't have is clarity of what we want from collaborative working (Phase 1 Int. 1 C).

One way in which this clarity of vision and purpose can be achieved is through strong leadership which ensures that clear discussions about aims and resulting outcomes take place and that agreements are adhered to.

Process or Structure of Collaborations

This area elicited responses from the majority of heads / principals in both Phase 1 and Phase 2. Heads felt it was important that there was a structure for the way in which the group worked together and that the structure was adhered to. There would be development over time as with any new group (some had experienced setting up a new senior leadership team for example and related their comments back to this) and that there would be developmental stages that would need to be gone through in order to become effective. It was felt that failure to move through such stages could lead to a very ineffective group.

> I don't know whether I am talking about storming, norming, performing and all that, I don't know whether that's where I'm really at (Phase 1 Int. 7 F).

> There are stages in building collaboration, you start with a willingness to work together don't you, and then a willingness to co-operate, and then when you have trust then you certainly start to collaborate and then you start to have mature relationships don't you (Phase 2 Int. 13 A Type 2).

Stoll et al (2006) when reporting on a number of research projects into collaborative partnerships in schools found that there was evidence of groups moving 'from initiation to implementation to institutionalisation' (pg. 228). It is clear from the responses above, that many respondents did not feel the collaboration of which they had been part, had moved much beyond the initiation phase. For some there was evidence of limited implementation but no one reported that they felt the collaboration was now an intrinsic part of their institution. These findings mirror those of Hall and Oldroyd (1992) and their model of collaboration discussed in Chapter 2 and will be examined further in the next chapter.

Many respondents emphasised that they felt collaboration or partnerships needed to be mutually beneficial although that benefit would not always be equal or easily quantifiable. The respondents reported that whilst it was recognised that not everyone could be a 'winner' all of the time, to always be the 'looser' would make them question whether they should remain in the collaboration.

> It's obvious in partnership arrangements there is always some sort of benefit but at times it can be a 90/10 per cent benefit (Phase 1 Int. 4 F).

There are times when it is difficult to articulate what a successful 'something' looks like, so people often use unsatisfactory experiences to help them explain success. Rather their view had developed by seeing or being part of actions and activities that they did not feel comfortable with, in the name of collaboration.

> I think successful collaboration for me would be maybe two or three possibly four so a much smaller group of schools that worked together and really defined what the partnership would look like (Phase 2 Int. 5 A Type 1).

This principal was part of a much larger chain but felt that the size of the chain militated against real collaborative action. A large number of schools involved in a collaboration may well make the logistics of trying to get agreement and 'buy in' from all too cumbersome and time consuming to make it effective.

Another institution in a partnership with a 'failing' school reported that as both schools have continued to work together, the relationship between them is changing, equalising, bringing greater mutual benefits.

> We have mirrored our school leadership team and what we are trying to do now is to develop a language across both schools that allows us to talk together with the roles much more closely affiliated and we hope eventually that we can almost interchange the two leadership teams (Phase 2 Int. 4 A Type 3).

Academies working as part of a chain (Phase 2) frequently commented on the collaboration that exists across the group, (the two academies in Phase 1 are also part of a chain but made no comment about its impact). The way of working differed but this seemed to be related mostly to the length of time the chain had been in existence. Where this had been some years, it was reported that the collaboration had developed into an effective machine.

> (name) partnership (chain) and I would say that's a very effective collaboration. We have clear defined things that we wish to do as a group of schools and we do them and deliver on them and we are very driven and things happen (Phase 2 Int. 9 A Type 2).

This partnership has been working together as part of an academy chain for several years. The leaders had been in post for some time and strong working

relationships had been built up. The sponsor had created an ethos which had become embedded across all institutions within the chain which meant that there was considerable agreement of what actions they wished to take as a group.

However, many respondents in both phases stated that they needed to feel in control of the institution(s) they developed partnerships with. When these were imposed from outside, whether that was by the LA or central government, it was less successful even where careful thought had been given to the process and structure of the group. The requirement to work in partnership to deliver the 14-19 agenda was one such, in a similar way to the structure which led Hall and Oldroyd (1992) to formulate their model. One head commented:

> I don't think it can be imposed from above; it has to be generated from within the stakeholders themselves (Phase 1 Int. 4 F).

Impediments to Collaboration

The percentage of responses to this area was very similar in both phases. Many respondents in each felt that there were two main barriers to schools and academies entering into more collaborations and developing them at a deeper level, namely the current use of league tables and competition between schools for pupil numbers.

> There is always a dilemma if you like between collaboration and competition and I think that's even more obviously true of secondary schools where, whether we like it or not, league tables still have an impact (Phase 1 Int. 1 C).

League tables are still an important aspect by which a school is viewed. Continued governmental pressure on results at GCSE level, the raising of the floor targets each year and the introduction without prior notice of the results of the 'English Baccalaureate' into the 2010 league tables before schools could appropriately make changes, has ensured that heads and principals continue to view league tables with a degree of concern. There is a sense of vulnerability and of not being in control of how they were being judged, which did not sit comfortably with many respondents.

Academies are not immune to this pressure, for example, the sponsors of Type 1 academies (those in existence before 2009) have all been notified that if their academy does not continue to improve above floor targets, the institution will be taken from their control and given to a sponsor which has proved it can impact on standards. This 'threat' is a powerful mechanism for increasing the pressure on principals to raise standards by totally focusing on their own institution and not engaging in developmental collaborations outside.

In some areas of the country, schools are in the perhaps fortunate position of not being in a crowded market, there is a shortage of secondary school places and therefore they not in competition for pupils with neighbouring schools. But most schools feel they need to market heavily to ensure pupil numbers stay high and therefore their income is at a level that will allow them to deliver a high quality education for their pupils. Principals commented:

> It's difficult to collaborate when I am vying for students from other schools (Phase 2 Int. 2 A Type 1)

There is considerable competition for places and that makes collaboration difficult (Phase 2 Int. 14 A Type 2).

When Connolly and James (2006) researched the ways in which collaboration could impact on school improvement they also found that schools were experiencing a tension between competition and collaboration:

This apparent paradox may generate tensions and conflicts for senior managers, which may require substantial management expertise to resolve (pg. 75).

The leadership necessary to enable a group of headteachers and principals to work through these tensions and remain a cohesive group was not always found to be present in the collaborations they looked at. It requires a leader who is accepted as leader by all of the group, and importantly one who has a range of leadership skills to enable him/her to negotiate between members and keep all on track (as discussed in Coleman's (2011) model).

A school where numbers are dropping runs the risk that parents will lose confidence in the school which compounds the problem, and it can quickly become unviable financially. This spiralling down is painful for all concerned and does nothing for the educational opportunities for the pupils remaining.   One Principal felt that:

Competition is not good for communities as it makes schools die (Phase 2 Int. 2 A Type 1).

There is a natural response to the perception of threat and that is to ensure self-preservation. Both league tables and competition for pupils were seen as threats and for those institutions where results have yet to rise, are geographically close

to more successful schools and not enough students in the area to fill all the available places, the automatic response appeared to be to concentrate internally to ensure survival rather than engaging in developing relationships with other institutions who might be currently taking potential students.

Overview of findings of Research Question 1

The finding from Phases 1 and 2 show that there is considerable agreement about what needs to be in place for successful collaboration to take place. Having a clear vision, strong leadership and a real sense of trust and openness across the group enable any collaboration to be effective in realising the desired outcomes. External factors such as league tables and competition for students equally were seen as factors which militated against the development of that level of trust, openness and therefore effectiveness. Ofsted judgements can often pull together all of these elements in a school's mind and that of the local community. These factors will be explored further in the analysis in the next chapter.

The second Research Question was:

- How can collaboration be conceptualised?

This has been considered in depth in Chapter 2 and two models were identified as ones that are most relevant to this study. They are Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) model of the collaboration process and Coleman's (2011) model of collaboration leadership. Hall and Oldroyd's model, developed following research into the ways in which schools worked together to deliver a governmental directive (TVEI), sets out a developmental process which, in their findings, led to successful

collaborations. This study began at a time when schools were again being required to work together to deliver a new curriculum initiative (14-19). There are therefore many parallels that can be made between their findings and those in this study. The leadership of collaborations was seen in the literature review as of fundamental importance to the eventual effectiveness of any collaboration. Coleman's model seeks to identify the multi-faceted nature of leadership needed in these situations. The majority of respondents in this study commented on the importance of leadership and that such leadership was not as 'straightforward' as that required to successfully lead a single institution. The way in which the findings from this study are able to take both of these models forward adding to the body of knowledge in this area will be discussed in detail in the analysis of Research Questions 1 and 3 in the next chapter.

The third Research Question:

- How might the conceptual model be developed to increasingly support a model for collaboration (including 14-19) across maintained schools and academies?

was dealt with in introductory questions b), c) and d), and interview questions 2, and 5.

Introductory questions b) and c) asked whether there was a local mechanism for all secondary heads to meet together regularly and whether academy principals were a welcome part of that group. All respondents in both phases reported that there was and that academy principals were part of it. Introductory question d)

related to the existence of a mechanism through which the 14-19 agenda was being delivered in the local area. All respondents in both phases again reported that such a group existed in their authority. There were a range of views, however, as to the effectiveness of this group, its potential longevity and their role within it.

Themes identified from the literature review were considered against the responses to these questions:

- current links between maintained schools and academies;

- the role of the Local Authority in supporting and developing collaborations;

- quality assurance processes for collaborations;

- the implications for collaboration of being part of an academy chain;

- responses to the concept of the 14-19 initiative.

Current links between maintained schools and academies

Whilst all respondents replied to the introductory questions relating to this theme, all of the Phase 1 heads and principals commented in detail whilst only many of Phase 2 principals commented. This might reflect the number of principals in Phase 2 who are part of academy chains and who saw their first link with the chain rather than neighbouring schools. Sponsored chains of academies have a central co-ordinating system which delivers many (if not all) of the school improvement support mechanisms an academy might need. It is common for principals within a chain to meet regularly as a group to share good practice, to develop strategy and agree actions.

As has been explained earlier, all 9 heads / principals in Phase 1 were from one LA that is made up of 10 secondary schools, two of which had recently become academies. One headteacher was unavailable to be interviewed although had wished to be part of the research.

The maintained heads in Phase 1 commented on the impact of the change of status, for example:

> It wasn't an issue, it was felt that they were integral members of the range of schools that were offering provision to (name) LA kids, that it was important that they were involved and included in all debates and discussions (Phase 1 Int. 1 C).

There was a strong sense expressed of a responsibility for all children in the area, not just within their own institution that appeared to override the status of any participating organisation. This may well reflect the size of the LA and the length of time many had been in post.

Clearly the position taken by the new principals had an impact on the way in which they were received by the rest and how the confidence and trust began to be formed within the group. One head stated:

> To give full credit to the academy principal, he has made it perfectly clear on umpteen occasions that he wishes the academy to be fully involved in collaboration partnership debate and working alongside other schools in (name) LA (Phase 1 Int. 4 F).

Some principals in Phase 2 commented that their acceptance into headteacher groups had not always been a smooth or easy one. For example:

At the time I was in (name) Borough, it was very hard to engage, people had the understanding that we had a lot more money, a lot more freedom, basically we could do whatever we wanted. Certainly I think there was quite a lot of fear and anxiety about the academy movement (Phase 2 Int. 5 A Type 1).

As has been cited earlier in Chapter 2 there have been many who believe that the academy movement as a whole is damaging to the English education system (Chitty 2008; Titcombe 2008; Hatcher and Jones 2006; Gillard 2008; Sinnott 2008). Articles in the press may well have fuelled a sense of reserve at best, fear at worst, on the part of maintained heads in a local area when one or more of their number changed status. Some heads viewed the removal of schools from local authority control as a detrimental move based on their political ideologies. As time has gone on, and as governments have changed and with the change, governmental policy, these fears seem to have assumed less significance. One principal stated:

As we have continued to develop our relationships with other local schools, there is more collaboration around (Phase 2 Int. 13 A Type 2).

Even in the early days of the academy movement, however, if the view was taken by heads on both 'sides' that the prime aim of all the educational institutions in a given area was to deliver high quality education for all of the children who live within its boundaries, then there was a willingness to work collaboratively regardless of status. One principal said that it was worth striving to be part of the partnerships that are already in existence.

I think as a federation we have always taken the view that we educate children who live in (name) City Council and their parents pay council tax to

(name) City Council so to suggest removing yourself from that debate and that dialogue I think is wrong (Phase 2 Int. 23 A Type 2).

It is clear from a range of responses in both phases that there is a growing belief that it is not possible to deliver improving results for all without being part of a partnership / collaboration and able to influence what happens within an area. One head felt that:

> We want to work so that we are multiplying so that everything we do we get more back, that means it's more likely to be successful, it's more likely to be sustainable (Phase 1 Int. 6 F)

However, other factors may also come into play. For instance, one principal of a converter academy (Type 3) reported that:

> We don't compete with the local comprehensive schools. We have good working relationships with them because we don't (compete) (Phase 2 Int. 21 A Type 3).

His school, as a selective boy's school, does not serve the same client group as the local schools and so without the need to compete for students, he had been able to preserve his good working relationships with neighbouring schools built up over a number of years. Should the results of neighbouring schools improve to his school's level, it might be that the relationship would alter and need to be re-negotiated.

Many principals in Phase 2 identified the kinds of collaborations they were involved in with maintained schools. Often these were for a specific purpose and were highly likely to add value to the academy as well as the other schools. As

was seen in the findings for Research Question 1, collaboration was seen as most effective when it resulted in benefits to all involved. One principal said:

> I collaborate with two other state schools and three independent schools which I set up as a partnership. So that's a strong collaboration looking specifically at programmes of study for students where they work together (Phase 2 Int. 22 A Type 2).

It is clear that there are a range of motives which prompt collaboration between maintained schools and academies. If working with other schools enable a head / principal to give his/her students a broader more relevant curriculum, then collaboration was felt to be worthwhile. The status of the institution does not seem to be a relevant factor in a head's or principal's decision.

The role of the Local Authority in developing / supporting collaboration between schools

This theme elicited responses from the majority of respondents in both phases and the majority of those responses were not positive about the role the LA had in bringing schools together across the area. The few remaining heads and principals made no comment.

The role of the LA has changed significantly over time and some authorities were able to make the necessary changes more easily than others. Connolly and James (2006) point out that LA have been encouraged to work in partnership with schools (as opposed to paternally) since the 1988 Education Act and in the last decade have been supported in developing collaboration between schools through, for example, Education Action Zones, Excellence in Cities and the delivery of the 14-19 agenda.

The introduction of 'Grant Maintained' status however, under the previous Conservative Government, gave many heads a taste of a freedom that they had not experienced under LA control. This was removed to a certain extent when the Labour Government changed 'Grant Maintained' status into 'Foundation' status but the benefits of being able to make decisions on a wide range of issues remained a factor for those heads who had experienced it. The early academy movement took that ability to exercise freedoms even further by, for instance, removing the requirement to teach the full National Curriculum, and many of the people appointed to the principalship of these academies had been grant maintained heads previously. They might therefore be regarded as predisposed to having a reluctance to work closely with the LA. Successive governmental actions have in fact increased the power of decision making for all schools although this has not been widely publicised and often is not actioned by schools. Because early academies were often led by principals prepared to take risks, they could (as in the example below) encourage maintained heads to exercise the freedoms which were available to them even when what they wanted to do was against LA policy.

> So when the local authority said you can't do that I was able and particularly as an outsider of the academy, say they are actually talking rubbish, you can do it (Phase 2 Int. 17 A Type 2).

Concern was also expressed about the quality of support that was on offer from the LA for a number of areas of school life. Unless heads / principals had confidence in the credibility of the central staff, they were unlikely to feel any

obligation to follow their direction on major issues such as the delivery of the 14-19 developments. Heads and principals from both Phases commented:

> I think it's about having the right people in post and I think from a local authority level I think that the person leading on everything needs to have the respect and credibility, and I don't think they have it here (Phase 1 Int. 1 C).

> Local Authorities often do not have the people with sufficient vision or creativity or expertise or experience in post. So I am not going to cry over the demise of the local authority (Phase 2 Int. 7 A Type 1).

These leaders did not feel that the centrally employed staff had the capacity to offer the level of support and challenge needed to help move the school forward. With the level of pressure on schools and academies to deliver ever higher results, heads and principals have had to become increasingly careful about the quality of support given to teachers. If the leadership of an institution does not feel the LA central support staff have the necessary expertise or credibility, they have the ability to purchase support elsewhere and are willing to exercise that ability.

Quality assurance processes for collaborations

Many heads / principals in Phase 1 and a few principals in Phase 2 commented on quality assurance as a factor in effective collaboration. Those who did in both Phases felt it was an important element of any collaboration and if a clear robust process of quality assurance was in place, the collaboration was more likely to be more successful. One stated:

> It is important that there are good QA mechanisms in place for all aspects of collaboration so that you can demonstrate whether it is meeting the objectives you set out with and is therefore effective (Phase 1 Int. 2 A Type 1).

Research by Hodgson and Spours (2006) into 14-19 collaboration supports the view that this is important for the success of a project. They contend that in order to ensure effective collaboration delivering the then required 14-19 agenda, there needed to be:

> a shared quality assurance and improvement systems between partners; and local area targets, developed on a 'bottom-up' basis by partnerships (pg. 7).

Throughout this study, collaboration has been seen as a means to deliver better learning experiences for pupils. In the context of the 14-19 agenda, this could mean that pupils are taught for at least part of a week in a school other than the one at which they are registered. For heads and principals, this can be problematic as it implies a lessening of the level of control they are used to exerting. To overcome this, a mechanism for ensuring the other establishment delivers equally high quality learning experiences for students is essential but one which some have found difficult to ensure. For example one head commented:

> We now have put a quality assurance practice into place but there's a question mark in my view concerning the rigour and robustness of that process. (Phase 1 Int. 4 F).

Respondents in this study indicated that it had not been easy to have a mature discussion about these issues as there was a reluctance to share concerns regarding the quality of teaching and discipline within the group. This meant that it often took longer to reach a stage where quality assurance processes were put in place and longer to ensure that those processes were robust and meaningful. Sharing concerns about the quality of teaching and learning within one's own

school could be seen as evidence of weakness which would leave the school vulnerable. This lack of openness at times gave rise to a sense of a loss of trust.

One principal in Phase 2 had developed strong links with major businesses and found that a business approach to quality assurance was a valuable learning tool for how QA could be managed in an educational establishment. He stated:

> They (business partners) certainly bring a business model of quality assurance. I have learnt a lot personally for my own development about quality assurance through them which has been invaluable (Phase 2 Int. 23 A Type 2).

This respondent had found that some of the traditional educational 'softer' approaches to quality assurance processes and performance management were not found in the business world. It is possible that a business approach is likely not to be as concerned about individual sensitivities as heads might be but focussed on the delivery of the company's goals. The principal reported that this had empowered the leadership team to take a more business-like approach which had been found to be more effective in eradicating under performance.

The implications for collaboration of being part of an academy chain

As has been stated in Chapter 4, within the 23 interviews undertaken for Phase 2 of this research study, there are 11 chains represented. Andrew Adonis, in the foreword to Astle and Ryan's research (2008) stated that:

> Academy chains – able to leverage excellent leadership, ethos, branding and curriculum across more than one academy and to do so rapidly – are guarantors of quality, accelerating the expansion of academies, because of the ease and reliability with which the chains are able to take on new projects (pg. vii).

This very positive political view of the ability of chains to make a difference has not been borne out across all academies that are part of chains in terms of pupil outcomes. It could be that the state of the predecessor school when it became an academy and the quality of staff who were TUPEd across will have had an impact on how quickly it can be improved. As has been mentioned earlier, those sponsors whose academies are not making accelerated progress have been informed that they could lose their sponsorship to other more successful sponsors.

One Principal found that:

> So its lots of small doors that we can open up through collaborations like that of course because of the (sponsor), our sister academies across the north east of the city are also keen to work with us (Phase 2 Int. 16 A Type 2).

Being part of a chain meant that there was an 'inbuilt' willingness to collaborate which was not always there with other schools /academies. Whilst the response from principals who are part of a chain was that they gained real benefits from being part of a larger group organisation, for others, who were not in a chain, felt that as the chains become larger, there is a possible danger that the central organisation will not be able to respond to individual peculiarities of any one institution as rapidly or as effectively as the principal of that institution might want. This could offset the potential benefits in the longer term. Large chains may well have head offices that are removed by distance, as well as social and economic factors, from the institutions they manage. They would appear to be replacing the role of the LA but without many of the controls.

The concept of the 14-19 initiative

All respondents in Phase 1 and Phase 2 reported that there was or had been a mechanism through which all secondary heads could meet together to consider and plan for the 14-19 agenda as set out by the Labour Government.

Fewer principals commented in detail on the 14-19 agenda in Phase 2 than in Phase 1. This may well be due to the timings of the field research. The general election took place between Phase 1 interviews and those for Phase 2. This brought in a new government and a chance of emphasis for pupils post 14. The pressure to deliver the changed curriculum post 14 was removed. The comments that were made however picked up on some of the themes discussed earlier. The majority of those who did comment felt that there was a lack of clarity about what the purpose of the collaboration in this area was for. For example:

> There is a lack of clarity about the 14-19 agenda (Phase 1 Int. 3 F),

which led to a concern that:

> I don't think the way the 14-19 collaborative stuff was set up was ever workable (Phase 2 Int.15 A Type 1).

Concerns were also expressed about the way in which the structures enabled delivery of the aims. This related to the ways in which meetings were conducted, who was in the chair, how decisions were made, and the possibility of impact the heads felt they had over the outcomes. There is a connection with previous comments regarding trust, leadership and control. Heads and principals felt:

> I think less purposeful was the 14-19 agenda which went across (name) LA and (name) LA. We found the collaboration 14-19 to be the biggest waste

of time, man hour time of talking round and round in circles and getting absolutely nowhere to the point that actually from our point of view no longer actually happened (Phase 2 Int. 9 A Type 2).

It shouldn't be possible for me to miss the last four meetings of the 14-19 group and it not make any difference (Phase 1 Int. 7 F).

These comments show that in some areas the 14-19 Strategic Partnership did not have clearly defined objectives, was not focussed on delivery and at times was not inclusive.

The other area of concern was the direction into which they felt they were being driven. Under the Labour Government, a new examination framework for key stage 4 and 5 pupils was introduced, that of diplomas. These examinations were set up to deliver skills and expertise necessary for industry and commerce but were not designed for those pupils, many of whom had become disaffected with school, for whom vocational education had been a real lifeline. Diplomas required teachers in collaboration to develop and submit for approval, a strategic plan for delivering each diploma and to train other teachers to deliver them. It was anticipated that students in an area would have access to a broad range of diplomas, moving between institutions as required. Concern was expressed by heads and principals, that 14-19 delivery mechanisms which only concentrated on diplomas were failing to provide high quality learning for a significant proportion of students. One head in Phase 1 summed up this concern by saying:

Our 14-19 partnership was that it got taken down one particular line which was diplomas and whilst aspects of that had some merit the problem it then meant that we didn't focus actually on developing the broader partnership. And the 14-19 partnership can't be about one issue, not long term and particularly not of that size. (Phase 1 Int. 6 F).

This echoes the views of Hatcher (2008b):

> How diplomas will work in practice remains to be seen. Local partnership provision may well be constrained by a combination of delivery problems and student preference for remaining at their own school (pg. 672).

Heads and principals reacted swiftly to the messages coming out from the Coalition Government and either slowed or stopped the work on the 14-19 diplomas. Whilst it was not sensible to spend time on something which probably now would not be in place, many felt that this meant there had been considerable waste of time, energy and money during the previous two years. One commented:

> Now with a change in government and possible changes, we can see people taking a backward step and that would mean a lot of effort and energy which has gone into this so far being lost. (Phase 1 Int. 5 A Type 1).

Heads and principals reported that they were relieved that the stress on diplomas had been reduced but felt resentful at the waste of time and effort they had had to give to trying to set them up.

What came across in both Phase 1 and 2 was that heads and principals felt they were being pushed into relationships and actions that they might not have entered into of their own volition. This gave rise to a rather jaundiced view of the 14-19 agenda as a whole when either decisions were not taken / actioned or the change in government shifted the emphasis.

Overview of findings related to Research Question 3

Overall the responses to this research question showed that the main priority for heads and principals is to ensure the best possible results for their own students. For some who were experiencing difficulty in doing this, it often meant any kind of collaboration was not seen as the best way forward. But for others, if collaboration meant getting an improved experience for their students which would motivate and engage them, then the status of the other institution was not relevant. The majority were clear that collaboration should be entered into because the institutions involved wished to do so and could see that they would benefit from it not because they were being told to do so by an external agency. Factors such as the ways in which the collaboration was able to ensure high quality across all institutions and the concomitant loss of control / power experienced by heads and principals also impacted on how effective a collaboration was perceived to be. The phenomenon of chains of academies which are increasingly operating in similar ways to LAs was seen by those in one as a positive (e.g., Phase 2 Int. 5, Phase 2 Int. 9, Phase 2 Int. 16, Phase 2 Int. 18) and those outside as a negative (e.g., Phase 2 Int. 20, Phase 2 Int. 22).

These factors will be explored in more detail in the analysis in the next chapter.

Time to Collaborate

This theme was only identified as a factor in Phase 1 and so is being discussed separately. Its importance for Phase 1 could be due to factors involved in the particular LA at the time or the external pressures to deliver the 14-19 agenda that had dissipated by the time the interviews for Phase 2 took place. However, it is

clear that the perception of the heads and principals in Phase 1 is that to enter into a collaborative partnership requires additional time over and above that to deliver the day to day functions of a school and therefore needs to give real value to the institution to be considered worthwhile. One head stated:

> But I had to make a conscious decision, because I thought if I am going to invest this time in reading, as well as going, I've got to make this work. When people are originally starting out on these partnerships, there needs to be an openness around actually it's going to take time and effort and commitment (Phase 1 Int. 6 F).

This Head recognised that it wasn't just a matter of turning up to meetings, there needed to be preparation beforehand (reading paperwork etc.) and a commitment to delivering on actions. In terms of a busy school agenda, such commitment had to be acknowledged.

Parental Perceptions

In the pilot, it was reported that schools would consider what parental reactions would be to any institution they were considering working with and such reactions might stop a collaborative venture going ahead. Questions relating to parent perceptions were therefore included in Phase 1 and 2 interviews. Many heads in Phase 1 responded but only a few in Phase 2 felt it was relevant. However, those who did comment in both Phases felt it was not to be a straightforward matter. It could be for instance, as one head put it that:

> Parents were happy about the institution but they were concerned about the quality of individual teachers (Phase 1 Int. 3 F),

rather than discontent with the organisation as a whole.

Also, many heads were aware that although reputations take some time to build, they can be lost overnight often based on inaccurate information. One principal commented:

> Parental perception is a key issue I think. But their view of schools … would be as it was 10 years ago (Phase 2 Int. 1 A Type 1).

If the parent's experience of school had been a negative one, it was more difficult to gain their active involvement in their child's learning.

Another principal found that he had been able to gain parental support by:

> engaging the parents really early on rather than present to the parents a fait accompli (Phase 2 Int. 23 A Type 2).

In this way, he was able to secure parental support for changes he felt were necessary to continue to raise standards. However, in areas where schools are not full, parents can find it comparatively easy to move their child from one school to another when they are unhappy about what is happening in a school. Parental choice in terms of school places has been an aim of successive governments but can be used in a way which perhaps was not intended by moving students from one school to another within an area during their time within that phase. Looking at collaboration between schools where competition is a factor, Wallace (1998) found that:

> The schools in group D (*part of his study*) were in an area where a significant proportion of parents expressed interest in exercising choice and, by forming a group encompassing all the schools in one town, its headteachers hoped to minimise the impact of parental pressure (pg. 206).

Overall Summary of Findings

There was significant agreement amongst all respondents both in Phase 1 and 2 to the themes identified (see Table 3 pg. 99 and Appendix 4 pg. 226). It was therefore appropriate to consider the responses together. No theme was identified only by Phase 2 respondents and Time was the only area identified by Phase 1 that was not mentioned by Phase 2. Gender and length of tenure did not show any major differences in responses but as these aspects were not a fundamental part of this study, further research would be needed to provide clearer evidence of this.

Each of the themes will now be analysed in greater depth in Chapter 5. In particular the analysis will focus on the findings relating to the development of collaborations and the leadership of collaborations.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter seeks to analyse the findings from the empirical research outlined in Chapter 4 and make links to the literature discussed in Chapter 2. It will follow the same structure as Chapter 4, i.e., discussing each research question, broken down into themes.

It was clear that headteachers and principals felt themselves to be influenced regarding collaborative ventures by a range of factors each to varying degrees. Some of the variation can be explained by the current situation within each school. Headteachers and principals remain concerned that the Coalition Government is increasing the emphasis on the standards agenda (e.g. Phase 1 Int. 1, 2, 5, 7, Phase 2 Int. 5, 12). The only instances where this did not seem to be an issue was in Type 3 academies interviewed in Phase 2 who had converted to academy status from a high performing base (one of those interviewed that achieved 100% 5A*-C including English and maths for the past few years). In schools / academies where results have still to rise, the leadership appeared to be much more inward looking than those institutions where success had been established (e.g. Phase 1 Int. 7). In the institutions where results are low, the leadership explained that their first priority had to be raising attainment and achievement within their own school, rather than seeking to collaborate with others, although they recognised that in

some cases a collaboration might well help them achieve the attainment goal. They did not seem to feel that they had the luxury of looking outside the academy but had to retain a close emphasis on concentrating internally to maximise the impact of limited capacity. Although this was not the case in his academy, one Principal said:

> It's this business all the time about capacity. When a school I think is operating in a tough area under challenge you can never take your foot off the pedal in those schools and so really that has to be their prime aim (Phase 2 Int. 4 A Type 3).

It would appear that collaboration often is seen as a 'luxury' to be entered into when the journey is going well. The perception of the need to concentrate internally appears to be a barrier to collaboration.

As has been shown in Chapter 4, the main elements that respondents felt were important to the way they were able to enter into collaboration with other schools were: trust, honesty and openness; clear vision; and leadership (Research Question 1). Respondents in Phase 1 also cited the importance of having time to devote to the process. Respondents in both phases commented on the factors that helped to make collaborations successful such as clear systems and structures and effective quality assurance processes as well as those factors which militated against successful collaboration such as league tables and competition for students. I will consider what leaders have said about the links that exist already between maintained schools and academies and the role of the LA in supporting collaborative ventures (Research Question 3). Each of these themes will be considered in turn, linking the views of respondents to that shown

in other research. The research began within the specific context of the requirements then placed on schools to deliver a range of provision for students aged 14-19 including diplomas. However, as over time this diminished in significance for schools and academies, the focus of the analysis has moved from 14-19 collaboration solely to collaboration and partnership working in a broader sense (see Fig 1 Time Line pg. 6).

Analysis of Research Question 1

- How can collaboration be explored and its effectiveness judged in an educational context?

The themes considered in relation to this research question are:

- Trust, honesty / openness;
- Leadership;
- Clear vision
- The process or structure of collaborations;
- The impediments to collaboration.

Trust, Honesty and Openness

Woods et al (2003) has called the embedding of collaborative relationships between schools as a 'qualitative change' requiring a strategic vision and an 'enduring, enabling structure of co-operation' (pg. 6). The shift is necessary; it is felt, following a decade of being placed in a competitive situation with neighbouring schools. Schools have been encouraged to compete for students and because of the need to continually raise standards, to compete for those

students who are likely to enable the school to achieve the highest possible results. Such competition has often meant that heads / principals have been reluctant to share their strengths and weaknesses in an open manner in case other schools might be able to gain an advantage over them. The requirement to collaborate means that heads and governors have to consider the success of young people beyond their own school population and give at least equal consideration to the performance of all students within the collaboration. This study is showing that for many the balance of competition and collaboration feels as if it is still tipped towards competition, making collaboration more difficult.

Westheimer (1999) gives 'meaningful relationships' as one of the five features commonly seen in successful communities. Research such as that by Hord (2004) and Louis et al (1995) also highlighted key characteristics of successful co-operation including the development of strong relationships where 'difference, debate and disagreement are viewed as the foundation stones of improvement' (Hargreaves 2003 pg. 163). Stoll et al (2006) expanded their list to include: mutual trust; respect; support amongst staff members; and inclusive membership.

As all the respondents in Phase 1 were in one LA that had only comparatively recently had two of its schools become academies, it is possible that the greater percentage of comments relating to trust in this phase compared to Phase 2 reflects the journey the authority as a whole was on. Comments from Phase 2 principals were not triangulated by discussions with maintained heads in their area. Some also were in authorities where the majority of secondary schools are

now academies creating a very different dynamic than when academies are in the minority locally. This would be an area for possible future research.

12 out of the 23 principals interviewed in Phase 2 were part of academy chains and were therefore, it might be said, automatically in a 'trust relationship' with the other principals who were part of their chain. Research such as that by Louis et al (1995), Nias et al (1989) and West-Burnham (2004) suggest positive relationships – trust and respect - are fundamental to the successful working in partnerships.

Bryk et al (1999) found that:

> when teachers trust and respect each other, a powerful social resource is available for supporting collaboration, reflective dialogue, and deprivatization, characteristics of professional community (pg. 767).

One head, in talking about a productive collaboration experienced elsewhere, stated that:

> They had already built up the relationships and the trust so that when contentious issues came along they had something in the emotional bank account (Phase 1 Int. 6 F).

Clearly he felt that trust enabled collaborative relationships to be able to withstand temporary disagreements. Temporary disagreements could be regarded as inevitable when a group of strong minded individuals come together, but when there is mature trust within the group, such disagreements can be worked through to a positive conclusion.

A principal in Phase 2 felt that:

> I think there is anywhere you go when academies are new into a city some mistrust and suspicion as to what the academies are going to do and be like (Phase 2 Int. 3 A Type 1).

As the Principal of an early academy this response may have been due to the fear of the unknown on the part of local maintained headteachers or 'mis-information' about the ways in which academies can operate. Often Type 1 academies came into existence through political pressure (local or national or both) to change the quality of educational provision in an area.

However, trust is not something which can be taken for granted, it has to be earned and continually worked at. One head felt that:

> I think I went through a phase where I thought I did trust most of (name) LA heads, I think I'm now going through a phase where I think I don't, because we are reaching a point where there is an awful lot at stake in this borough (Phase 1 Int. 7 F).

Phase 1 took place in one LA which had 10 secondary schools, two of whom had just become academies. The group dynamics changed significantly both within the group and between the group and the LA as it was going through a period of uncertainty with an interim Director and staff redundancies.

The strength of feeling expressed by many respondents in both phases makes it clear that being able to trust members of a collaborative is seen as vital to the continued existence of the group. It is not something which comes automatically but grows over time as relationships build and actions prove that trust is

warranted. Distrust was seen as a factor which could quickly destroy the sense of belonging to a group. Developing a sense of trust across the group as a whole helped to break down the territorial boundaries which many heads / governors feel regarding their own institution and allowed the territory for which they felt responsibility to grow encompassing all connected institutions. Their views strongly support that found through previous research. Research such as Bryk and Schneider's later work (2002), Arnold (2006) and Bennett and Anderson (2002) all describe various aspects of trust and its impact of the success or otherwise of collaboration between schools

Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) model for collaboration was discussed in Chapter 2 and it is clear that the heads and principals in both Phases regarded the collaborations they were involved with at various stages along this model. For ease of reference a simplified representation of their model is given below in Fig 5.

Fig 5: Hall and Oldroyd (1992) model of collaboration (simplified)

Conflict $\longrightarrow$ competition $\longrightarrow$ co-ordination $\longrightarrow$ co-operation $\longrightarrow$ collaboration

One Principal felt that:

> I think the difference between co-operation and collaboration is trust. Some of the things I have attended have been very much about co-operating with one another, but still thinking about your own organisation and what you can get out of it for yourself rather than when you develop that trust then its more about what we collectively can do and I think that's the moral purpose that underpins that (Phase 2 Int. 13 A Type 2).

Fig 6 seeks to set out the way in which this study has been able to expand on the process of development in Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) model. When considering the responses from both Phases it is clear that respondents, whilst they believe collaboration develops through stages as Hall and Oldroyd (1992) identified, those stages are not necessarily linear or automatic.

Fig 6: The factors impacting on the development of collaborations.

a)   Competitive co-ordination ⟷ co-operative co-ordination

b)   Openness and honesty

      Co-operative co-ordination ⟶   co-operation

c)   Trust

      Co-operation ⟶   collaboration
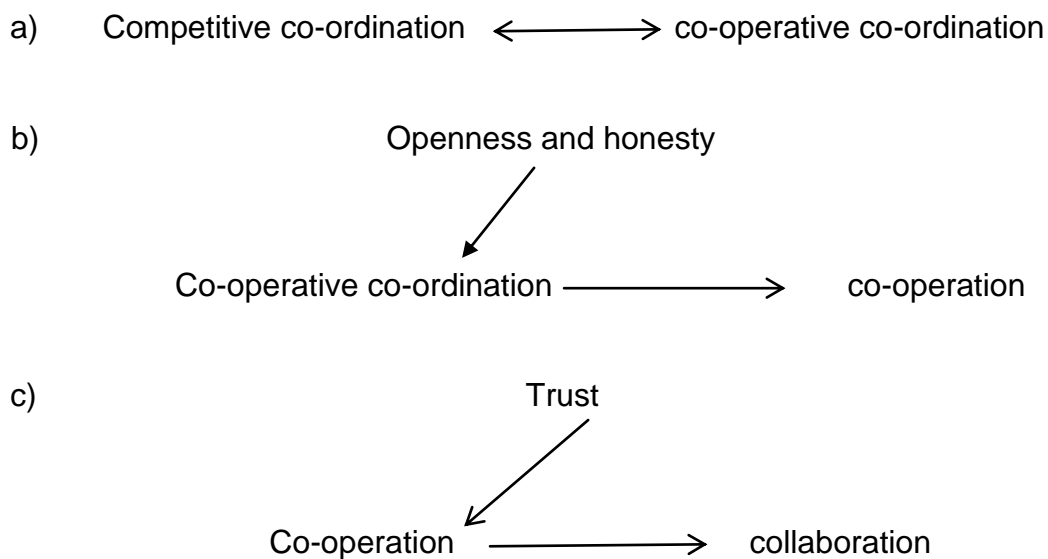
It is clear that for those seeking to develop collaborative working, there is no clear cut line which marks the move from one stage to the next. For example it is possible to enter into an agreement regarding co-ordinating some aspect of school life in a competitive spirit or equally with a co-operative spirit (a). This study has shown that the latter is more likely to be the case when there is a spirit of openness and honesty between the participants (b). Equally, the emphasis placed by heads and principals on the importance of trust to collaborations indicates that this can be seen as the major factor in moving from merely co-operating together to collaborating (c). There are in addition a range of other external and internal

factors which affect the movement from a) through b) to c) in the model above. The context in which each individual school / academy is placed, the pressures brought to bear by Governors / sponsors / parents / local and central government can all impact on the fragile development of mature trust. The internal leadership capacity within an institution and Ofsted judgements also have a significant impact.

Leadership

Glatter (2003) refers to the different nature of leadership needed by those leading collaborative ventures:

> But in addition, there is substantial research evidence to suggest that the requirements for leading organisational partnerships are to an extent distinct from those for leading a single organisation, not least because co-ordinators or facilitators of partnerships often have weak formal authority. Yet their skills are often key factors in determining whether a partnership succeeds or fails (pg. 19).

It is clear from the interview discussions that many heads and principals took on their leadership role in order to lead <u>an</u> institution not to lead a partnership of institutions. Comments reflect their understanding that the two are not the same. These new requirements will be discussed in more detail throughout this chapter.

Coleman (2011) identified a number of elements that he found needed to be present in the leadership of collaborations and his conceptual model has been discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. He describes collaborative leadership as 'a blended phenomenon' (pg. 312).

Comments from heads and principals support this view. One said:

> What's needed here is not a leader but a facilitator and I think in the absence of a facilitator, individuals within the authority have come in and assumed leadership roles (Phase 1 Int. 4 F).

As has been stated earlier, headteachers and principals are used to being in control, to dictating (in the nicest possible way) what will or will not take place in their establishment. It may be that because they found accepting working to someone else's leadership difficult that they talked about a facilitator instead (one who promotes, helps move actions forward rather than directs).

Expecting a group of powerful leaders to work together for the common good that may require giving up as well as gaining something may not always be successful initially. For them to accept one of the group as the leader and to agree to do what is being asked, requires considerable skills of that leader. Moore and Kelly (2009) found that:

> Headteacher participants certainly enjoyed sharing the support of colleagues, but the sharing of power for ultimate decision-making was another issue (pg. 397).

Therefore a number of research studies found the idea of a facilitator to be more effective than traditional leadership models. Certainly the responses from both Phases would suggest that they would agree with this. There was also agreement however, that whilst facilitating, the leader also needed to act as a leader to ensure that agreed actions took place and objectives were realised. One respondent said:

> I think we need someone who is going to say actually the early stage (of collaboration) isn't good enough for you to move any further. Someone needs to take that kind of direction … you've got somebody who's got an idea about where education ought to go, we're never going to get any further than the easy stage of partnership (Phase 1 Int. 8 C).

Huxham and Vangen (2005) found that both direct leadership and facilitation are necessary within a collaboration. There are times when embracing and empowering others in the group may not ensure that the necessary actions take place. They stressed that there is a need to be: 'skilled at operating from both modes and managing the interaction between them' (pg. 228). One head stated that:

> There is a need for the identification of the need for the style of leadership and nature of leadership that's required to get heads to discuss and debate opening the key issues (Phase 1 Int. 4 F).

Such leadership requires authority and power which is not easily accepted by other strong leaders. This study has begun to identify early signs of how the leadership of collaborations is developing and strengthening over time. Echoing James et al (2006) findings regarding 'leadership density' and 'leadership depth' within a collaboration, one principal talked about the impact on his own leadership once he had developed leadership across the group. He said:

> Its noting a certain maturity in the partnership coming to a realisation that actually one's explicit input or leadership is no longer required to sustain that collaboration and actually being grown up about saying well actually others are better placed now to provide the leadership for this and we could serve young people both within our own institution and elsewhere better by realigning our resource and our leadership capacity elsewhere (Phase 2 Int. 14 A Type 2).

A collaboration may require someone with significant hierarchical power to be in a learning situation with someone who has much less. This, as Stoll et al (2006) point out, requires new roles and relationships within the organisation. The structures and roles needed to make an individual institution successful are

unlikely to be the ones needed to bring a number of organisations together sufficiently to achieve a common goal. A collaboration needs to be able to consider how it will empower all members of the group to lead aspects of its work from time to time whilst retaining overall leadership and accountability in one role.

The respondents in both Phases supported the need for strong leadership to enable any collaboration or partnership to be successful. But it may not be the traditional leadership style. A facilitator rather than a leader is likely to be more successful in enabling an effective collaborative. This research has supported the findings of other studies in that there is agreement that leadership of collaborations is different from that of the leadership of a school and will be discussed in more detail later. Significantly, the analysis of the findings is beginning to expand on the work of Coleman (2011) on the multi-faceted nature of collaborative leadership. In addition, it has also found that for those interviewed, it made no difference whether the respondent was the headteacher of a community or foundation school or the principal of an academy of which ever type and therefore does not reflect the view often expressed by the Anti-Academy Alliance amongst others, that academy principals act in a totally isolationist manner compared to community school headteachers.

Clear vision

The starting point for many of the respondents in this study is that of vision, the aim, the objective, the purpose for which the collaboration is envisaged. Without this being in place, they find it difficult to engage in the process and feel limited

ownership of any of the activities. In their research into how collaboration enables innovative practice, Glatter et al (2005) emphasise the importance of having clear aims and objectives at the outset. The then DfES funded 'Diversity Pathfinder Initiative' (2001) and their publication 'A New Specialist System: Transforming Secondary Education' (2003) emphasised the need for clear aims and objectives.

Huffman (2001) and McMillan (2004) suggest that the more mature collaborations involve all their stakeholders in building the vision. It is possible for two heads / principals for instance to develop a vision of how their two institutions can work together. But to allow all staff and students in those institutions to participate in translating that vision into practical actions requires significant courage. There is always the risk that allowing others to be a significant part of the process will mean that the end result may not be exactly the vision the head had in mind. The pressure felt by heads in terms of their accountability for the standards agenda exacerbates this. However, without the opportunity to debate, formulate, and amend, the leadership is unlikely to gain real ownership from all staff necessary to drive changes forward.

Many of the heads and principals in both Phase 1 and 2 agree that a shared and clear vision is important in order for collaboration to be effective. One felt:

> it kind of works and I suppose the reason why the collaboration with (name) school works so well is because the head has this great moral purpose, completely gets the plot, completely shares the vision (Phase 2 Int. 15 A Type 1).

Early academies (Type 1 and 2) were often influenced by the political rhetoric that academies were set up with a 'moral purpose' to change the life chances of young people. That shared vision of delivering better outcomes for all young people in the group needs to be seen in actions and to be of benefit to all involved. When action supports the vision and benefits the whole group, there is an increase in willingness to participate creating a positive cycle of growth and success. A head stated:

> That experience of sharing it's well worth the investment and I think that anybody when they can see there is a purpose; you will do it (Phase 2 Int. 9 A Type 2).

However, it is also clear that some respondents felt uncertain whether within their own authority there was a clear vision about, for instance, what provision should be made to deliver the 14-19 requirements. This uncertainty impacted on how the effectiveness of this particular collaboration was viewed. One head reported:

> There needs to be a vision, there needs to be, sorry, an agreed vision of what 14-19 will look like in this LA in five, ten years. I don't think we ever had that (Phase 1 Int. 7 F).

As has been explained earlier, Phase 1 took place in one LA and at the time the interviews took place there was considerable dissatisfaction amongst the heads about the way the LA had managed the introduction of the 14-19 reforms and the political emphasis behind the process. There was a feeling that the fundamental aspects of the aim or vision had not been fully and honestly discussed which left some heads feeling marginalised.

Respondents in both phases emphasised the importance they placed on sharing a vision / aim with all members of a collaboration and that without this shared

understanding of purpose, such ventures are not likely to be successful. A shared belief gives the group the strength to develop the trust and openness necessary to take any hard decisions necessary to reach their objectives. As a principal in Phase 2 put it:

> True collaboration, I think, only occurs when there is a sense of moral purpose and there is a sense of people joining together to make a difference … Its about making a difference … so that we are not at war with one another but actually we share the same intellectual social capital and both of us are stronger for that (Phase 2 Int. 13 A Type 2).

This research has shown that while there is an acceptance that having a clearly communicated vision is fundamentally important to any partnership working, in practice it is harder to achieve. There is a temptation to start with 'solutions' before the 'problem' is fully identified, accepted by the group as the problem, and articulated. For a collaboration to be effective long-term however, the debate about what the vision for the group is, why and what outcomes are aimed for needs to take place. Without it, the 'solution' could be quickly achieved and the need for the collaboration to remain in existence gone. For this to occur, the group needs to have a sense of trust in each other and to be effectively led.

Processes / structures of collaboration

As has been discussed earlier, the Labour Government did much to encourage schools to work together and with other organisations in order to improve standards though a number of initiatives. These had implications for existing practices within LAs and with unions. There were political pressures both

internally and externally which gave rise to power struggles in some areas which were not always completely resolved.

For academy principals, this changing of existing practices was not a matter of negative significance, indeed for many it was to be welcomed (e.g., Phase 1 Int. 3, 7, Phase 2 Int. 7, 8, 9). The majority had chosen to apply for the principalship of academies because they wanted freedom from the constraints LAs and unions imposed on maintained schools. Only one respondent in Phase 2 reported that he had felt some anxiety at the loss of 'the person at the end of the phone' (Phase 2 Int. 17 Type 2) which had been his experience when a headteacher in a maintained school. This was lessened, however, as the chain to which his academy belonged developed and fulfilling the support role. The role of chains has developed considerably over the past few years with many now fulfilling part of what would have been the LA role. His academy was formed from two failing schools where results were very low and he felt he needed external support to help him build capacity to sustain raising standards

The governmental stress on the need for schools to work in partnership emphasises the advantages to be gained from local issues being addressed by those on whom the issue impacts most. The groups (schools, teachers, parents) who perceive the need most acutely are those best placed to seek to find the solutions. DfEE commissioned research by Hutchinson and Campbell (1998) into partnerships found that whilst there was no one definition of a partnership which fitted all scenarios, all did have some common features such as:

develop common aims and build strategy to achieve them and share risks,
resources and skills (pg. 1).

It was clear from the interviews in this research that much thought had gone into
the processes involved in developing effective collaboration. There was a
recognition that unless the process is thought through and to a certain extent
followed, there would always be impediments to the eventual success of that
collaboration. There needs to be a reason to come together as a group that
enthuses and motivates all concerned, a perceived need that can best and
perhaps only be met by a collaborative approach. However, once that decision is
taken, hard work needs to be put into the process of structure, accountability and
responsibility to ensure it is sustainable and delivers the desired outcomes.

It was seen that there are stages through which the group need to go to become
effective. These stages may well differ depending on the starting point of those
involved. But for many it could be represented as Fig 7 below.

Fig 7: Process of forming a collaboration

Perceived $\longrightarrow$ other interested $\longrightarrow$ loose $\longrightarrow$ formalised
Need   schools   group   collaboration
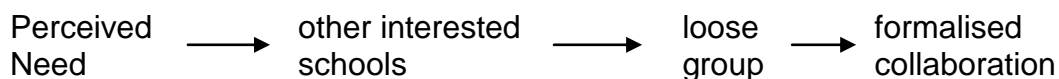
This reflects the work of Tuckman and Jensen (1977) discussed in Chapter 2.
Institutions seeking to work together should not steer away from difficult
discussions which may in the first instance appear to be counter-productive
(storming phase) but in fact enable them to develop real ownership of the vision.

One head felt:

> we've probably in (name) in collaborative groups never got into the storming in a way that we should in order to come out the other side and be performing (Phase 1 Int. 7 F).

Without the 'storming' phase, the effectiveness of the group to which he belonged was very limited he felt.

In other situations, the reason for the relationship changing over time is more straightforward. For instance where one school is less successful and is to be supported by a more successful one, the relationship between the two must change over time in order for the less successful not to be 'taken over' by the other. One Principal in this situation said:

> I also think it has to move to a point where it's symbiotic rather than parasitic and I think that's where we are now in that we are getting more symbiotic (Phase 2 Int. 4 A Type 3).

This academy is a high performing institution which had been asked to take on a school where results were low.

The converse of this is that those collaborations where there is no clear mandate / vision and structure are likely to be less effective. For example, one principal commented:

> I also sit on the (name) CPD group and that's less effective and I think that's to do with that there isn't a clear coherence around what it is we are trying to do and so it's more about a nice friendly chat which is non-impact (Phase 2 Int. 13 A Type 2).

Where members of the group are on a more level footing, the stages are different but equally necessary. As has been seen earlier in this chapter, trust between

partners has been a matter of considerable interest to many heads / principals interviewed. It is considered to be essential to effective collaborations but equally difficult to develop and maintain. Mistrust is easy to develop when partners within the collaboration do not do as they say they will or go against decisions the group have taken. It is only when there is mature trust that the relationship within the group is able to work through such inevitable 'contentious' issues (see Chapter 4 pg. 104)

This reflects the findings of Hall and Oldroyd (1992) discussed in Chapter 2. There was a recognition from those in both Phases of this study that collaborations develop and change over time and that as that development takes place, the effectiveness of the group increases. Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) model uses the dimensions of relationships and strategies to plot the progression of a collaborative structure. It is clear from this research that many heads and principals felt what they had experienced had not sufficiently moved through this progression to reach a situation that gave rise to the maximum benefit for students. Many regarded the collaboration they were involved in as at the co-ordination or co-operation stage rather than fully collaborating. The implication of what they have said is that mature collaborative relationships which are sustained over time are not easy to achieve. This has implications for the long term effectiveness of governmental policy for school to school support partnerships.

However, some leaders reported that there were real quantifiable benefits from working in partnership. These take many forms but the benefits gained were felt to

be measurable and impacted on a wide range of staff and therefore students. One said:

> I do think that some of the work I'm doing feels to me like partnership because I am getting benefits and other partners are getting benefits (Phase 1 Int. 3 F).

It is clear that heads and principals in both phases felt that structure and process were important to avoid a collaborative degenerating into a 'talking shop'. Without a structure, it is easy to lose sight of the goal each individual institution has for being part of the group. There are indications of examples of Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) model in action as heads and principals seek to develop into a meaningful productive entity. The structure needs to be upheld by strong leadership and through effective facilitation of the group's processes to ensure that it is not 'de-railed' by actions which could break down trust. Such action can lead to slippage in the way in which the development of the collaboration progresses through Hall and Oldroyd's model.

Impediments to collaboration

Cribb (2009) stated that:

> In the 1980s, powers were delegated to local schools and, with publication of league tables and the development of OFSTED, schools became largely competitive. During the 1990s schools became even more competitive with open enrolment, competitive testing and the closure of 'poorly performing schools' (pg.4).

Many of the respondents in Phase 1 supported the view that league tables heavily influence the way in which schools view how they can work with other schools. For example:

League tables do not give parents the best evidence for their child but until they are abolished they will continue to be the main factor individual schools will be fighting for (Phase 1 In. 2 A Type 1).

They are probably viewed very differently by heads at the top of the league (such as Type 3 academies) compared to those nearer the bottom but for all they remain a powerful influence.

Atkinson et al (2007) found that:

a culture of competition between schools inhibits collaboration as there is a clear tension between competing and collaborating. The encouragement to collaborate sometimes sits uneasily with other government initiatives which appear to promote autonomy and competition (pg. 74)

Principals interviewed in Phase 2 also saw the difficulty of collaborating when institutions are in competition with each other for students and for their position in league tables. Only in areas where there are insufficient school places currently for secondary students did principals feel that they were not in competition with other schools and reported that collaboration was easier than their experience elsewhere. Even in these areas, competition was a factor in terms of the 'type' of student attracted to the academy. Those with higher Key Stage 2 results and who were therefore perceived to have greater potential for high GCSE results are prized as students. The location of the institution and its admissions criteria can impact on how many such students are available. Heads continue to feel their position is vulnerable when outcomes are not yet deemed 'outstanding'. One said:

There would be an easy way to extend collaboration and that would be just take out league tables and say to people, 'Ok, this group of heads are responsible jointly for the performance of this group of schools. People have to make sure that the base they are operating from is secure and you

154

can only risk a certain amount of collaboration if your job is on the line (Phase 1 Int. 7 F).

Schools may feel under pressure to aim for short-term improvements in their individual position in accountability league tables (Cribb 2009 pg. 8).

With the political agenda for the introduction of Free Schools and the encouragement of successful schools to expand, the supply of school places is becoming more difficult for the LA to manage and is likely to increase the competition between institutions for students.

Again, Phase 2 principals supported the view expressed in Phase 1, that any collaboration imposed from outside, whether that's national or local government, is much less likely to be successful. Principals report that they prefer to be in control of who they work with and for what, rather than being dictated to. This suggests difficulties for those schools who, because of their poor performance, are told by either local or national government to collaborate with a more successful school. This sense of imposition poses an additional factor that will need to be overcome on the journey to successful collaboration. One head felt:

Where it is imposed and nobody can see the point of sitting trying to do something that somebody stands in the way of you being able to achieve, then it is a purposeless activity (Phase 2 Int. 9 A Type 2).

It also requires the supporting school to have the capacity within its staff to take on extra demands and the ability to offset that sense of imposition with some quick wins. If the school being supported is unwilling to tackle the systemic causes of their lack of effectiveness, then the supporting school staff can feel that

155

the additional workload is not worth the effort. This has significant implications for the way in which the leadership of the successful school responds.

Responses in the pilot raised the issue of parental perceptions as a factor that could impede the effectiveness of collaborations. It was felt that collaboration would be difficult to enter into if parents perceived the linked school as 'inferior' to the one in which they had placed their child. A head / principal might be concerned that parents would remove their child from the school in such an event and that the kind of parents who were likely to do this were those with higher achieving children. One head who had experienced this parental response stated that:

> parents now in many ways regard schools like supermarkets and if they can't get it at Asda, they'll go to Tesco so, you know, you've got to think (Phase 1 Int. 9 VA).

The knock-on implication for overall examination results was felt to not be worth risking.

For some parents, schools are not always welcoming places. Stoll and Fink (1996) found that:

> parents often feel to blame for a school failing… what can you expect from these children…they see schools as places to be feared (pg. 135).

However, respondents in this study in both phases felt that parents were more concerned about the particular courses and teachers who would have contact with their child rather than the school as a whole. One head found that:

> There were some concerns raised by my parents that if their child is going to be taught by staff of other schools that were not working at the same level, were they going to be disadvantaged (Phase 1 Int. 4 F).

One principal felt that communication was the key to ensuring parents were on board with any developments the academy wished to make:

> If you are in a partnership and are realistic about what is being delivered, I think parents are an easier win (Phase 2 Int. 5 A Type 1).

Therefore whilst responses from both Phases indicate that heads and principals take account of parental views, they would not use parental concerns as a blanket reason for not participating in a collaboration which they believed would be of benefit. Parents move their children to other schools for a number of reasons besides a proposed collaboration and if the school has good home / school links, concerns can be lessened.

It is clear that many heads / principals remain concerned about the fact that there is still a pressure on institutions to compete with each other through the publication of league tables of examination results by individual school. Advertisements for house sales often mention the distance to a 'good' school implying that parents are influenced by league tables in their view of a school and this can impact on numbers on roll. A vicious cycle is produced out of which schools can find it difficult to break. It is not surprising therefore that many consider carefully whether any potential collaboration will impact negatively on league tables and student numbers. Unless the emphasis of these diminishes, this pressure is likely to remain. Parental influence is however set to increase with the introduction of Free Schools, which can be set up by parents. Further

research is needed into how such organisations will impact of the education system as a whole.

Time to Collaborate

It is interesting to note that whilst instinctively having sufficient time to collaborate might be considered a major factor in whether a collaboration was effective or not, respondents did not often refer to it. In Phase 1, 3 of the 9 commented on the need for additional time for collaboration. It could be that leaders in education have become immune to increasing workloads over the past few years as national government has accelerated the number of initiatives they need to follow. The Labour Government, for instance, introduced 650 initiatives for education within their first 5 year term.

Research has shown (Louis et al 1995; Stoll et al 2003; Thompson 2001) that embedding change and ensuring meaningful learning takes place requires time to be formally allocated to the process. To some extent this was addressed through the 'Workforce Reform' initiative which gave all teachers allocated time each week to prepare, plan and assess. It also removed some tasks from teachers that were not considered 'teaching' such as putting up displays, photocopying, or collecting dinner money. However, to enter into a collaborative partnership requires additional time over and above that of delivering the day to day functions of a school.

Time needs to be allocated from the outset to ensure that the pressure of additional activities, however much they may be seen to be important, does not dissipate the enthusiasm and commitment of those involved. Rutherford and Jackson (2006) quoting Rudd's research (2003) point out that some of the constraints to collaborative working that need to be resolved early on are the 'extra time required' and the 'effort and resources required' (pg. 441). However, it is also possible that the impact of too much time to meet could be to encourage meetings where nothing is actually achieved and this study has shown heads and principals are unwilling to give time to what they see as 'talking shops' (e.g., Phase 2 Int. 21). This has implications for the leadership of the collaboration as a whole and of each individual institution.

It is also true that for any worthwhile change to take place and become embedded requires a significant length of time to elapse (Elmore 1996). Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) model reflects the need for time to elapse as institutions move towards effective collaboration.

Summary of analysis of Research Question 1

Research Question 1 sought to identify the factors that impact on the effectiveness of collaborations. This study supports the findings of previous studies in identifying key elements necessary for collaboration to be effective, in particular that of Hall and Oldroyd (1992) and Coleman (2011). A group of institutions working together for the benefit of all members cannot just presume success without spending time at the outset to articulate shared aims and goals,

setting up a clear structure to enable action and developing a clear quality assurance process. For this to happen, there needs to be a high degree of trust and openness between all members of the group that can enable it to withstand disagreements and conflicts. Some respondents were clear that meaningful collaboration needed to grow and was likely to go through a number of stages. These stages do not follow a straight linear path as a range of factors could push the development of the collaboration backwards as well as forward. That slippage can impact on the group's ability to become an effective cohesive group. The majority of the respondents were clear about the factors involved in effective collaborations. It is therefore possible to add to Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) model as shown in Fig 8 below.

Fig 8: Characteristics of Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) collaboration model (amended)

Competition: mistrust; lack of openness; no sense of group identity; own institution predominates.

↓ ↑

Co-ordination: agreement on one issue; some acceptance of winners and losers; limited sense of trust.

↓ ↑

Co-operation: agreed vision / aim; trust developing; mutual benefit understood; leadership tolerated; ad hoc processes.

↓

Collaboration: strong vision / aim shared by all; mature trust relationship; strong leadership accepted; effective processes including QA.

There are also external factors such as Ofsted judgements and internal factors such as leadership capacity which impact on a school's ability to fully participate in collaborations. The need for strong leadership identified by the respondents, which is different from that needed for a successful single institution, is multi-faceted and able to vary its responses in a variety of ways resonates with Coleman's (2011) model.

Analysis of Research Question 2

- How can collaboration be conceptualised?

As has been discussed in Chapter 4, two models relating to collaboration were identified in the literature review as having relevance for this study. They are Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) model of the processes and structures involved in developing a mature and effective collaboration and Coleman's (2011) model of the multi-faceted leadership for collaboration. Although the models were not given to respondents, the findings show significant congruence with both models. Exact terminology was not used but details of experiences both of being part of a developing collaboration and the impact on leadership styles on the effectiveness of collaborations, demonstrated both models in a practical sense.

It has become clear in analysing the findings, that this study has been able to extend the understanding of the terminology used in Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) model and the ways in which groups of schools are able to progress or otherwise through their various stages. Progress is not always linear and there are factors

which impact on the group to the extent that they can begin to slip back into a previous stage. It has also begun to unpick some of the facets of leadership identified by Coleman (2011) and consider the relative importance of some.

Analysis of Research Question 3

- How might the conceptual model be developed to increasingly support a model for collaboration (including 14-19) across maintained schools and academies?

Themes identified from the responses to these questions were:

- Current links between maintained schools and academies;

- The role of the Local Authority;

- Quality assurance processes for collaborations;

- The implications of being part of an academy chain; and

- Responses to the concept of the 14-19 initiative.

Current links between maintained schools and academies

The majority of those interviewed in Phase 2 citied a number of partnerships in which they operated. Many are working closely with the primary schools from which they receive pupils. It was often seen as a way of influencing the quality of their intake. Where attainment in primary schools had traditionally been low, any work with leaders and teachers in the primary schools which helped them raise standards meant that the academy had an improved prospect of ensuring increased GCSE results.

It would appear from responses in Phase 2 also that collaboration with partners outside of education and who were not connected through sponsorship is comparatively limited and concentrates mainly on delivering additionality to the curriculum on offer particularly to older students. It is seen as a way of extending students' experience into the world of work in a more co-ordinated way. One principal stated:

> We have looked to find as many external organisations that we can link to as possible and with lots of exciting possibilities particularly for Year 11 (Phase 2 Int. 7 A Type 1).

One also used such links to develop the leadership skills of staff:

> Co–coaching programme between our teachers and Ernst and Young junior executives, now in its third year and they get a huge amount out of it as well as us (Phase 2 Int. 1 A Type 1).

Only one respondent in Phase 1 (a Foundation head) indicated that they were intending to develop links with non-educational organisations in this way. The school was at the time in discussion with an organisation to develop Trust status. This very limited sample would seem to indicate that academy principals are more ready to 'think outside the box' and take what might be regarded as a risk than maintained heads in order to further develop their institution. Many principals appointed to academies at the start of the initiative had been headteachers previously often of grant maintained / foundation schools. Their willingness to take risks and develop entrepreneurial activities was considered to be an important criterion for selection for early academy appointments. The PriceWaterhouseCooper report for NCSL (2011) found that:

> Leaders in sponsored academies (Type 1 and 2) rated risk-taking and creative and decision-making attributes more highly than converting academy leaders when comparing attributes with those needed in the maintained sector (pg. 7).

A strongly expressed view from many heads and principals was that any partnership or collaboration that was imposed from outside (i.e., by national or local government) was unlikely to be successful. This appears to run counter to Ainscow's et al (2006) research, which looked at effective collaboration as seen in groups that had 'volunteered', groups working in 'a context of incentives', and those 'subject to external pressure'. Those in the latter group were found to be as likely to be successful as those who had volunteered. I would contend that this difference in findings relates at least in part to the changed educational landscape since 2006. The interviews for this study indicate that heads / principals are concerned about managing their own destiny rather than 'submitting' to the dictates of others. It would appear that heads increasingly want to be 'in control' of what happens in and to their institution. Most of the respondents in Phase 1 and 2 believed that effective partnerships arise from individual schools recognising a need and seeking to work with other schools who have the same or similar issues or who are further on the journey of solving those issues. One stated:

> I don't think it can be imposed from above; it has to be generated from within the stakeholders themselves…What cannot happen, what does not happen is the fact that a central organisation tries to promote partnership for reasons which to them seem sensible because they are charged to get schools to work together for example and yet to the individual stakeholders doesn't make sense (Phase 1 Int. 4 F).

Many principals reported that a clear view of the benefits to their own institution was often a trigger for voluntarily entering into a collaboration. One said:

> We can choose to collaborate with whoever we want to. So for example we are keen to collaborate with any organisation irrespective of where they are or groups of organisations who we feel can either support them or they can support us or we can mutually benefit from it (Phase 2 Int. 13 A Type 2).

Only one respondent felt there would be some merit in schools and academies being required by legislation to work in partnerships or clusters. The comment was made in connection with support for schools which are currently failing or where results at GCSE are below the 'floor targets' set by Government. He thought that:

> the future will be these arrangements and these clusters coming about through legislation, you know, rather than the sort of ad hoc arrangement when things go wrong. I think schools will be required by law to organise themselves into clusters with strong schools within the cluster taking the lead (Phase 2 Int. 20 A Type 1).

Another head who has since become an executive principal of a chain of academies who had moved to a formal agreement with another school, found that it was a more 'successful way to work, through a contract rather than a charter, to enforce the more difficult parts of a collaboration' (IPPR 2003, pg. 1).

It would be possible for national government to require all schools to be part of formalised partnerships as a mechanism to ensure that no school failed to give a high quality education to its pupils. Further if the partnership as a whole was judged by the results of the group rather than, as at present, by each school individually, it would be in the interest of the higher performing schools to support weaker schools to help them improve. However, as has been identified, this

research would indicate that heads and principals on the whole are not in favour of enforced collaboration. Further research over time would be needed to explore the impact on the 'good' schools when in a partnership with one weaker school.

A few of the principals interviewed had already expanded their remit to work closely with another school that had been categorised as 'failing'. Often this had come about as a request from local or national government. Some however, had embarked on this route from a strong sense of moral purpose to improve the life chances of all young people in the area. Although they often described this as 'collaboration' or 'partnership working', it was clear that the relationship between the two institutions was very different to that between two schools who are equally or similarly successful. At times this link took the form of mentoring or coaching of the leader in the weaker school. Rhodes (2011) makes the point that:

> coaching and mentoring are based upon trusting collaboration between individuals so that they may work and learn together (pg. 245).

But for the staff in the school that was in special measures or deemed 'weaker' when the relationship began, there can be the feeling that they were being 'taken over', that things were being 'done to them' rather than 'with them'. Such responses need to be overcome to enable improvements to be made.

There often had to be a real sense of urgency when a successful school / academy began working with a failing school and the pace of change could be considerable which reinforced potential negative emotions in some staff in either school. In the past such partnerships have been set up almost as a last resort following political pressure – when the school in special measures is under threat

of closure. In such situations, the process and structure of collaboration needed to be different to that described above. One principal who took on supporting a school in special measures stated that:

> But one thing we discovered when we started getting into relationships that were dealing with things that were intractable or had been intractable, raising standards in a school that was in self-denial…sometimes you have to introduce something that formalises the collaboration in order that people should absolutely abide by the collaboration (Phase 2 Int. 19 A Type 3).

Equally there are implications for the staff in the 'strong' institution. They will be called upon to undertake over and above what they had been contracted to do, particularly those in leadership roles. The emotional cost and impact of working with staff who are demoralised, who are not performing as they should needs to be taken into consideration by the leadership team so that strategies can be put in place to support staff. Sometimes however, giving too much consideration to the feelings of staff who are not working at the required level does not in the long run help to move the situation forward. The Principal quoted above also said:

> In the past I have always managed to get by with a fairly mixed group of people, so those who are a bit stronger supported those who are a little bit weaker and we succeeded, but when you are pushing yourself to the absolute limit, there can be no passengers. So in hindsight I would have probably been more ruthless at the time (Phase 2 Int. 19 A Type 3).

One head in Phase 1 felt that the concept of seeking support from others was not always viewed positively by other heads. A sense of being blamed for failing does not encourage schools to seek support when they need it. He said:

> We could also do more to support each other. We do not have a
> mechanism where this is done routinely and without the recipient school
> feeling blamed for needing to ask (Phase 1 Int. 2 A Type 1).

There is some evidence that links between maintained schools and academies has continued to grow, sometimes as equal partners, sometimes one supporting a weaker colleague. However, there is very little evidence to show that the consideration of the status of either institution is relevant when such links are formed. It is more about what benefits can be gained for one's own institution or for the community as a whole. Therefore this first study has shown that the autonomy of academies does not necessarily equate to an isolationist approach and supports research undertaken by PriceWaterhouseCooper for the National College (2011).

> The research indicates that for converting academies, academy status
> itself has had little impact to date on the nature and degree of collaboration
> (pg. 6).

This research (of which I was an Advisory Group member) involved questionnaires and interviews with a number of principals, those with sponsors, in chains and early convertors and gives a broad range of evidence about the academy movement as it develops.

The role of the Local Authority in supporting collaborations

No partnership begins from a blank baseline, it begins with the history of previous relationships which may or may not have been positive. In Wallace's (2000) study of school restructuring quoted in Bennett et al (2004), the changes to the LA

responsibilities over time are shown to have significant implications for LA /school relationships. The emphasis on intervening only when a school is failing to provide an acceptable standard of education has meant that the LA has been left with those areas that are more contentious such as admissions and school places.

In this study the responses from headteachers and principals to questions about the role of the LA fell into three main areas. Respondents were prepared to comment generally about the role of the LA and how this had changed, about the LA's role in supporting (or not) collaborations and how they felt about their own link with their LA.

One principal in Phase 2 felt the changes at national level were having a significant impact on LAs. He stated that:

> It will all depend on how much power is left with LAs. Dare I mention the two words Local Authority, DfE – Michael Gove doesn't want any of that. LAs have two to three years left at most (Phase 2 Int. 1 A Type 1),

and another that:

> it's not because of academies or LA schools, it's that there is less of a role for the LA now so that even state schools are saying, you know, 'why are we here apart from supporting each other?' (Phase 2 Int. 22 A Type 2).

Their role within the 14-19 agenda was often not viewed favourably. One Principal commented:

> The 14-19 agenda didn't work because of the LA and that's probably true nationally I suspect (Phase 2 Int. 15 A Type 1).

No respondents in Phase 2 reported favourably on LA/school or academy collaborations. Clearly their experience had not been a positive one for several reasons. For example one principal said:

> I think because the messages weren't loud and clear, shared by everyone and people giving in equal measure, you can see why things collapse. It's not just this LA, it's any LA. They just don't have the people power to be able to do it now and it will get worse and worse (Phase 2 Int. 22 A Type 2).

For the principals in this study, the process of collaboration development with the LA, had not been taken at a pace they felt comfortable with and this meant that the shortcuts prevented the 'buy-in' there otherwise might have been. One stated:

> they (the LA) want to speed things up, you know, so therefore they jump certain forums and don't get enough people involved enough, significant people involved (Phase 2 Int. 6 A Type 1).

The response to this situation was to increase the gap between the two. Another commented:

> It's a clear defined thing we want to do that the LA's failed to deliver on and when we tried to collaborate with them to deliver it, they failed to deliver on it for us as well. So God helps those who help themselves. It's all in our best interest (Phase 2 Int. 10 A Type 2).

It did leave for some a sense of regret however. One principal felt:

> If we think what an LA should be, it should be what holds and takes care of, it's what do they call it, the place of last resort almost and they have a responsibility and I have always wanted to be part of that responsibility (Phase 2 Int. 4 A Type 3).

And one Principal felt there was still an important role the LA could play if it chose to adapt:

> LAs have an incredible influence, they have got to change their psyche to become influencers, become collaborators, recognise the big picture and then persuade people to join in (Phase 2 Int. 4 A Type 3).

For many heads / principals, the lack of credibly experienced staff meant that they felt the LA had nothing to offer them in terms of school improvement or support for initiatives. Inflexibility and an apparent unwillingness to react at a fast enough pace for schools has meant that many schools have taken matters into their own hands and developed their own support structures. There were only limited indications from this study that there would continue to be a need for an organisation such as a LA to support school improvement. As schools and academies continue to develop a maturity of collaborative mechanisms, whether that is within an academy chain or a collaboration, then the chain or collaboration will increasingly fulfil the support role that the LA has taken in the past. This has significant implications for the way in which state education is managed in England and needs to be the subject of more in-depth research.

Quality Assurance

It is clear from the findings outlined in Chapter 4, that heads and principals in both Phases felt it was important to have a mechanism that ensured what was being delivered across the group was of a consistently high quality. As one Principal put it:

> The quality bit is really important because one of the challenges we face, … is how do you ensure that the quality of experience that your children get when they go to someone else's school is as good as you hope it would be in your own and that for me is what the partnership will thrive or fail by (Phase 2 Int. 23 A Type 2).

This echo's the DCSF requirements for 14-19 reform (2008 pg. 59) and Hodgson and Spours (2006) research. However, it is clear from responses that getting to a robust system of quality assurance is at times not an easy thing to do. Heads

/principals do accept the robust challenge from such organisations as Ofsted about the quality of the learning experience within their school, although they may dislike the experience, but it is much harder to accept that level of challenge from a fellow head. There is often a degree of reticence in sharing 'warts and all' with others in a competitive market as has been seen earlier. It requires a significant degree of openness, honesty and trust which usually only comes with mature long standing relationships. One principal stated:

> That is a difficult hurdle to overcome (QA issues) but I would say an important and necessary one actually and that can only come when you have developed a real degree of trust and understanding between partners (Phase 2 Int. 14 A Type 2).

The lack of robust quality assurance processes can lead to a breakdown in trust between members of the collaboration. If openness and honesty was not present, and pupils did not receive a high quality experience in another school, then the basis of the collaboration would be very much in doubt (see Fig 9).

Fig. 9: Impact of QA and Trust on Collaborations

Strong QA ⟶ Low Trust
Weak QA ⟶ High Trust
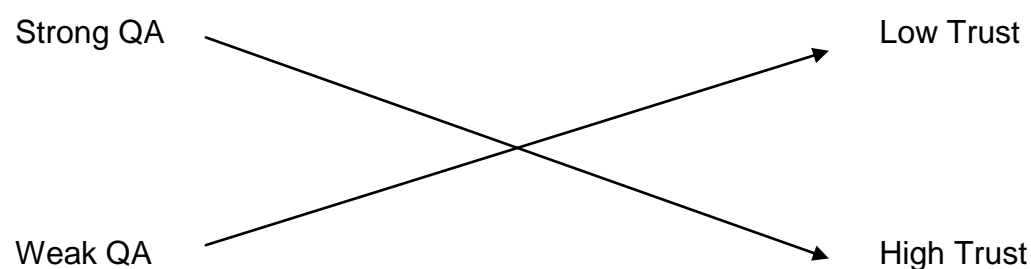
However, if all institutions are going to continue to improve, capitalising on the strengths of the whole group, then such processes need to be thoroughly

embedded across all. As Buchanan and Huczynski (2004) point out robust quality assurance systems depend on the commitment of all involved to self-regulate ensuring compliance.

Implications of being part of an academy chain

The concept of schools being formed into a 'chain' was part of the previous Labour Government's thinking. In 2009, it published a White Paper entitled Your Child, Your School, Our Future, in which it set out proposals for 'Accredited School Groups'. In the context of the growth of the academy movement, Glatter (2011) argues that the concept gives rise to concerns regarding governance of the institutions involved.

More importantly perhaps, is the presumption that a chain of academies can exhibit the same ethos, values and principles across each establishment.

Speaking about the chain of which the academy was part, one respondent stated:

> Complete ownership and engagement of all partners so everybody understands the vision, everybody understands what their contribution to the vision will be, that you need a set of policy statements to monitor it so that you know exactly what good looks like in the relationship (Phase 2 Int. 23 A Type 2).

However, the higher the number of institutions within the chain, the harder it would be to closely match the ethos to the needs of the community each serves. One principal states:

> If you are a great believer in independence as I am, you have to be careful that you don't support or gradually became part of an LA type network, I don't think that will happen. If you get too big you become a mini LA. There is a real danger in that (Phase 2 Int. 20 A Type 1).

As the political agenda for the growth in the number of academies continues, LAs could, in the not too distant future, no longer have any schools under their direct control. Unless regulations change, this would leave LAs with the responsibility for: ensuring that children and young people with special education needs are appropriately supported; where necessary parents are prosecuted for non-attendance by their children at school; the sufficiency of school places and the co-ordination of admissions. Activities such as those related to finance, human resource management, advice and support for teachers and the full range of school improvement activities would be determined by each academy or academy chain. I would contend that it is possible for a future political decision to be taken which abolished LAs in favour of using for instance, the central Board of academy chains to fulfil such functions. This raises an interesting question about accountability. An LA is governed by the decisions of which ever political party is in control. Whilst this can lead to tensions and frustrations, particularly close to election time, it goes give the general public a perception that they (through their local elected member) can influence decision making. Moving such activities to be the responsibility of an academy Board removes such influence. There is no requirement for such Boards to have parents as members (see as an example the membership of E-Act Board (www.e-act/aboutus/Board).

Being part of a chain was seen as a real benefit by the principals in Phase 2 who were part of chains. Those who were not, indicated that if they were part of a chain, they would feel a loss of the freedoms they currently enjoy as a single academy. This reaction could indicate that whether the academy is part of a chain or not, has some influence on which posts some prospective principals apply for.

Some chains are now the size of small and medium-sized LAs and are delivering services to each institution in a very similar way to that in which LAs supported maintained schools in the past. The significance of this is still to be explored. Will chains be given the opportunity, for instance, to manage admissions (rather than merely set admissions criteria) in the future, an activity which is currently the role of the LA? As LA funding reduces due to increased academisation within an area, the number and quality of LA staff has begun to diminish in a number of LAs. Such reductions could give rise to a vacuum which sponsors of academy chains may wish to expand into. As they have developed their role over time within the chain, they have built up expertise which could be offered to other institutions outside the chain, this increasing their sphere of influence. As has been discussed earlier, the lines of local accountability placed on LAs are not in place on sponsors of chains. Significant research is required into the implications of such a development.

The 14-19 agenda

In terms of the need to collaborate in order to deliver the requirements of the 14-19 agenda, it is clear that a range of strategies have been employed by groups of

schools and LAs to address the needs of students in the local area. Hodgson and

Spours (2006) found that:

> The common feature of all these models is their attempt to offset the negative effects of a predominantly competitive and divided education and training system in order to meet the 'horizontal' and 'vertical' progression needs of particular groups of learners in a local area (pg. 2).

This reflects the dilemma identified by Lumby and Foskett (2005) when looking at

the emphasis on schools working together to deliver the necessary 14-19

changes. They found that:

> The most significant difference between the education and training sector in the twenty-first century and that of the 1970s has been the dismantling of the command and control system encapsulated in the government – LEA - school/college hierarchy and its replacement with the twin-axis model of strong central government direction and autonomous individual institutions (pg. 133).

Looking at the evidence of what was happening in practice, they concluded that:

> The rhetoric of accountability to the market and to the learner is in reality the retention and enhancement of accountability to the government (pg. 135).

Institutions that believe themselves to be autonomous and are keen to remain so

are often reluctant to be on the receiving end of strong governmental control.

Hodgson and Spours' follow-up report in 2007 recognised that:

> A particular difficulty is that the Government urges institutions to collaborate while, at the same time, encouraging them to compete for pupils, funding and resources in pursuit of school improvement (pg. 1).

They went on to set out against six dimensions necessary for the delivery of the

14-19 agenda what they had seen in practice in collaborations across the country

(see Appendix 5). At that stage, their judgement was that the majority were still at

an early stage of development (termed weakly collaborative). The table (Appendix 5) also includes what they would expect to see if the collaboration had developed further and become strong. However, even those areas which had received additional funding as Pathfinders were not able to demonstrate that they had made real progress towards 'strong' on all six dimensions. Dimensions that had not made progress were 'qualifications and assessment' and 'accountability frameworks including league tables'. Both of these are heavily influenced by the competitive nature of the current education system. As has been shown earlier, many heads and principals in both Phase 1 and 2 reported that the need to compete with neighbouring institutions for students and for high examination results hindered them forming strong, open collaborative relationships.

It is clear from the comments of respondents both in Phase 1 and 2, that very few felt they were part of a strongly collaborative 14-19 partnership as set out by Hodgson and Spours. This resonates with issues identified from Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) model (see Fig 2 pg. 51). Various reasons are cited for the lack of 'strength' such as the lack of clarity about what the group were working towards and why, a lack of trust within the group and a lack of strong effective leadership.

The majority of headteachers and principals in Phase 1 and some in Phase 2 shared concerns about the leadership of their 14-19 partnerships. Because they felt there was little clarity about what the group was trying to achieve, there was a real sense of a lack of leadership. One said;

14-19? Don't know quite what my job is. I don't feel like we, heads aren't contributing in the way that they should. I am not sure who is leading (Phase 1 Int. 6 F).

Others felt that the particular direction the group took was not helpful in that it did not meet local need or it was too narrow a focus. Comments were made such as:

It's because largely 14-19 collaboration almost exclusively is on diploma development and diploma delivery and that is all that it is (Phase 1 Int. 4 F).

But the 14-19 thing caused us real problems and was a disservice to our kids to be honest because it wasn't delivered (Phase 2 Int. 8 A Type 2).

It has meant that for most of those interviewed, delivery of the 14-19 agenda has not been an example of real partnership that could achieve the focus for which it was set up. This response was similar regardless of the status of the institution, maintained, Type 1, 2 or 3 academies.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the emphasis on developing collaborative relationships to deliver a new 14-19 agenda changed during the course of this research, it is clear that the respondents support the findings of, for example, Hodgson and Spours (2006, 2007) and Lumby and Foskett (2005). The system envisaged by the government did not deal with the perceived conflicting issues of collaboration and competition. It envisaged that the LA and LSC would take the lead in ensuring that the agenda was addressed but it did not necessarily equip either with the personnel and tools to do so effectively. Heads and principal have for some time developed an increasingly broad range of options or pathways for post 14 students which meets needs, maintains motivation and raises aspirations.

The push to deliver a new qualification (diplomas) designed for only a limited group of students was felt by many in this study to be a retrograde step. Therefore the incentive to collaborate with others to do so was not felt to be a worthwhile activity.

Summary of Research Question 3

Research Question 3 sought to identify ways in which the conceptual models of collaboration discussed in Chapter 2 can be further developed. Respondents in Phase 1 and 2 were keen to talk about the wide range of links or collaborations they had with other schools and organisations. There was no suggestion from any that the status of the school, i.e., whether it was a maintained school or an academy, had any bearing on whether they would collaborate. There is only limited evidence that the type of academy had any bearing either. Those Type 1 and 2 who commented, felt that the benefit to be gained outweighed status. Only amongst Type 3 academies were there some limited evidence that as highly successful schools, the impetus to collaborate was much less. But again, when collaboration was entered into, the status of the other party was not the main factor. What the mutual benefit would be was of far greater importance. Those who are part of chains of academies found the central support helpful and were happy to be part of such collaborations.

Very few respondents had positive experiences of working with their LA and there was little indication that there would be a gap in support structures if LAs were to cease to exist. In particular the way in which many LAs had set about delivering

the 14-19 agenda was seen as ineffective and wasted considerable time and money.

Ensuring quality across collaborating organisations has been a difficult process for many and it was reported that such processes are not yet fully developed. As seen in Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) model, the level of maturity needed to deal with such issues was lacking on respondents' experience. Many put this lack of maturity down to the lack of leadership of the collaboration as a whole. Coleman's (2011) conceptualisation of the leadership necessary for a collaboration to develop is helpful in interpreting the views expressed in this study and will be returned to later.

The next chapter will set out what conclusions can be drawn from the findings of this research and make some suggestions for future research and lessons for academics and practitioners.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis have sought to set out the findings and analysis gathered from the research. These chapters also made links with previous relevant research literature highlighting where similarities and differences existed between the research findings from this study and those that went before. In this chapter I seek to identify the lessons that could be learnt as a result of this study, suggest developments to the conceptual models used and highlight future research projects in this field.

In response to the first Research Question, insights have been gained into the perceptions of heads and principals as to what 'effective collaboration' means (Fig 8 pg. 160). Such perceptions have been moulded by the fast changing landscape of current educational policy and practice at national and local level. This study set out to discover whether collaboration was more or less likely to be considered a viable option given the changes introduced nationally in the last two years. However, the clear message from respondents is that collaboration is viable and in fact, although complex, more necessary than ever as support mechanisms from for instance, the LA, dwindle.

In seeking to identify a way to conceptualise collaboration (Research Question 2), the model put forward by Hall and Oldroyd (1992) was explored in order to

expand on the understanding of the model (Research Question 3). This led to insights into the way in which the model can operate in practice. One aspect of effective collaborations that has come out of this study as being of high significance is that of leadership. Coleman's (2011) model of collaboration leadership conceptualised this aspect and this study has been able to use the experiences of the heads and principals to take forward his model.

I have also sought to discover whether the independence gained through academy status is impacting on the way in which they and the remaining maintained schools view the need for, and have the motivation to, collaborate.

The responses gathered from the interviews linked closely to themes identified in previous research studies. These themes relate to the characteristics of successful collaboration (trust, openness, relationships, a clear vision or sense of purpose) and the processes and structures necessary (developmental stages; leadership; quality assurance; academy chains / LA links). There was also significant evidence related to factors that impede successful collaboration. This chapter will consider the conclusions reached from these themes and will identify ways in which this study has supported and extended the current field of knowledge. It will also seek to make suggestions for future research.

Research Question 1

- How can collaboration be explored and its effectiveness judged in an educational context?

Evidence from heads and principals in both Phases indicates that the factors that make for effective collaboration are the same regardless of the status of the institution. There was strong support for collaboration being self-determined, not imposed from outside, whether 'outside' meant LA or central government. However, there is a growing message from central government that collaboration with a strong school will be imposed for schools that are failing to deliver good or outstanding education and ever increasing attainment. In my experience as a practitioner, externally instigated collaborations were more successful when heads were allowed to manage the process and activities themselves without much 'interference' from the external body which had imposed the collaboration (e.g., an Excellence Cluster).   The findings from this study indicate that if such an initiative was imposed legally across the board, it would be important for longitudinal research into the implications for the emotional cost and impact on the staff in both the weaker and the stronger institutions to take place. Principals were concerned that there is a risk that the stresses and strains of this kind of activity can put the successful school at risk.

As Louis et al (1995), Nias et al (1989) and Hord (2004), amongst others, have found, the respondents interviewed for this study believed that developing strong relationships across the group (one of Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) dimensions) so that there is a deep sense of trust and openness is fundamental to success. Trust was seen to grow over time when actions demonstrated commitment to the group and its key purpose. It does not come automatically, but when present within a group, it enables that group to withstand the disagreements and conflicts which

inevitably arise. Respondents reported that trust can also be lost and this impacts on the ability of the group to move forward through the structure of Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) model in a linear manner.

Heads and principals reported that the process they felt was most effective in developing a strong collaboration could be represented thus (Fig. 7 below repeated from Chapter 5 pg. 150):

Fig 7: Process for Forming a Collaboration

Perceived ———▶ other interested ———▶ loose ——▶ formal
Need schools group collaboration
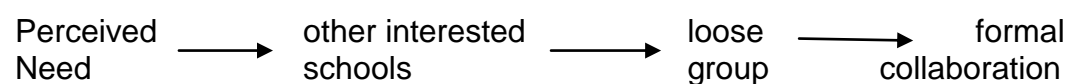
There needed to be an understanding of need and that working with other interested schools over time in a loose grouping can generate the necessary trust for a collaboration to become effective (co-operation in Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) model).
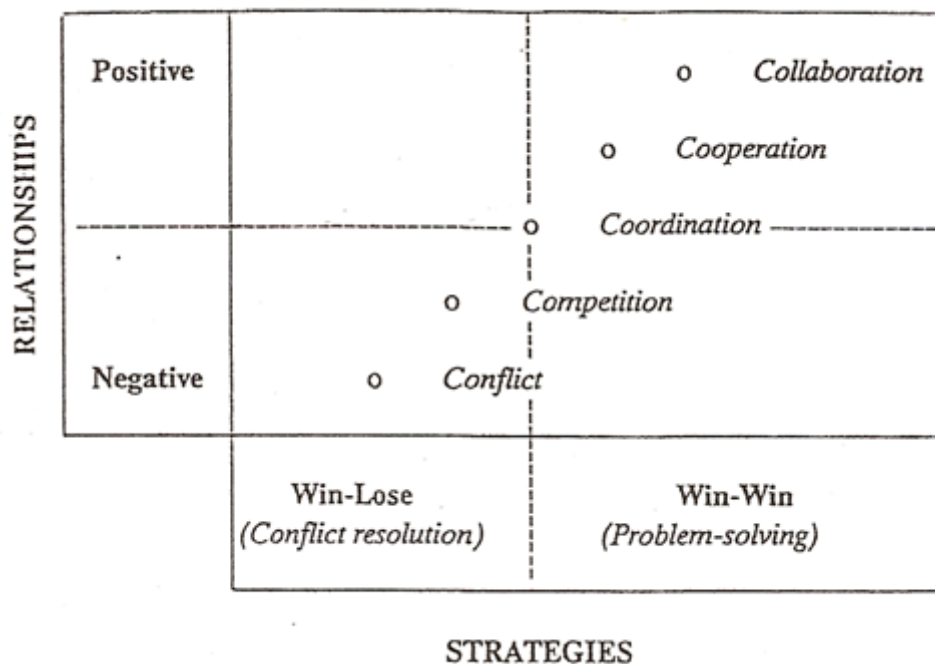
Fig. 2: A continuum of ways of working (Hall and Oldroyd 1992) in Hall and Wallace 1993 (pg. 105) (repeated from Chapter 2 pg. 51).

This study has shown that fundamental to the effectiveness of a collaboration is the acceptance by all involved of the vision or aim /purpose for which the group has been set up. However, it was reported that in the experience of many, this and other 'important' discussions had not taken place hindering the development of the collaboration. Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) model describes a developmental process and as has been seen earlier, seems to indicate that the stages are automatically linear.

The analysis of the findings (Chapter 5) discussed the factors that respondents reported impacted on collaboration effectiveness in their view (see Fig 8 (see pg. 160 and below). This study has concluded that unlike the apparent linear

development set out in Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) model; collaboration can slip back into previous stages which slows down the progression towards effective collaboration.

Fig 8: Characteristics of Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) collaboration model (amended) (see Chapter 5 pg.160)

Competition: mistrust; lack of openness; no sense of group identity; own institution predominates.

↓ ↑

Co-ordination: agreement on one issue; some acceptance of winners and losers; limited sense of trust.

↓ ↑

Co-operation: agreed vision / aim; trust developing; mutual benefit understood; leadership tolerated; ad hoc processes.

↓

Collaboration: strong vision / aim shared by all; mature trust relationship; strong leadership accepted; effective processes including QA.

Whilst this study concurs with that of many other research findings in that strong relationships within the group developing into mature trust lead to effective collaboration, it has shown that frequently the nature of collaboration development does not move forward in a linear way as the model suggests. This study has shown that it is possible (all too often in the experience of some of those interviewed) for a collaboration to slip back into previous stages (from 'co-operation' back into 'competition' for instance). However, this slippage need not be a straight 'backward - forward' movement returning to the same point but partial slippage can on occasions lead to stronger development (represented

below Fig 10). It would appear that the realisation that relationships had broken down, that trust had been lost focussed attention on the risks of losing the intended outcomes altogether and galvanised participants into re-invigorated action.
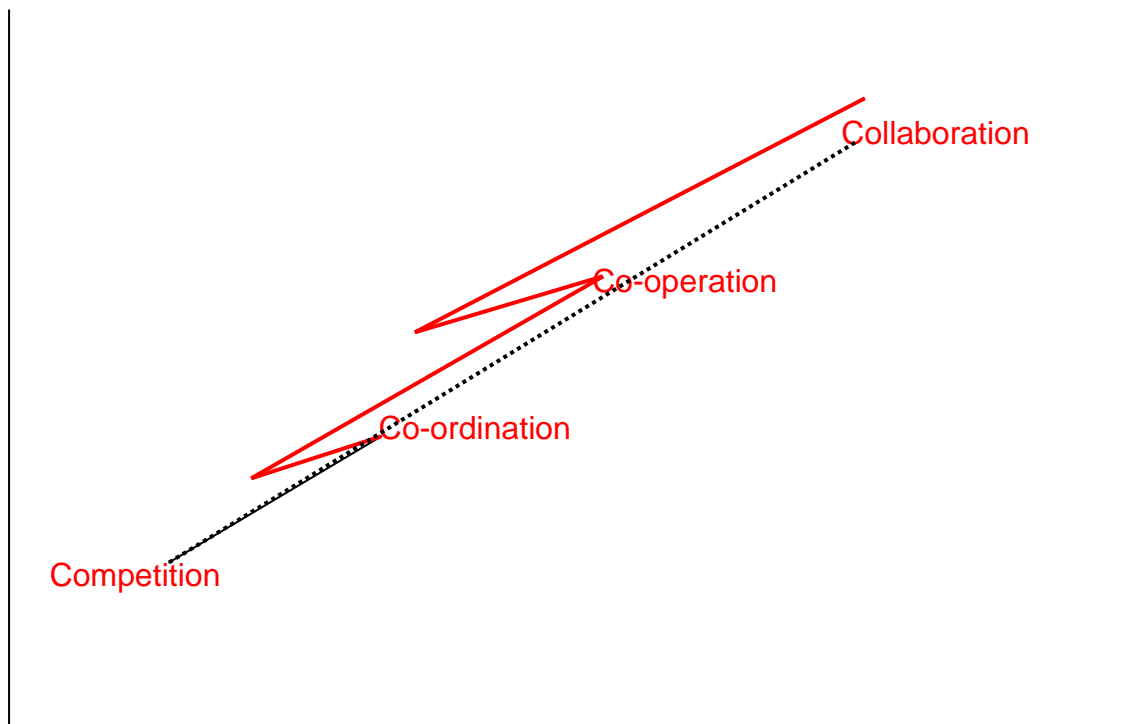
Fig 10: Non- Linear movement through collaboration developmental stages (amended from Hall and Oldroyd 1992).

Key: _____ linear progress through the stages

_____ Progress showing slippage and return to more effective position.

As in the bottom left hand quadrant of Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) model (see Fig 2 pg. 51 and 185 above) a lack of trust is seen as detrimental. 'Negative relationships' using 'win lose strategies' epitomise the conflict and competition

phases of their model. Mature trust was characterised by being able to have disagreements and conflicts whilst maintaining the willingness to work together and the confidence that all are working for the common aim.

Moving beyond these stages seemed for some in both Phase 1 and 2 to be almost an unachievable ambition (see Fig 8 pg. 160 and 186). A number of reasons were given for this view but the most common was a lack of strong leadership for the collaboration (e.g. Phase 1 Int. 8 C).

Whilst many respondents did not feel they were part of an effective collaboration, they were able to articulate what for them characterised 'effectiveness'. They reported that effective collaborations have clear aims (vision) accepted by all, have strong systems and processes including quality assurance. These were deemed to be vital but difficult to achieve without a high degree of trust. The conclusions drawn from these views are represented in Fig 11 below.

Fig 11: Factors for effective collaboration

High school control

Actively seeks collaboration Clear need known Strong trust within the group Strong leadership Strong process (QA) Strong Ofsted judgement	Understand need to collaborate But a lack of confidence in others in the group Concern over loss of control

High Effectiveness ———————————— Low Effectiveness

Funded externally Clear aim But limited flexibility of actions Limited perceived need	Imposed externally Reluctance to engage No perceived need No identified purpose Poor Ofsted judgement

Low school control

The axes of this grid represent the level of control at the individual school level (vertical axis) and the effectiveness of the collaboration (horizontal axis).

This study has shown that the heads and principals interviewed believed that effective collaboration is most likely to be the outcome when there is a high level of school control and when the school is judged by external measures to be highly effective. My own view would support this from my experience as a senior officer in an LA for many years has shown that a perceived inability to control what happens in and to a school can lead to disengagement on the part of the head.

189

When collaboration is effective (top left hand quadrant), it also enables capacity to be built within the group and equally importantly, within each institution in the group. Heads / principals felt that developing staff in such a way that they were able to manage change well and improve outcomes was an important by-product of collaboration. This has significant implications for the government's model of 'school to school' collaboration to support weaker schools. The findings from this limited study would suggest that if strong schools are paired with weaker schools in order to impact on the quality of education in that school, it would need to be through a different, probably more formal, process.

Respondents were able to talk more confidently about being part of an effective collaboration (Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) terminology) when they were part of an academy chain or part of an established network such as an Education Action Zone. Interestingly, it is possible both of these could have been an imposed collaboration. Also, both are likely to have paid employees whose role is to lead / facilitate these collaborations to make sure that actions are undertaken as agreed. Many Education Action Zones appointed a Director who was not one of the heads involved but who had sufficient credibility with the group to command respect in terms of their experience and their ability to 'project manage' the initiative. Most academy chains employ a central team to drive school improvement, to work alongside individual principals within the chain to support them in dealing with the issues within their particular institution and to share good practice between institutions. It would appear that the Government is increasingly in favour of academy chains that have proved they have been able to impact on student

outcomes (e.g. Speech by Sidwell, the Schools Commissioner 2011). Anecdotal evidence would suggest that such chains are being asked to take on more schools thus growing in size. This study reports concerns expressed by some heads and principals that academy chains are taking over the role of the LAs without the (possibly) balancing influence of elected members accountable to the local community.

The findings show however, that there are a number of impediments to effective collaboration (see Fig 11 pg. 189). Heads / principals talked often about competition for pupil numbers and league tables as factors that make them hesitate before entering into collaborative relationships. This reflects previous research into this field, for example, Coleman (2011), Haeusler (2003) and Ainscow et al (2006).

It is possible to represent what heads and principals in this study saw as the forces at work on collaboration as below in Fig 12 (pg. 192) but this is an idealised state where the forces are balanced and one they report that happens rarely in practice. For many, Fig 13 (pg. 193) is a better representation of what they have experienced.

Fig 12: Force field analysis of effective collaborations (equally balanced)

Negative forces   Positive forces

E
F
F
E
C
T
I
V
E

C
O
L
L
A
B
O
R
A
T
I
O
N

Competition for students →

Trust ←

League tables →

Strong leadership ←

Externally imposed →

Robust QA process ←

Parental views of other schools →

Clear vision and purpose ←
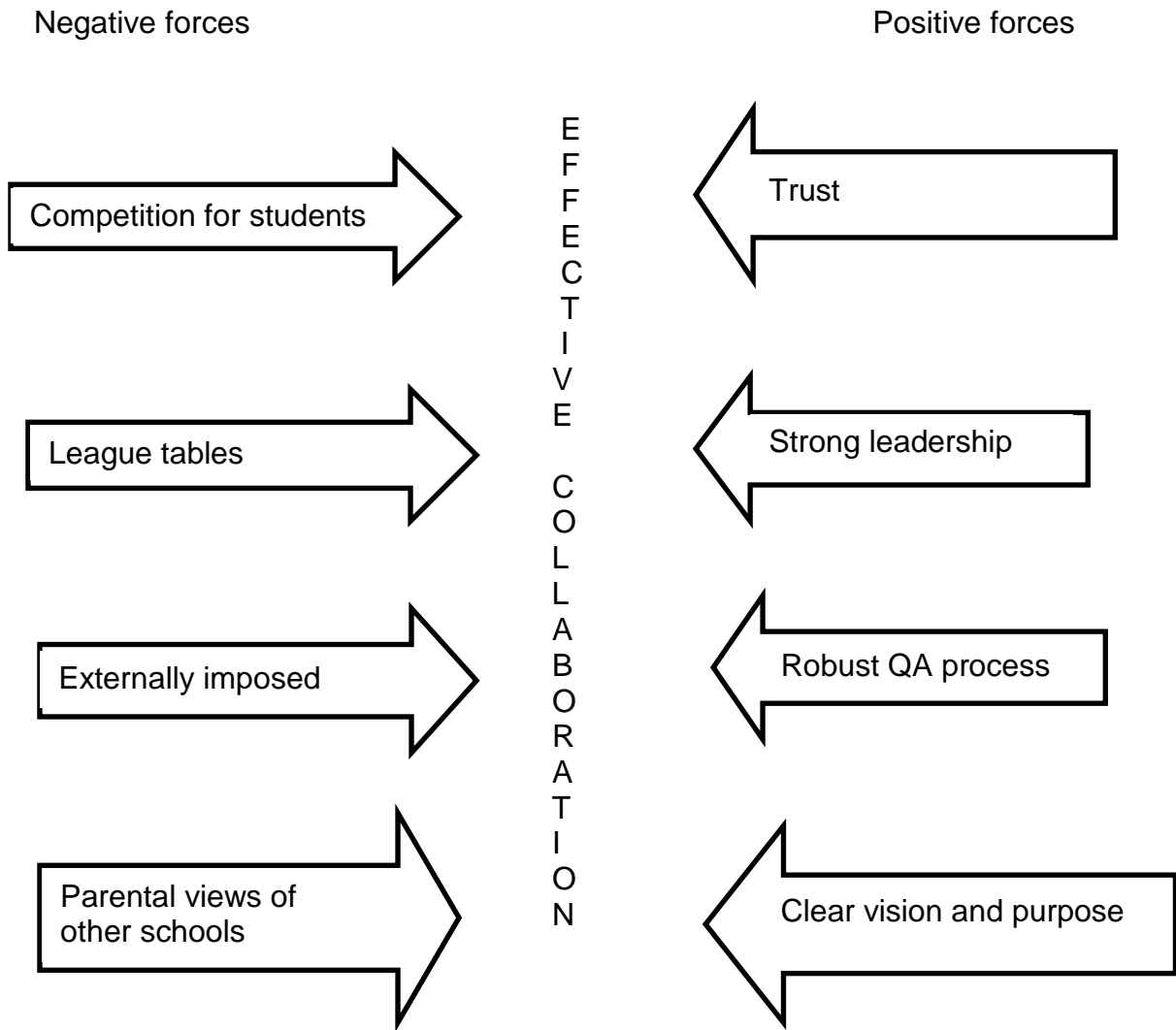
Fig 13: Force field analysis of Competitive-Co-operation
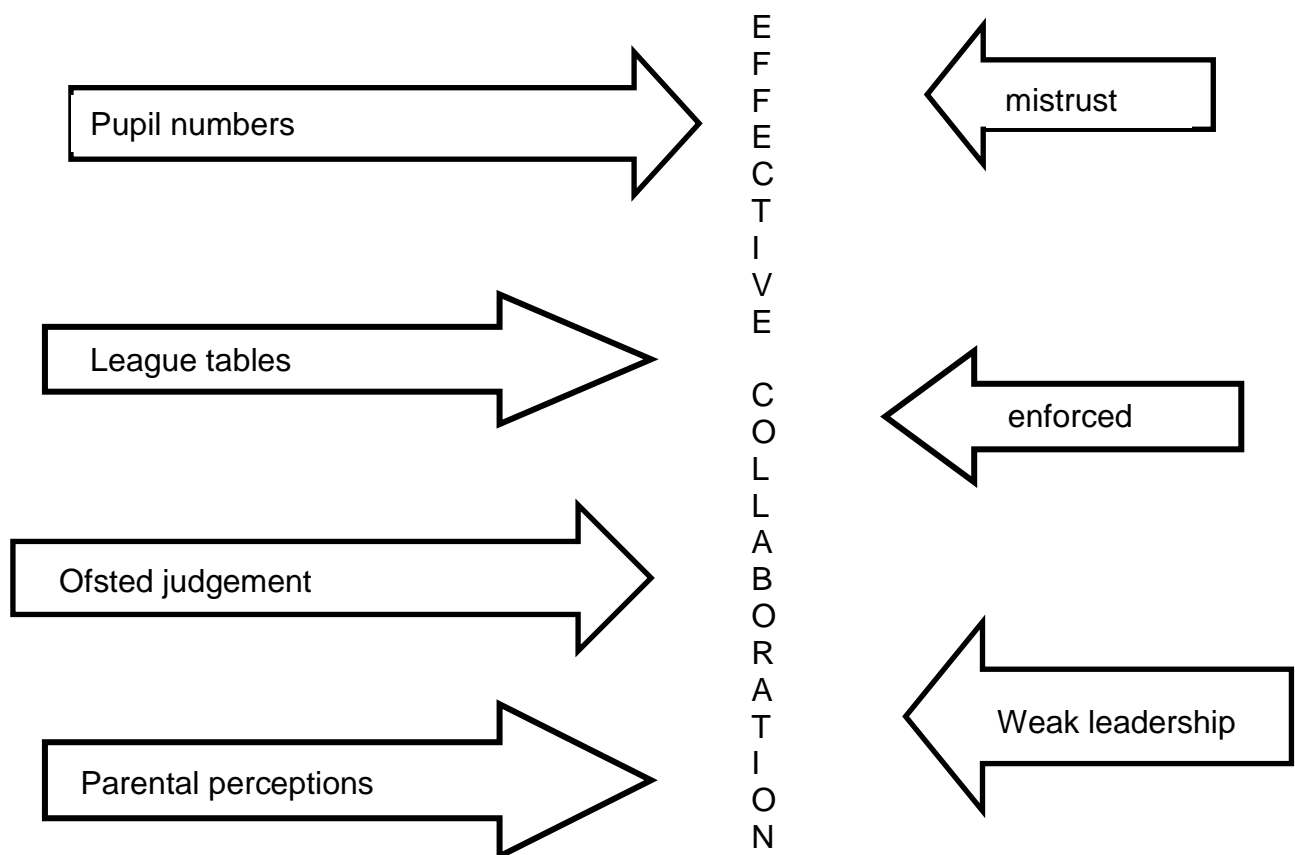
The perceived pressures of competition and the standards agenda mean for some heads / principals that they do not have the capacity to stand against such forces. However, many of the respondents in this study indicated that although competition remained (either for student numbers or for position in league tables), the benefits to be gained by setting such concerns to one side and focussing on what can be gained by working together to meet common issues outweighed the risks. This requires a significant degree of courage, confidence and strength of leadership that there is sufficient strength within one's own institution to offset the time used for collaborative activities without any resultant loss of focus on

improving the attainment of students. Where there is weak leadership, low standards, imposition and mistrust (e.g. Fig 11 pg. 189 bottom right hand quartile), it is unlikely that the pressure from league tables and competition would be countered. The role of governors in collaborative effectiveness was not part of this study and was not an area which respondents commented on but would be a valuable future research area to identify the ways in which the strategic role of governors supports or otherwise productive collaborations .

The role parental perceptions play in a head's willingness to collaborate with other schools arose from the pilot of the interview questions for this study. Respondents acknowledged that parental views are important especially in an area where there were surplus school places. However, many felt there were ways in which parents could be encouraged to participate successfully in the change process. The introduction of Free Schools, many of which have arisen from parental pressure adds another interesting dimension to this factor. Further research will be needed into the impact of Free Schools initially but also into the impact parental pressure groups will increasingly be able to have on the viability of other schools.

Research Question 2

- How can collaboration be conceptualised?

This question was addressed more fully in Chapter 2. The models utilised for this study were those of Hall and Oldroyd (1992) and Coleman (2011). Hall and Oldroyd's model of collaboration was chosen because it arose from a similar

baseline to that which existed when this study began. Findings from both Phases support their research that effective collaborations need to go through a number of stages before they become effective. However, there is evidence from this study that has enabled the model to be explored in more depth and given increased clarification of the processes (RQ1). Collaborations do not always progress through the stages in a linear manner, some get stuck at early stages, others slip back as a result of internal and/or external factors (see Fig 8 pg. 160 and 186). However, respondents commented that when there is a willingness to establish effective collaboration, backward slippage can engender a renewed desire to drive forwards (see Fig 10 pg. 187) which can increase effectiveness.

Coleman's (2011) model concentrates on the leadership necessary for collaborations to be effective and so gives a more in-depth insight into a vital aspect of collaborations. Respondents in both Phases were clear about firstly the importance of strong leadership for effective collaboration but also that such leadership is different from that required for leadership of a single institution. The multi-faceted Coleman model has been expanded in the light of their comments (RQ3). Conclusions and further potential research regarding both models arising from this study are discussed through Research Question 1 and 3 in this chapter.

Research Question 3

- How might the conceptual model be developed to increasingly support a model for collaboration (including 14-19) across maintained schools and academies?
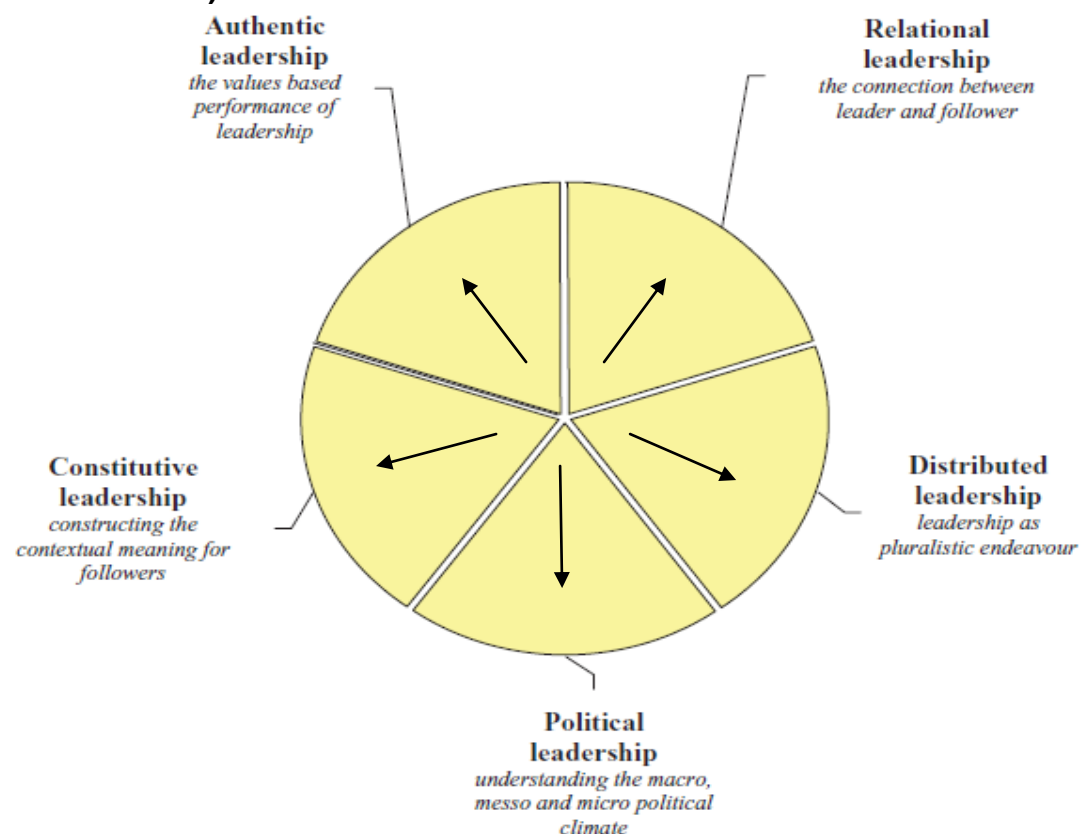
The focus of the research has broadened during its life span due to external factors (governmental change and a consequent shift in focus, (see pg. 4 and Fig 1 pg. 6). What is of significance for the future of education in England, however, is the emphasis this study has found on the importance of leadership to effective collaborations. The current Coalition Government is stressing, as the previous government had begun to do, the importance of schools collaborating as a mechanism for school improvement. Therefore the leadership of such collaborations will increasingly become a matter of debate and research. The findings of this study would indicate that the heads and principals interviewed do not feel that the training on offer from such organisations as the National College of School Leadership (NCSL) is sufficiently diverse to meet this need. It is possible that a new system of training / coaching will need to be established to prepare future leaders. I would also contend that further consideration of why some people want to become heads and principals need to be undertaken. When the personal risks are high, many in a deputy head or vice principal position may well feel they do not want 'their head on the block'.

The various complex elements of Coleman's (2011) model were discussed in some detail in Chapter 2. The findings have shown that heads and principals make use of a number of his elements to support their leadership. The next section of this chapter will look at the conclusions from this research which begins in a limited manner to answer some of the questions raised by Coleman and expand on the knowledge field in this area.

Without strong leadership in one form or another, respondents recognised that the aim of raising achievement across the group (something most saw as a primary aim e.g. James et al 2006) was less likely to be sustained. At times heads / principals talk more easily of external factors than internal ones.

Fig 14 below seeks to represent Coleman's (2011) model as if each facet is equally important and utilised equally all of the time indicated by the arrows in each segment.

Fig 14: Coleman (2011) Model of Collaborative Leadership (with amendments)

Authentic leadership
the values based performance of leadership

Relational leadership
the connection between leader and follower

Constitutive leadership
constructing the contextual meaning for followers

Distributed leadership
leadership as pluralistic endeavour

Political leadership
understanding the macro, messo and micro political climate

Fig 15: Collaborative Leadership in practice (from Coleman 2011).
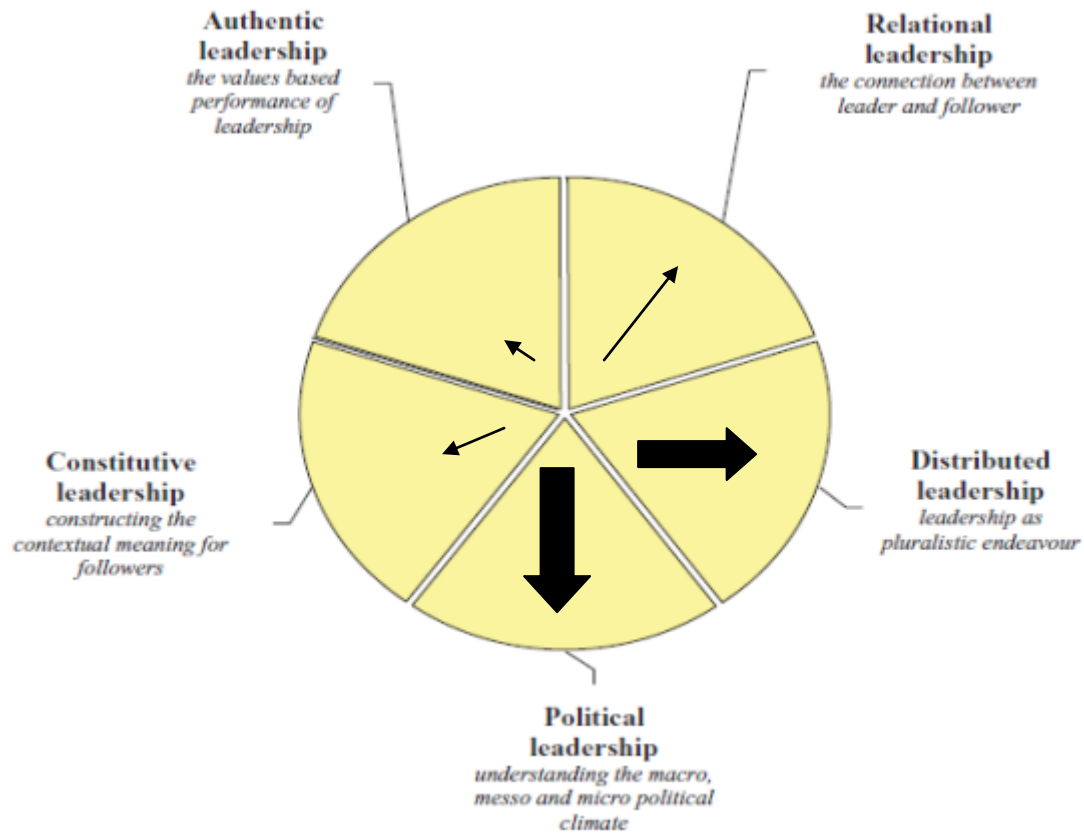
It is possible to conclude however, from the analysis of the findings in this study that leaders of collaborations amend their leadership in practice to best meet the needs of the group at any one time (Fig 15, thickness of the arrows). Each aspect of Coleman's (2011) model may increase or decrease in importance due to context. It is the ability to change emphasis as required and the ability to recognise when this is necessary that is of significance in terms of new understandings of his model and of leadership development in the future.

Many responses concurred with previous research findings (e.g., Moore and Kelly 2009; Glatter 2003; James et al 2006, Stoll et al 2006) that the strong leadership necessary was not easily achieved as heads can be reluctant to give up control and collaborative leadership needed to be both facilitative and when necessary dictatorial. A number of those interviewed were either executive principals or working to executive principals and had therefore had experience of a non-traditional model of headship. However, many were not confident that they had experienced the kind of leadership necessary to move collaborations forward as set out by Coleman (2011). It may be concluded therefore from the research that such leadership is not easily developed currently.

Coleman stated that whilst 'constitutive leadership has been largely unexplored' (pg. 310), many heads and principals share similar values and refer to them as how they demonstrate being professional. In this study the majority of respondents related values to the vision or aim they have for their institution. Type 1 and 2 academy principals placed emphasis on the 'moral purpose' behind their aims and ambitions.

This study has been able to show that it is vital that the collaboration leader is able to weave together the subtle but important differences in ethos between institutions so that none feels they have to adapt more than others. This resonates with Coleman's (2011) political leadership, as a number of respondents talked about the range of contacts they felt it was important to maintain in order to be able to deliver the best for their students. The purpose of such links was seen to be to manipulate external factors in such a way that the students gained some

additional benefit. Some principals clearly saw they needed political understanding as an academy to strengthen their power to 'cut deals' and exploit other people's lack of knowledge of what could or could not be done under new regulations.

As Coleman (2011) points out, some of this activity may not sit comfortably with a traditional ethical approach. A question relating to this was not specifically asked but no respondent raised a concern relating to it. Gaining something that benefitted students outweighed any scruples. This relates to a collaborative as well to an individual institution. From this study and in the light of governmental policy, I would suggest that political leadership in this sense will become increasingly more important and therefore an area which would benefit from further investigation (see Fig. 15 pg. 198). This raises a number of questions. For example, is such ability something one is born with or can it be acquired through experience, through observing others at work or learning about it on a course? Are there boundaries which should not be crossed in an educational setting (which might be different from those in a business setting)? Is the impact of having a leader who is not able to exercise political leadership as described by Coleman detrimental to the overall effectiveness of the collaboration?

Triangulating statements which related to Coleman's authentic leadership either through observations over time of the leadership or by talking to other members of staff was outside the scope of this study. However, when comments were made, heads / principals tended to focus on the ways in which they, as the leadership,

instilled a sense of self belief in staff and pupils developing strong social capital. A longitudinal study observing leaders in action, triangulated by feedback from staff would be a further development for this aspect to investigate whether this has a measureable impact over time on outcomes.

In Coleman's (2011) model relational leadership across the collaboration does require a real understanding of who and what the other members are. Appreciating the factors which are influencing other people's decision making, their successes and their challenges helps to begin the process of developing the necessary level of trust for an effective collaboration. This study has highlighted the importance of strong relationships across a collaboration supported by an openness and spirit of honesty which enable trust to be developed. Respondents have indicated that the continuing 'pressure' to raise standards creates a vulnerability which can militate against strong relationships between institutions.

Some respondents detailed the way in which they have instigated leadership structures which empower staff to take responsibility (Coleman's 2011 distributed leadership). Descriptions such as 'not being directed to..' and 'starts to come more from the person wanting to do the job well' (Phase 2 Int. 3 A Type 1), 'coming up from the roots' (Phase 2 Int. 4 A Type 3), are how heads and principals described their desire for a more distributed form of leadership within their own institution. In many cases, it required a change of culture.

It is also clear from visiting 32 institutions across England in the course of this study that the term 'distributed leadership' is interpreted differently by different heads and principals. As Coleman (2011) points out:

> The term remains vague and misunderstood with insufficient attention having been given to what such approaches look like in practice (pg. 307).

The factors influencing the way in which distributed leadership is put into practice in an institution are replicated within a collaboration although they are perhaps more complicated. Instead of one culture needing to change or adapt, there may be several but they need to be cohesively independent. However, in terms of the sustainability of an effective collaboration, responsibility and leadership needs to be spread across the group even though one individual is viewed as the leader / facilitator. This continues to be an area which would benefit from further study.

Final thoughts and Further Research

This small scale study has begun to explore some of the implications of the changes to education in England made by successive governments. The ever increasing number of schools being removed from LA control through becoming academies, gives a very changed landscape to that envisgaed by, for instance, Rab Butler in 1944. As a researcher and practioner who has worked within the LA educational system for over 20 years, the findings from this study have challenged my perceptions and understanding and given exciting insights into how previous research findings can be taken forward.

In common with other qualitative research findings, this study also raises many questions which are beyond its scope (see pg. 205) and which would benefit from further research. The methodology chosen was effective in that it enabled heads and principals to give their view of their world supported by their understanding of the impact of actions taken. There was no discernible reluctance or hestiation to speak freely in response to any of the questions. It would however, require in-depth triangulation to totally verify their statements. This was beyond the scope of this study. As it is a small scale study, the findings need to be explored more broadly through other research studies and would benefit from an in-depth analysis of the impact of Type 3 academies on overall attainment, collaboration and public perceptions.

This study has sought firstly to identify whether collaboration is still viable in the light of policy changes. The resounding response was that it is and whilst complex is increasingly important. Secondly it sought to verify whether Hall and Oldroyd's (1992) model for effective collaboration is still appropriate. The evidence gained from the respondents in both Phases indicates that it is and the study has been able to amplify what the model looks like in practice. I have sought to demonstrate from the findings that the development is not necessarily linear but that groups may slip back to less effective stages. Some heads / principals have experienced situations where the group has remained 'stuck' and others that the backwards movement has galvanised the group to move forward again more vigourously which has enabled to group to become more effective then they might otherwise have been. As mature trust relationships develop, the collaboration is less likely to

'fall back' to the behaviours of the previous stage when difficulties are encountered. There has been no discernible difference in response to this between maintained schools and academies and little between types of academies.

Thirdly, this study has sought to begin to flesh out what Coleman's (2011) model of collaboration leadership looks like in practice. Heads and principals have been able to demonstrate that they utilise all five elements of the model within the way they lead in their own institution or across a collaboration although they may not have used Coleman's terminology. However, greater clarity is still needed to fully understand how leaders develop the understanding needed to determine which element dominates at any one time. From the evidence gained in this study, I would contend that each element has an elasticity which is impacted upon by a range of tensions and forces. Some of these will be from within the group itself (e.g., relational, constitutive, distributed), others will be from outside the group (e.g., political). Both internal and external forces however will be manifested through authentic leadership.

Further research into practical examples of each of these aspects continues to be necessary to support the development of strong collaboration between schools whatever their status. Political rhetoric from both parties indicates that collaboration will remain an important vehicle for school improvement. It is therefore vital that there is a clear understanding of what leadership of such

ventures should look like in order to support the development of successful leaders of the future.

This study has also identified areas where further research could usefully be undertaken:

- The role of governance of each institution within a collaboration and across the collaboration as a whole. What are the implications for the current role of governors, how can a larger group maintain the 'local' perspective and how can accountability for outcomes be measured?

- The role of LAs as the number of academies grows and the educational landscape changes. Is there still a need for a geographically based organisation which is accountable for pupil outcomes? What skills and expertise does such an organisation need and how should it be funded?

- The role of the central Board in chains of academies. As these take on more of the traditional LA roles, where does the accountability lie for the use of public money?

- The impact of Free Schools, including the influence of parents on the educational landscape and the supply of school places.

In conclusion, the findings from this small scale study has added to the body of knowledge of two conceptual models, one relating to the development of collaborations, the other to the leadership of collaborations, by modifying and extending each. However, there remains the need for on-going research in this

field as the landscape of education in England takes on a new face. In particular into effective leadership of collaborations, chains and individual institutions to ensure that leaders in the making are effectively prepared to take on the leadership required to ensure that pupils are given the best possible opportunity to succeed.

APPENDIX 1A: Interview Schedule   Pilot Version

Introduction to interviewer – link to Birmingham University – EdD, personal experieince of working in education

Introduction to aims of the study
The study seeks to discover how the aparently opposing initiatives (academy status and 14-19 collaboration) are being put into practice in two Local Authorities.

Introductory questions

a)How long have your been a headteacher in this authority?

b)Is there a mechanism for all secondary heads to meet together regularly?

c)Does this include academy principals?

d)How is the 14-19 agenda being delivered in this authority?

For the purpose of the study, the following has been taken as a definition of collaboration:

'An agreement (verbal and/or written) between the leaders of educational institutions within a defined geographical area to work together to deliver an agreed purpose supporting pupil achievement and attainment'.

1) What in your view does collaboration look like in practice?

2) How would you quantify an effective collaboration?

3) Do you feel there is effective collaboration in this authority at the moment? What leads you to that judgment? Does having maintained schools and academies make any difference or is this an irrelevancy?

4) Have you been part of school collaborations elsewhere? If you have what were the key factors which made them effective and what were the outcomes?

5) What in your view needs to happen in this authority to ensure effective collaborative working between maintained schools and academies to deliver the full range of 14-19 curricular changes?

APPENDIX 1B: Interview Schedule amended following pilot

Introduction to interviewer – link to Birmingham University – EdD, personal experieince of working in education

Introduction to aims of the study
The study seeks to discover how the aparently opposing initiatives (academy status and 14-19 collaboration) are being put into practice in two Local Authorities.

Introductory questions

a)How long have your been a headteacher in this authority?

b)Is there a mechanism for all secondary heads to meet together regularly?

c)Does this include academy principals?

d)How is the 14-19 agenda being delivered in this authority?

For the purpose of the study, the following has been taken as a definition of collaboration:

'an agreement (verbal and/or written) between the leaders of educational institutions within a defined geographical area (Local Authority) to work together to deliver an agreed purpose supporting pupil achievement and attainment'. This 'agreed purpose' might be a single event, the delivery of a course or a much broader range of activities. Implicit within the agreement is that it would not have a detrimental impact on any individual institution.

1) What in your view does collaboration look like in practice?

2) How would you recognise / evaluate an effective collaboration?

3) Do you feel there is effective collaboration in this authority at the moment? What leads you to that judgment? Does having maintained schools and academies make any difference or is this an irrelevancy? Are there other factors which impact more on the effectiveness of any collaboration?

4) Have you been part of school collaborations elsewhere? If you have what were the key factors which made them effective and what were the outcomes?

5) What in your view needs to happen in this authority to ensure effective collaborative working between maintained schools and academies to deliver the full range of 14-19 curricular changes?

APPENDIX 2: Breakdown of Interview sample

	Phase 1			Phase 2		
	Gender	**Tenure**	**Status**	**Gender**	**Tenure**	**status**
Int. 1	Male	12 years	C	Male	7 years	A (C) Type 1
Int. 2	Male	3 years	A (C) Type 1	Male	5 years	A Type 1
Int. 3	Male	16 years	F	Female	1 year	A Type 1
Int. 4	Male	17 years	F	Female	8 years	A Type 3
Int. 5	Female	6 years	A (C) Type 2	Male	2 years	A (C) Type 1
Int. 6	Female	10 years	F	Male	3 years	A (C)Type 1
Int. 7	Male	7 years	F	Female	4years	A Type 1
Int. 8	Female	2 years	C	Male	10 years	A Type 2
Int. 9	Female	1 year	VA	Female	3 years	A (C) Type 2
Int. 10				Male	2 years	A (C) Type 2
Int. 11				Male	12 years	A (C)Type 2
Int. 12				Male	3 years	A (C) Type 1
Int. 13				Female	4 years	A Type 2
Int. 14				Male	7 years	A (C) Type 2
Int. 15				Female	6 years	A Type 1
Int. 16				Male	3 years	A (C) Type 2
Int. 17				Male	7 years	A (C)Type 2
Int. 18				Female	4 years	A (C)Type 2
Int. 19				Male	12 years	A Type 3
Int. 20				Male	8 years	A Type 1
Int. 21				Male	12 years	A Type 3
Int. 22				Female	12 years	A Type 2
Int. 23				Male	10 years	A (C) Type 2
Totals	5 male 4 female	Less than 5 yrs- 3 5-10 years – 3 Over 10 years - 3	1 VA 4 F 2 A (C) 2 C	15 male 8 female	Less than 5 yrs -10 5-10 years – 9 Over 10 years - 4	8 Type 1 10 Type 2 3 type 3 12 A Chains 9 A single

Key: C = Community school
F = Foundation School
A = Academy
(C) = part of an academy chain
VA = Voluntary Aided

APPENDIX 3: Sample Transcript Phase 1 Int. 8

Thank you for agreeing to see me. As you know I am working at Birmingham University doing a Doctorate and to confirm that confidentiality is assured. My interest has grown out of my personal experience of working in education for a number of years. The aim of this study is to look at what appear to be on the surface two opposing initiatives, one of which is Academy status which are independent from local authority and the other is the 14-19 Strategy which is requiring schools or institutions to collaborate and to see whether the Academy status is making it more difficult to deliver within a geographical area something like the 14-19 Agenda. That's the purpose.

Firstly some basic questions about how you fit into the area that we are in at the moment.

Can I ask firstly how long you have been a Headteacher in this authority?

This is the end of my second year.

Is there a mechanism for all secondary heads to meet together regularly?

Yes we meet once a month at the TASS meeting at which all of the ten secondary schools plus the two special schools are there and occasionally the PRU, or short stay school, is invited.

Does this include the Academies?

Yes.

Has that always been the case or was there any discussion or did that happen before you arrived?

Yes that was previous to my arrival, however I understand that it was discussed in detail and certainly ever since I've been there the Academies have been represented.

Could you do a little explanation about how the 14-19 Agenda is delivered in this authority? What are the mechanisms for delivering 14-19?

Well there is a very big strategic partnership which is 14-19. That comprises of all the headteachers plus colleges plus a very wide array of different groups coming through. That's supposed to set the strategic direction although in practice I feel that there's very little added to the Agenda by most of those people it's just a consideration of the information coming out from officers for the headteachers to critique. Then there is a delivery group which will take some of those suggestions and will try and work them to make them possible within schools. At that point some difficulties come

211

out which may come back via the Strategy Manager into the schools or more likely back up to the Delivery Group to be worked on. However, there still seems to be a lot of work that is done by Officers that is just coming out than individually into the headteachers and into schools coming through. Some bits are taken on so the Diplomas have got a life of their own that's been led principally out of one school that have got other schools joined to it and we will have taken on something like the Engagement Programme which we are delivering on behalf of the entire authority at the moment.

So, if I unpick that a little bit there is an over-arching group which is very big but you seem to be indicating that's mostly driven by Officers. Is it chaired by an Officer?

Yes it is now. In fact it always has since I've been there though I understand beforehand there was a headteacher in charge.

But there are delivery mechanisms that are delivering things like Diplomas across the borough but there are not each individual institution delivering the Diplomas on their own there is a corporate approach to delivery of Diplomas at least.

**I wouldn't go that far because I think even within the Diplomas you've got sort of difference of mini-clusters leading and that's led to the Diplomas being set up and not having one complete overview. So, for example, you've got Creative and Media that we are involved in that's being led by was (name) is now (name), one of the Academies. We are linked with it, so is (name) College which used to be (name) and they are running on one way and one format and then you've got people who are involved in some of the others in a very different way and you don't have that smooth transition between the different mini-clusters of students, for example, in the way that it ought to be. So it is really being led by people who wanted to work one way but actually you've got schools and headteachers and delivery groups who are saying 'well we can't get it to run the way in which we want
It to run' so we've set up sort of ad hoc arrangements that over time are becoming formalised.**

OK. I think we may well need to come back to that as we go through.

For the purposes of this study I have obviously been looking at definitions of collaboration which is what 14-19 is requiring and just for the purposes of this I have done a sort of amalgam and so what I've come up with is 'Collaboration is an agreement verbal and/or written between the leaders of educational institutions within a defined geographical area which may or may not be a local authority area, to work together to deliver an agreed purpose supporting pupil achievement and attainment. The agreed purpose might be a single event, a delivery of a course or a much broader range of activities. Implicit within the agreement is that it would not have a detrimental impact on any individual institution'.

If we could do a little bit of an exploration of what collaboration means to you. So what in your view would collaboration look like in practice?

In practice it would be that you would have genuine partnership even if somebody was taking a more leading role in something because they've got the capacity, they've got the expertise but there isn't ever a minority partner who is only getting second bite of the cherry or something. So, for example, if we are truly collaborative the Diplomas happen for the best of all of those students and it doesn't happen in one place or another just purely because it is easier for a group of students to get somewhere and we don't have a school gets particular first choice of something and then other schools can join in afterwards. So you would have true working together and partnership. I think you will also have a much clearer idea about how the short term aims or that one particular project is fitting longer term into something that is happening across the whole of the borough and by working together you are all working towards that common aim even if it looks like you are working very different partnership events. So it may well be that a particular school is in collaboration with another because somebody is working on the Diplomas, for example, but another school is working on a different element but it has the final aim in all of that. And you may well have schools aligning themselves more with each other's practices but that doesn't have to happen for collaboration. It has to be the genuine spirit that is being taken up and can be articulated and then can be seen in the practice to work.

So would you say there is quite a lot of equality between partners within a partnership?

There should be. Yes and I think that for me is what makes it really genuinely collaborative is that understanding that we are all schools of a certain ilk you may be further forward in some areas, you know, but there are ones you may need to develop and people will be having strengths and weaknesses in other areas themselves but working together you can do much better with it. So there is no school that is a charity case, there is no school that is so deserving it can't lead on anything in particular. It's just that they are where they are at a certain stage at the moment and need some help to improve but they will actually still have the strengths that they could work with other schools with.

How would you recognise or evaluate effective collaboration?

Well I think that is really important to actually be looking to say when you are setting up the collaboration that you need to be thinking about how can you evaluate and monitor what is going on. Because it is very easy for everyone to sign up and say yes we will be genuine partners but unless you are actually having the conversation about what indicates genuine partnership and then you can go back and actually analyse it, you are not going to be able to call someone and say, actually we are not doing this

here, we are just doing it because it works best for us. And that is a great difficulty there. So I think if you are looking at the genuine partnership you've got to be looking and saying well ok how does this impact on every part of the work that is going on so, how's it impacting on our student, how's it impacting on our staff, how's it impacting on the school, with its reputation, etc. and saying well, ok, we're not going to do something because then there's going to be detrimental impact here to one or more schools. We shouldn't be doing it like this.

Thank you. Do you feel there is effective collaboration in this authority at the moment?

No. My understanding is we've come a long way from where we were a few years ago, but if I think back to where are we, even in the two years I've been here, I wouldn't say it's effective because I think schools are still only getting into things because it benefits where they are and clearly you wouldn't be doing it unless there is a benefit to you, but because we haven't got that agreement it is very difficult about where we should be as a whole authority or a group of schools or a partnership. I don't see how we can then be saying that we are effective in that. If I go back clusters, at our cluster we are still at the stage of saying what is the point of us being together and I think we are very close to closing it down because it's just truly dreadful and nobody can actually articulate and take forward anything about what we are doing.

14-19 is better because so much money comes with the thought that you have to be working together that headteachers will try to make it work but there is not genuine collaboration and partnership there because it still is about well I can get this out of it and I can get this for my own school that could be to the detriment of others and I don't think we've really clearly ever allowed ourselves to talk about that. I think the strategy group is too big to do that. I think there is an element of you wouldn't want to talk about it with some of the Officers and people who are involved and, you know, TASS doesn't ever seem to come to it. We get close to it and then we shy away from where we are and it is a very difficult thing because for a true partnership as we keep talking about, you are going to have to be able to call people out and say this is wrong, this is not helping and because of previous histories or whatever, some heads, I think, wouldn't want to do that, or if it looks like it's going to be difficult they then don't come to the meetings.

Does having Academies and Maintained Schools make any difference to what you have just described? Is that one of the key factors in a lack of, maybe, trust between institutions or a lack of willingness to really enter into a true partnership as you have described, or are there other factors and actually Academy status is an irrelevance in that?

It's not an irrelevance because it sort of feeds into the nature of the school and it's the bit about the nature of the school and its governance and its leadership that will enable people to be more outward looking or not. I don't particularly get the impression that Academies here are saying we will go it alone on our own, although there are certain elements where you can see that happening. A very clear example that I know a lot about is the Engagement Programme. (name) has its own different centre in which its going to work with students on and it will not send, I think, students on to the Engagement Programme because it believes it has somewhere better. It is willing to open that to other schools within reason, part of that is numbers, and I understand that for capacity, but the costs of it, I think, are prohibitive for ordinary schools whereas, of course, they are being absorbed under the charitable status and the governance of the (name) Trust there. So that makes things a bit more difficult, particularly if you are talking about a partnership where it's all about numbers and actually can you get the funding to work to take twenty percent of our schools out is going to make it very difficult to look at it from that point of view. Could it be worse? I guess it could be, if the Academies decide to go completely on their own for everything. Because of the people who are leading it I suspect that they are not going to be interested in going that route, but if the governors had been very different I think that that might have led to us having more of a difficulty.

And that would be exacerbated with having one sponsor for both Academies, wouldn't it?

Well it would because you've actually there got all the structure already in-built and I know we are talking about a different authority but my experience has also shown that sometimes Academies want to club together even if they've had different sponsors because they feel there is something inherently different about an Academy.

Do you share that view?

No, because they're all schools in the end, they've all got students and actually although they are independent schools there is still an awful lot put on them to be working collaboratively outside and actually sometimes schools leaders want to do that but they find themselves being constrained by their governors who are either suggesting that they work differently because they understand more the model of an Academy, particularly when you've got sponsors who are naturally into education or you've got these bigger Trusts coming through who will see things like economies of scale, one of the very reasons they are setting up several of these or a very different philosophy from what's going through and therefore they would want to carry that on. I think it depends on the philosophy of the leaders and the governors there.

215

One of the Heads when I piloted the questions before I started this, came up with a greater impact on ability to collaborate was from parental perceptions than whether the schools is an Academy or not an Academy, and she said that she wouldn't enter into a partnership with a school where she knew parents did not approve or like that school because she felt it would be detrimental to getting numbers in her own school and perceptions within her own school. So are there other things that you think impact like that, perhaps, on the ability of schools to work collaboratively together, rather than just Academy or Maintained status?

I've certainly seen that work and, as you say, it doesn't matter what the status of the school is, it is about the local perception. I think a lot of it is also about staffing. I think there is an awful lot of snobbery in people's staff rooms and that will lead to genuine collaboration or not, and it was very interesting to come here when the Diploma had already started and look at who was pairing with whom and, if you try to unpick how some of that might occur, it became very clear there was some indirect, 'Well we won't be working with them on it'. I don't think it was a coincidence the two lowest performing schools in the area were working together on the Creative and Media Diploma, for example when there was a Performing Arts who could well have been brought into that but for whatever reason, and I don't think really geographically, that that had come through however you don't want to unpick things too far when you come into post. But that for me, for example, I think was really very clear about what's going on and I don't think that would be parental perception because there was no way at that point parents would have been thought about.

Exactly.

So I think that's an issue and whether it's staff room as in the general staff room or whether it's through talking to the leadership I think that is certainly something to be concerned about. And there is, I think, in the end when you start getting these lead schools, these lead schools believe that they know better and whether that then leads to indirectly some sort of discrimination about 'Well we're the lead schools so therefore what we are saying goes, our planning works, other people's planning doesn't.' We sent somebody for a term and a half to go and do some of the planning, none of their work has appeared in the eventual Diploma. If their work isn't good enough then we should have been told back on that one, but actually what's coming forward to us is that actually it just seems to have got missing because the lead school has somebody else change over, that work went and somebody else is in charge and they are starting from scratch, more scrabbling around, which just seems to be a waste. That could be just one single example, but it seems to me that's the concern that we might have and because people don't get together sufficiently, or if they do no hardened decisions are made, we just seem to have people bumping along trying to get things together more than a better, harder nosed evaluation for these Diplomas.

216

Which brings us back to what we talked about. The equality of partnerships within a partnership.

Indeed. Little things about equality is also, I think, a more general perception about education and what education is like. You talked about, let's say for example, (name) don't want to send people across to here because there is a perception that (name) students and (name) students don't mix. That's possibly true. What that happens is that's coming out of something that might happen at weekends or whatever, where you get these difficulties or fights and then it's 'oh can we bring someone over' not understanding that you don't drop them off in (name) or letting them loose or having a school event but we have had some difficulties around that with the Engagement Programme. Some schools are very willing to work with us and say that's nonsense we're going to put in support we're going to put in help to ensure that you will come over and others are saying 'Oh no our children don't travel too well, could we have an alternative venue. We like what's being done but we'd just like it on our own site or we'd like it on a site that's closer to us or a more neutral site. And I think that's a difficulty that might come through with some of those things, so that's just about how genuinely people are perceived as moving around and I think students and parents are genuinely distrustful of that because there's not that one idea about it's education and I don't think really any Diploma champions have been out there sufficiently.

Is that something to do with the make-up of this authority in your experience from other authorities? My perception of this authority is that people don't see it as an entity at all. They see themselves as belonging to the various villages, townships, whatever you like to call them, and so is it part of that? I know that when (name) and (name) became (name) before it became an Academy, there was a lot of talk about the fact that there would be tremendous fights between the two those up the hill and those down the hill, none of which transpired, even in (name) which wasn't at the state the (name) is now in. So it's the sort of view within this area, I don't know whether from your experience elsewhere whether that's the same. Do other areas feel themselves more of a whole? Would a London borough feel it in a similar way, do you think?

I've never worked in a London Borough but I worked in a very big authority in (name) when we were looking at how to put Diplomas out and there, of course the geography was far wider. If you're thinking (name) was out of it by then but you were talking about really going as far as (name) and down into (name) and it was how people would try and make those up and it was because it was such an issue I think people started thinking about that and for me, they went out and championed Diplomas far more than I think we've got here. Now whether that's because we've got a person in post that's not being as effective as they might, whether it's individual institutions who are saying 'Well Diplomas are only an extra and we are not really sort of championing them ourselves through our options process or whatever, but it does seem to be an issue that we are not getting people sort of together

working on all of those things. And therefore this idea of what is education, are we still at that old fashioned thing that education is what happens in school and you choose a school and therefore that's where you stay. I am still surprised, and more so here, I think, than in the last three schools I have worked in, is this idea of people saying, 'Well, what are you doing to get my student into work experience?' who is then a 14-15 year old – 'What are you doing getting my child to somewhere else?' if you are offering them an opportunity it's as if they are more mollycoddled here or people are nervous about that moving around. I am not sure there is any more inherent violence or fear of violence in this area but there is a very clear identity 'Oh you know I don't do (name) because I live in (name)', or 'I'm not allowed to go here because I live in (name)' and that I think is very difficult to break down, that series of little communities, but I am not sure that the schools are helping that in any way. And of course we do want to encourage competition between schools because that's quite healthy as well. You've got to have some sort of identity and some sometimes your identity is because you're not the other schools, so it's very difficult to get that balance but we do have to break it down a bit more. The Diploma for us this year works very well because it was being held "in a neutral venue" because it was being held at the college. Now it looks like it's not going to be held at the college next year for our 10's into 11's, it's going to be held at a school. We have now got concerns from our students already on the Diploma, how will this be managed because they feel themselves a minority group.**

OK. Any other hindrances to collaboration, do you think?

I think one of the things it does, it takes a lot of time and that means time actually to have the meetings and for different people at different levels to have meetings. And of course where we've picked up rarely covered that's been an issue for us. But I think actually the time needs to be over time it needs to happen and we need to be pushing these out to all of them but, again, doing it for the right reasons. One of the things coming through is the, 'Well we don't seem to have many people taking up certain aspects of the 14-19 particular Diplomas. Shouldn't we just be putting more and more people on there.' Whereas we should talk about taking the right people onto the courses, having the right courses that are set up for them and I think that is sometimes a difficulty. We are being forced so much to push through on the level 2 courses, that really we have only set our Diplomas up for level 2 courses whereas some of our level 1 students would do really well. The Foundation Learning Diploma could be a saving for that and that's what we are trying to work on and to take through using the Engagement Programme to send through that Foundation Learning. That might help but again it takes a long time and it's going to need a change of perception and that altered perception is, I think, where the longest time takes from staff, students, parents and how you get into all those different areas with the same message, I think, is a problem, we've really not begun to address as a group although individually the champions are trying to work on that.

One of the difficulties we come back to is the size of that initial strategy group.

I worked in an authority that had four times as many secondary schools but the strategy group wasn't as big as the one that we are in at the moment. It is massive because you've got every headteacher that's been invited there, every college leader and a myriad group of Officers, who are not quite sure, sometimes, why they are all there, and 14-19 then just becomes a very general thing that we're putting things into. So you'll have somebody who's going to talk to use about IAG at the same time you have someone talking to us about pre-NEETs and NEETs and all the rest of it. All that is fine but it just becomes a reporting paper back, it's not strategic. I cannot recall really of any questions being asked us about what are we setting, what are we trying to do. So it just becomes a reporting back to with a few people being asked if they will take the lead in looking at things like the figures for money and where they are all being put. But nobody has really said this is what we need to be looking at, why is there a problem with what we've got? The Diplomas have been set up and they are chuntering along, 14-19 other courses have been set up, conversations around transition between college and school we've not really seen anything happening through there and what the offers are and why there is a mis-match in some cases between what schools are doing and what colleges are accepting. And for me, if we were really being strategic, we'd talk a lot more about that and that would inform why we've got a large amount of NEETs or not, but more importantly why we've got a large amount of 17 year olds who are out of everything.

But to have it smaller would require some Heads not to attend and therefore to trust the Heads who do attend to speak on their behalf.

That's where I think we have got a better system in this area than I have seen in some time. OK I have worked in very big authorities but those then get broken down, but the trust that we do put into each other, because we do represent each other on a number of different groups, I think is much higher. Because we meet monthly which is more frequently than, again, I have been used to, you actually do get a lot of reporting back and people, I think, are now at the stage where they actually might pick the phone up to say, this is happening what do you think, or, more likely, email about it. So I don't know that people would be unhappy about that. And certainly we then ask people from those groups to go and represent us on things like the Schools' Forum and that's more important, if you like, because "there's money involved", so therefore if people are willing to do that, I think you're willing to do the 14-19 and actually because a lot of us don't attend every meeting we are more or less saying that in effect anyway. Actually you're going and I'll expect you to represent my views. Or you will have the same views as me so I'm happy not to go because I know that other people will be there.

Have you been part of a School Collaborative elsewhere and if you have, what were the key factors that made it effective?

When I was in (name) I was part of a group that set up the Excellence in Cities cluster. What made it effective there was that there were a few people with a very clear aim about what we wanted to do and we were able, because we were the lead school, with the LA to pick our partners and then add a few more that geographically or for different reasons made it imperative that they came with us. The good thing about that then was, of course, people had a like mind and wanted to improve. Another major factor was it brought seven million pounds so therefore people wanted the money they had to come along with it as well. It was a small group from the point of view of writing the bid. That was good because it meant that you didn't go out to consultation a great deal and waste a lot of time talking about things. The difficulty was it then became consolidated in three schools and, if you like, that then became the inner group and people felt that we were, as an inner group, having more chances to influence where we were. The difficulty was that was predicated on the two secondary schools who, of course, the Excellence in Cities was set up to do, then primary schools joined very much as junior partners and they really felt that. And that's where it became clear to me about that idea, ok even if the institutions have imposed on them a different status, you don't have to work like that, and you don't have to have a secondary school who's given the lion share of the money, saying therefore we are more important than you. And actually the way in which you saw something, and I was only a deputy Head then, but the way in which you say the headteachers work, either showed that they had a genuine collaborative belief in this, and that just because they were from a small school in size and just because they were "infants" or "junior" schools didn't mean to say that they had any less input and any less validity in being part of that partnership. And actually where it worked well was the secondary schools deliberately deciding to take a back step in some of these things, because either primaries were working better or they had a greater need. So therefore things like, learning mentors, more of them went into primary than notionally should have done because the idea was that once they got it right in primary we wouldn't have such problems in secondary. Or transition, the transition mentors would spend more time in primary than secondary rather than vice versa. That worked really well. But I do think geography does help as well. Because I think you have a clear idea about groups. And the other thing that worked on that was this idea that it wasn't just what goes on in school it was about the wider area. So although I might get very frustrated about extended services and what extended services might mean, it was clear that the successes that were coming through were quite often around those, if people would link into your project as well. So your project doesn't stand in isolation. The service surrounded it. And I think education has moved on since then as I'm talking about 2002/2003. But it is that idea that there is a general broad thinking about where you want to try and get to and Social Services pick that up, Housing picks that up, even though Education might be driving

it and pulling in some of those people, again the early adopters had some use. It got stuck in a couple of areas but things like Health were much more pro working together and you could see some improvements going through.

So the impact for pupils?

Well the impact was, the indicators started off and the social ones came first, things like reduced exclusions, slightly improved behaviour, some families who, we used to use the phrase 'educational tourists' who used to walk through a primary school and move to another one.   There was an agreement that there would be a blanket approach to certain things, certain behaviours, etc, so that schools couldn't then be played off one against another, and certainly some families really found themselves getting pinned to actually, you know, this is your thing, and you've got to improve this, but they were also given the learning mentors to help them with that, so you did see some improvements coming through. There were some key families in the area who were helped a great deal with their younger students where more or less we thought we'd lost the older students and that brought some of them back. Improvements from the point of Key Stage 2 results did begin to improve. What we didn't see was it really coming into Key Stage 4, particularly, now some of that is probably over time, because that was again the lost years, but we were able to put in some more targeted resource into Key Stage 4 that probably kept some students in education.   Didn't necessarily translate into results but probably translated to them being present and attendance improved, if nothing else.   After that, what was coming through should have been an increase in improvement and certainly thinking back to a couple of years ago I saw some results were slightly higher than you might have expected, whether that was only Excellence in Cities I don't think you could necessarily say. But the other thing was a greater understanding about primary/secondary and actually working within (name) what it was like and the difficulties and a clear view about headship, I think, and leadership. And that's the other good thing, it did allow people to work together in different ways at lower levels because you had the Gifted and Talented group that I initially led on, and then somebody else took over from me so they could actually start activities and not just looking at them in isolation within little classes.

That brings me very neatly into my last question. What in your view needs to happen in this authority to ensure effective collaboration, particularly around the 14-19. One of the things that my reading has pointed out for collaborations is the importance of leadership and you've just talked about leadership, and the fact that it any collaboration of this kind needs to be well and effectively led by whoever. You've mentioned in this authority the 14-19 strategic partnership is chaired, perhaps dominated by Officers. Do you feel that is the right vehicle for leadership of 14-19? Should it be from an educational institution? Should it be from a Head? Would there be any difficulty with a Head taking on, can other very successful Heads equally accept another Head who may or may not be as successful in

terms of the rankings in a league table, being the driver? That may not be what you feel there needs to happen here, it's just in my head.

It's very difficult, isn't it? First of all, what do we need to make sure is happening here if we are going to get 14-19 working well, is we need a really clearly articulated view of what actually 14-19 could do and actually we need then all to sign up to it, because I don't think we've got that idea, I think we've got, as I say, these different things that are going on that might link together and they might not link together and there is an outcome. But I don't think we've got 'this is where we want to be' other than the LA RAG-rated thing, so there is that 'oh look this is now how we're doing, some of these indicators are two years old but that gives red not green', so there's that and it seems to me that's more or less what we're aiming to do rather than to look at actually what our students are, what the needs are and how we can get those through. And then some of that will be told us because we will then have decreased NEET figures, we'll have increased attendance, or whatever. So I don't know that we've got that clear idea. I don't see how that links in to the businesses in the local area and the universities and all the rest of it. I think that bit is missing. And again that's about transition again. So I don't think we've got a clear idea about students have got coming into the 14-19 bit, what the particular problems are, where the cohorts are working out, where the tensions are and what we need to develop. I don't even see that we've got anybody going out to do some of that. Now you might say that as a strategic group we are then tasking or we're expecting the Officers to do some of that. The Officers seem to have their own jobs and it doesn't seem to link back. Now maybe that was all done two or three years ago before I came but there's never been anywhere that I could read any of that and I've asked to see some of the previous stuff coming through and certainly sitting at these places I don't get the idea that's what's happening. So it gets to be, 'well we've been given this money what shall we do with that?' We've got this sort of pre-NEET project going on because we think that will help but we don't ever tie it into what pre-NEETs will then go into at Key Stage 4 and where it will go on to after that. Connexions seem to be mentioned around the area but we don't have anything again about how they're working to develop what we've got in place or where we need to take it next.

So I think that's got to be a much clearer view about what is education for in this authority. What does it need to tackle and then to be dialled back into the strategic group and/or the delivery group. And actually maybe the delivery group as got a closer, better view about what needs to happen because they're on the ground more. We don't really ever get any feedback from that except when it comes back to us in schools and then we take it forward as headteachers.

How to change that agenda? Could be about the leadership. You know, effectively what people are talking about at the moment is who should chair that meeting. Well chairing a meeting does not mean to say that you are

leading on the something. My worry about it being a headteacher is that you've got so much to be doing in your own school have you got the time if you are really going to lead on it to be the effective leader. I wouldn't have and I know when we were concerned about who was leading it and they talked about the deputy chair of TASS, that would mean me because I take over next year, for my sins, but there's a problem with that because I wouldn't have time to go off to spend all my time talking with (name) and talking with the others about where we're going to be. I think that should be a leader's, or one of the Officers' job. After all, that's in their title. But it's got to be a bit more than just working on what they think the agenda is. It's about taking the agenda back to people, and wider.

I think headteachers might have a problem about it being somebody who isn't as good because they are identifying a person with institution with results, but I think there is less of that. I think there may be a few where that might be, and it's not necessarily the old guard but I think genuinely people around the tables are recognising either that there but for the grace of God go I, in some cases, I was there when we were in Special Measures and I don't think anyone thought (name) can't be any good because she / he's in Special Measures because some people knew they might be in Special Measures or very close to it or National Challenge or whatever, and other people recognised that there is a cyclical thing, you know, (name) was the worst school here, I understand, some time ago. It's now clearly not but therefore you should be looking at that and saying these are people who are professionals. You get your own judgements out of what you think about individuals and that might cloud issues, but that always does. I don't think a headteacher couldn't do the job, I think it would just have to be one that's got an awful lot of time to give for that. I don't know if there's anyone here at the moment who might think that, possibly because some people give a lot of time for other things.

Would an independent person be a useful vehicle for a chair? In my head it's somebody who's got the time. It feels as if you are describing that there are two parallel lines at the moment for 14-19. There is one which is principally Officer driven which produces plans in order for us to get the RAG rating and there are schools who are working for their own, rightly, pupils and seeing where they can link with others to increase the impact and the benefit and sometimes those two aims match the plan and sometimes they don't, but they seem to be quite parallel. It seems as if the plan has been written with a view to the RAG as opposed to what does Thurrock want for its young people.

Yes I think you're right about that. Could an independent person do it? Well it depends on independent from what. I mean, independent from the area, no. I think that's part of the issue. If you don't know the area, and we have got a number of people who don't live in the area or who have come or are interim, interim, interim and that I think exacerbates the problem. I think you've got to have somebody who is on the ground, who knows the problem, knows also the people but actually can say, 'this needs to happen

more' and can pull together and pull back in some cases, people who are going off on different directions and say, 'ok does this work?' and make some of that communication happen. But it is not communication as in 'well can you just send a paper round', because loads of that happens. People either don't read it or you don't really understand what they're trying to get at. But actually can you communicate back to 'this is why we are doing it because these are the ends we want out of it' and then have somebody who is doing some independent evaluation and moderation. And I think if they are able to do that because they are not so linked in with one of those two institutions, that might happen but they would have to be incredibly detailed in what they are trying to do, and also in the amount of time they would give. And at that point you stop being independent because you become, if you like, like an Officer that's coming through.

Which ought to be what the 14-19 team are doing.

Yes. And I suppose the difficulty there is the 14-19 team seem to have things added and added and added. If you are talking about where one of the really important key drivers are coming through to make changes, it seems that 14-19 are accruing more and more responsibilities or accountabilities whether they are accruing the resources with it or whether it is just being concentrated in the hands of a few who have got a lot to do and therefore things might fall through, I am not so sure about. I do worry though, that 14-19 as a team will in the end become by in de facto the LA, particularly as the commissioning bit comes through.

Yes and with the public spending cuts that we are told about and with this authority's financial state, there won't be many people left at all.

No, but this sounds a bit different because it's you and where you are, but actually taking that post and putting half of it into the person who was 14-19 just in effect makes that a more important thing, but then takes 14-19 to be the school improvement part of it. Well it will be interesting to see how Key Stage 2 and 1 and the Early Years fits into "14-19" and where the struggle will happen. It might actually mean that 14-19 stops being so powerful because the recognition is it comes somewhere else, but in education we have this terrible thing, don't we, that we always think secondary schools are more important than primary and clearly that is where the primary and junior heads are feeling at the moment, that it's all going one way and they're losing out but they're being squashed a little bit more.

Anything else about 14-19 operations here or Academies and Maintained Schools here that you feel you haven't mentioned that would be helpful to me?

I think it is about genuine philosophy and I think there are two things. There is the philosophy of the school and the people who lead it and there's that bigger philosophy around and about what we think education is. I think you can either avoid that or you can work together for that. But you've got to
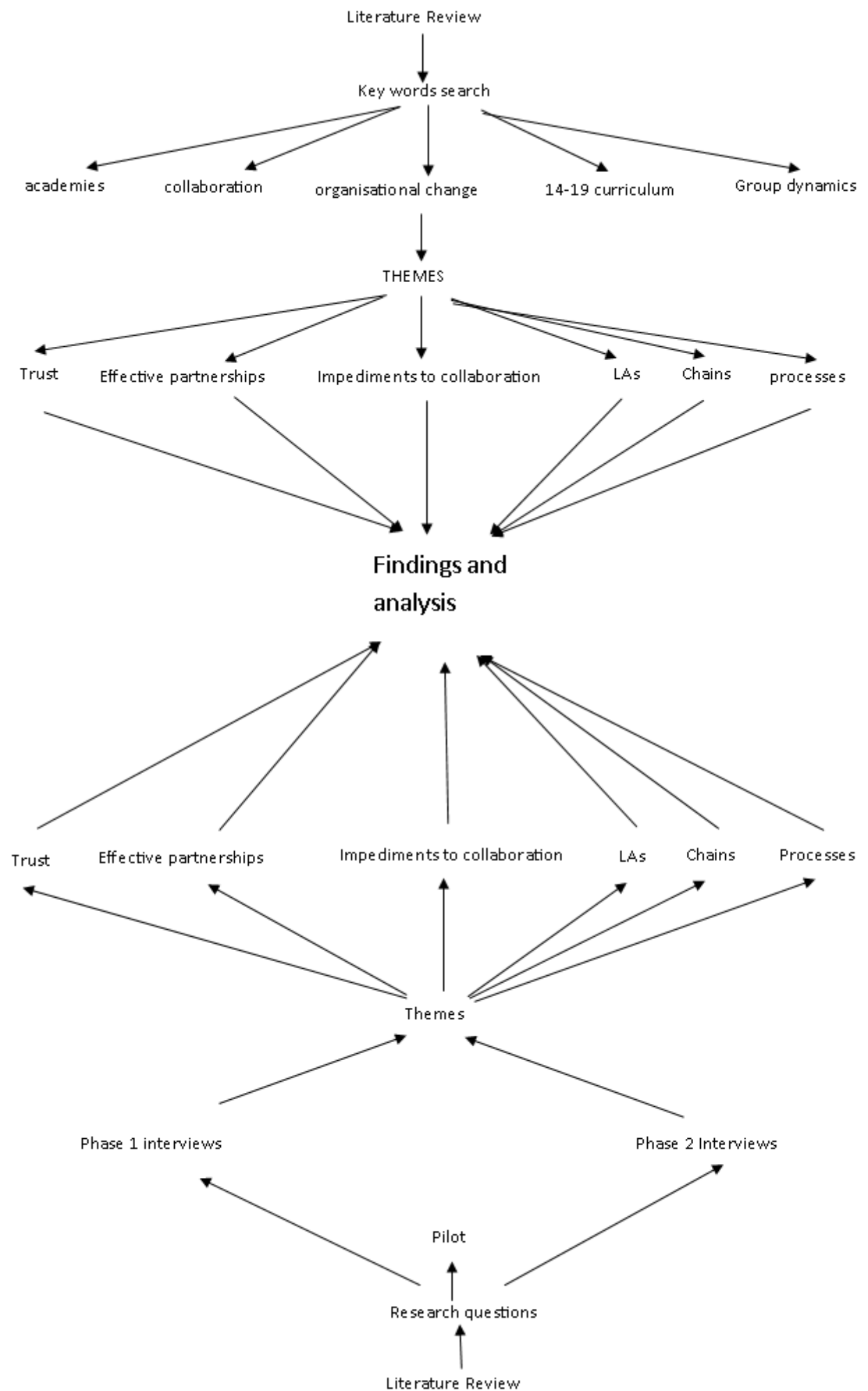
have the vehicles to do that. I think we are slowly getting to the stage now where we've got that recognition that unless you are pulling together and you've got somebody who's got an idea about where education ought to go in this area, we're never going to get any further. At the moment I think that idea of pulling together is working quite well because I think the Academies see they can gain out of this because we are at such a low level of co-operation and collaboration here and that we will all benefit by having those partnerships. So I think we are all at the easy stage of partnerships. I think in order to move us on to the next stage is where you are going to need, and this is hard in the political atmosphere we're in, but we need someone who is going to say, 'actually the easy stage isn't good enough for you to move on further with that' and that's where I think the LA has to take some sort of direction and I feel at the moment we haven't got that happening. Whether it's a can't or won't or hasn't realised it, I'm not quite sure about.

Thank you very much. When I have done all of my interviews if there are things that have come up in others that I would like to check back with you on, as we haven't covered it as you're the first one, can I come back to you?

Sure.

Thank you.

APPENDIX 4: Analysis of Literature and Findings by Theme

Literature Review

Key words search

academies   collaboration   organisational change   14-19 curriculum   Group dynamics

THEMES

Trust   Effective partnerships   Impediments to collaboration   LAs   Chains   processes

Findings and
analysis

Trust   Effective partnerships   Impediments to collaboration   LAs   Chains   Processes

Themes

Phase 1 interviews   Phase 2 Interviews

Pilot

Research questions

Literature Review

Literature Review Analysis by Themes (1)

Lit. source	Trust	Time	Clear vision	Leadership
	Glatter et al, 2005, What's New Identifying Innovation arising from school collaboration initiatives. **James et al** 2006, Lessons from successful schools in disadvantaged areas **Rutherford and Jackson** 2006 Setting up school partnerships. **Stoll et al** 2006, Professional learning communities a review of literature. **Glatter** 2003, Collaboration Collaboration Collaboration. **Connolly and James** 2006, Collaboration for school improvement. **Nias et al** 1989, Staff relationships in the primary school. **Hord** 2004, Professional learning communities. **Louis et al** 1995, Professionalism and communities. **Woods et al** 2003, Pathfinding and Diversity. **Westheimer** 1999, Communities and consequences. **Bryk and Schneider** 2002, Trust in School. **West-Burnham and Otero** 2004, Seminar series. **Arnold** 2006, Schools in Collaboration. **Bennett and Anderson** 2002, School-Lea partnerships. **Dasgupta** 1988 Trust as a commodity. **Bigley and Pearce** 1998, Problems of Trust and Distrust. **Coulson** 1998, Trust and contract in public sector management. **Covey** 2006, The speed of Trust. **Bennett et al** 2004	**Glatter et al**, 2005, What's New Identifying Innovation arising from school collaboration initiatives. **Rutherford and Jackson** 2006 Setting up school partnerships. **Stoll et al** 2006, Professional learning communities a review of literature. **Glatter** 2003, Collaboration Collaboration Collaboration. **Louis et al** 1995, Professionalism and communities. **Thompson** 2001, Can things only get better? **Elmore** 1996, Getting to grips with good educational practice.	**Glatter et al,** 2005, What's New Identifying Innovation arising from school **Rutherford and Jackson** 2006 Setting up school partnerships. collaboration initiatives. **Stoll et al** 2006, Professional learning communities a review of literature. **Connolly and James** 2006, Collaboration for school improvement. **Rudd** 2003, Partnership approaches to sharing best practice. **McMillan** 2004, Complexity, Organisation and Change. **DfES** 2003, A new specialist system. **DfES** 2004, 5 year strategy for children and learners. **Cribb** 2009, Working better together. **Day et al** 2003, Network learning in practice. **Hall and Wallace** 1993, Collaboration as a subversive activity. **Stoll and Fink** 1996, Changing our schools. **DfEE** 1997 Excellence in schools. **Glatter** 2003, Collaboration Collaboration	**Coleman** 201, Towards a blended model of leadership for school-based collaborations. **Stoll et al** 2006, Professional learning communities a review of literature. **James et al** 2006, Lessons from successful schools in disadvantaged areas **Glatter** 2003, Collaboration Collaboration Collaboration. **Hodgson and Spours** 2006, From weak to strong collaboratives **Hodgson and Spours** 2007, Nuffield 14-19 **Hatcher** 2008, Academies and diplomas. **Moore and Kelly** 2009, Networks as power bases for school improvement. **Huxman and Vangen** 2005, Managing to Collaborate **PriceWaterhouseCooper** 2003-8 1-5 Academy Evaluation reports **PriceWaterhouseCooper** 2001, Academies: researching into the leadership of sponsored and converting academies. **Ofsted** Annual Report 2007. **Butt and Jackson** 2007 Modernising schools. **Hargreaves** 2004, Working laterally. **Wallace** 1996 A crisis of identity. **Boccia et al** 2000, Partnership success in urban schools **Spillane** 2005, Distributed leadership. **Bennett et al** 2004 Control autonomy and partnership in local education. **Harris** 2003, Teacher leadership as distributed leadership. **Gibb** 1958, An

Control autonomy and partnership in local education.		Collaboration. **Evans et al** 2005, Collaboration: the big new idea for school improvement	international view of the emergence of leadership. **Gronn** 2000 Distributed properties. **Crowther** 2001, Teachers as leaders. **Harris** 2004 Distributed leadership and school improvement

Literature Review Analysis by Themes (2)

Lit source	Impediments to collaboration	Structures / processes	Academy / maintained working	Role of LA
	Stoll et al 2006, Professional learning communities a review of literature. **Glatter** 2003, Collaboration Collaboration Collaboration. **Hodgson and Spours** 2006, From weak to strong collaboratives **Hodgson and Spours** 2007, Nuffield 14-19 **Connolly and James** 2006, Collaboration for school improvement. **Atkinson et al** 2007, Inter-school collaboration. **Cribb** 2009, Working Better Together. **Wallace** 1998, A Counter-policy to subvert education reform?	**Hall and Oldroyd** 1992, Development activities for managers of collaborations. **Stoll et al** 2006, Professional learning communities a review of literature. **Glatter** 2003, Collaboration Collaboration Collaboration. **Hodgson and Spours** 2006, From weak to strong collaboratives **Davies and Hentschke** 2006, Public Private partnership in education **Hodgson and Spours** 2007, Nuffield 14-19 **Hatcher** 2008, Academies and diplomas. **Connolly and James** 2006, Collaboration for school improvement. **Rhodes** 2011 Mentoring and Coaching for leadership development in schools **Ainscow et al** 2006, Using collaboration as a strategy for improving schools in complex and challenging circumstances. **Tuckman and Jensen** 1977, Stages of small group development revisited. **Hutchinson and Campbell** 1998, Working in partnership. **McMillan** 2004 Complexity,	**Hodgson and Spours** 2007, Nuffield 14-19 **Hatcher** 2008, Academies and diplomas. **PriceWaterhouseCooper** 2003-8 1-5 Academy Evaluation reports **PriceWaterhouseCooper,** 2001, Academies: researching into the leadership of sponsored and converting academies. **Astle and Ryan** 2008, Academies and the future of state education. **Larsen et al** 2011, What works? **Curtis et al** 2008, The academies programme. **Burroughs** 2005, The privatisation of the State Education sector.	**Davies and Hentschke** 2006, Public Private partnership in education **Bennett et al** 2004, Control autonomy and partnership in LAs. **Hodgson and Spours** 2007, Nuffield 14-19 **Hatcher** 2008, Academies and diplomas. **Connolly and James** 2006, Collaboration for school improvement. **Wallace** 2000, Integrating cultural and political perspectives. **PriceWaterhouseCooper** 2003-8 1-5 Academy Evaluation reports

| | | organisation and change. **Hargreaves** 2003, From improvement to transformation. **Elmore** 1996, getting to grips with good educational practice. **Glatter et al** 2005, What's New? **Hopkins** 2001, School improvement for real. **Newman and Wehlage** 1995, Successful school restructuring. **Martin and Frost** 1996, The organisational culture war games. **Drennan** 1992, Transforming company culture. **Schein** 1985, Organisational Culture and leadership. **Louis et al** 1995, Professionalism and communities. | | |

Literature Review Analysis by Themes (3)

Literature source	14-19 development	Parental perceptions	Quality assurance
	DfES 2005a, 14-19 Education and Skills white paper. **DfES** 2005b, 14-19 Implementation Plan **Stoll et al** 2006, Professional learning communities a review of literature. **Hodgson and Spours** 2007, Nuffield 14-19 **Hatcher** 2008, Academies and diplomas **Hodgson and Spours** 2006, From weak to strong collaboratives **Lumby and Foskett** 2005, 14-19 education. **Glatter** 2003, Collaboration Collaboration Collaboration. **DfES** 2007 The Children's Plan **DCSF** 2008 Delivering 14-19 Reform. **Pring et al** 2009, Education for all	**James et al** 2006, Lessons from successful schools in disadvantaged areas **Glatter** 2003, Collaboration Collaboration Collaboration **Hodgson and Spours** 2006, From weak to strong collaboratives **Hodgson and Spours** 2007, Nuffield 14-19 **Stoll and Fink** 1996, Changing our schools. **Adonis** 2008, academies and the future of state education	**Glatter et al** 2005, What's new? Identifying innovation arising from school collaboration initiatives. **Hodgson and Spours** 2006, From weak to strong collaboratives **DfES** 2005a, 14-19 Education and Skills white paper. **DfES** 2005b, 14-19 Implementation Plan. **Buchanan and Huczynski** 2004 Organisational behaviour

Phase 1 Interview analysis by Theme (1)

	Trust / Honesty	Leadership	Clear vision	Time
Phase 1 Int. 1 F			I think that what we don't have is a clarity of what we want from collaborative working	
Phase 1 Int. 2 A (C) Type 1	We did a lot of talking together so the relationship has become quite close. There has been an environment of competition which has been a barrier to effective collaboration – a lack of trust. There is no real debate which would help form us more tightly into a real group entity.	The strategic group is very big and maybe that is why there isn't the discussion on what we want our vision to be at meetings. Mainly information sharing – no real debate	I believe the focus here needs to be on developing a clear strategy. We need to develop a greater clarity about raising standards.	
Phase 1 Int. 3 F	The protocols have to be in place when trust and confidence are there. And I do think a level of transparency, openness, sharing, quality time given to that, well facilitated, that indicates the travel, direction, pace and protocols that are going to lead to the outcomes we are all seeking. Partnerships have to be built, be resilient and it's not just about personalities, it's about the principles on which it is based. The resilience wasn't there, the trust wasn't there, the depth or protocols weren't there in order for us to have got through the challenge. You learn about trust, don't you, you learn about whether the person's word is what they actually do, and when it comes to some difficulty as to whether or not they are straight with you or not.	Unless there is high quality leadership that is consistent, you are never going to have that clarity of vision, clarity of partnership, clarity of relationships that build the trust and confidence which is vital. It's not only leadership; it's about being able to facilitate the collaborations. Delegation needs to be clear.	You have to have clarity about outcomes. It has to have a sense of purpose, direction and an outcome that meets the agenda of all the people involved. Unless there is high quality leadership that is consistent and lasts longer than the time of the 6 months of any interim director, you are never going to have the clarity of vision, the clarity of partnership, clarity of relationships that build the trust and confidence that is vital. You have got to feel ownership of it if you are going to feel the commitment and the drive to the standards agenda that is implicit within it.	The academy's development was at an embryonic stage and it wasn't ready for the partnership that it was engaging in
Phase 1 Int. 4 F	The first principle has to be addressed in my view that that is that there is a need to collaborate or co-operate or work in	I think what some might refer to as a lack of leadership, is a lack of a conductor of the orchestra. What's needed here is	You have to have clearly from the outset, there is a need for the collaboration, as I said there has to be a need and that need is	

	partnership. So although there is good discussion, good debate etc., the focus in my view should be what's taking place within the organisations first and to significantly improve schools from within.	not a leader but a facilitator and I think in the absence of a facilitator, individuals within the authority have come in and assumed leadership roles. I think where the opportunity is being missed here is the identification of the need for the style of leadership or the nature of leadership that's required to get headteachers to discuss and debate openly on key issues, which in my view is the role of a skilled facilitator.	encapsulated in what the desired outcomes are. It's very much the case of here is the vision, this is what we want in this year, next year, two years, three years time whatever its going to be, and this is the management structure, and the involvement of outsiders and key stakeholders that I wish to use for that and if its mutually beneficial then great. There has to be a vision of 14-19 provision within XX and a formation of that vision in the first instance. A subsequent debate to get people to sign up to that vision, than an agreement as to how that vision is going to be realised and mechanisms put in place by which that can happen.	
Phase 1 Int. 5 A (C) Type 2	As much as a lack of trust, there is a fearfulness. I think there's a need for self-preservation.			
Phase 1 Int. 6 F	They had already built up the relationships and the trust so that when contentious issues came along they had something in the emotional bank account Are we really working in partnership, are we really getting more than we would and that should then not only generate more possibilities, but help identify the plan and activities. That way you have a greater chance to have a wider range of outcomes and deeper outcomes for a wider range of children. It's not just about turning up, it is actually about building the relationship. Looking at the possibilities, it is about actually testing	So there is something about the quality of the chair and that also means that then if you have got someone like that particularly coming from an almost independent standpoint, that he is then also able to hold officers to account	Schools are having to get better and we are going to have to get better still are actually saying what partnerships we are going to belong to and how we set them up so that, for example, with you agreed definition for that almost to be the start of the conversation. There has to be some really clear thinking around the effectiveness and the outcomes of that. There was always that overarching structure and sort of raison d'être for actually being involved in it.	I was asked to join and when I first saw the paperwork I nearly gave up but I thought 'no', if I was going to do this I'm doing it properly. But I had to make a conscious decision, because I thought if I am going to invest this time in reading, as well as going, I've got to make this work. When people are originally starting out on those partnership,

	yourself, holding yourself to account.			there actually needs to be an openness around actually it is going to take time and effort and commitment.
Phase 1 Int. 7 F	The whole thing revolves around trust and for me that's the key thing whether the people you are working with you are able to trust and get on with. But if people are honest about where their school is and what their school can do and so on, then we can make real progress but until they break that barrier and until people are prepared to say the other bit, you know, it shouldn't be a problem but it is. A head said, 'in the spirit of openness I need to say so and so' and I'm thinking 'sorry?' because that now says to me that we are not open with each other around this table. We have these surface interactions where we can agree that we will do certain things but when it comes to the absolute crunch that affects finance, something like that, everybody fights their own corner and the collaboration doesn't really exist. I try to be very honest about what I say and despite the fact that I open my mouth a lot, I try to be only saying things when I am pretty sure of where I am standing with it. When it comes to something which is a crunch issue everybody either sweeps it under the carpet or just leaves it under the carpet and never looks at what's going on because it's all a bit		I think it's about shared goals and that everybody in the collaboration is prepared to put themselves out to make sure that shared goals are achieved. We really tried hard to do that in the XX Cluster but people really tried to put themselves out to try and make sure it happened. There needs to be a vision, there needs to be, sorry, an agreed vision of what 14-19 will look like in XX in five, ten years. I don't think we ever had that.	

	too. So I keep coming back to this thing about trust and then sitting there and saying OK so we are going to achieve x, y and z and be clear about what you are doing, you are not just kind of meeting up for the sake of meeting up. I think I went through a phase where I thought I did trust most of XX heads, I'm now going through a phase where I think I don't, because we are reaching a point where there is an awful lot at stake in this borough.			
Phase 1 Int. 8 C	I think it is about genuine philosophy and I think there are two things. There is the philosophy of the school and the people who lead it and there's that bigger philosophy about what we think education is. I think you can either avoid that or you can work together for that but you have got to have the vehicles to do that.	So there is no school that is a charity case, there is no school that is so deserving it can't lead on anything in particular. Because we haven't got that agreement, it is very difficult about where we should be as a whole authority or group of schools or partnership. What made it effective there was a few people with a clear aim about what we wanted to do and we were able to put things into action.	It has to be a genuine spirit that is being taken up and can be articulated and then seen in practice to work. I think you also have to have a much clearer idea about how the short term aims or that particular project is fitting longer term into something which is happening across the whole of the borough and by working together, you are all working towards that common aim even if it looks as if you are working very different partnership events.	It takes a lot of time and that means time to actually have the meetings and for different people at different levels to have meetings.
Phase 1 Int. 9 VA	I suppose one of the bottom lines is that sometimes you'll take a little bit of those things on trust if you actually trust the person at the top. So some of it is just personal relationships to be honest. What I would actually like to see is everyone saying 'well I will only talk about my own' but until you have that trust people will do that and I suppose it's chicken and egg.	Heads want strong leadership so long as it's them being the strong leader.		

Phase I Interview Analysis by Themes (2)

	Impediments to collaboration	Structures / Processes	Academy / maintained working	Role of LA
LA1 Int. 1 C	There is always a dilemma if you like between collaboration and competition and I think that's even more obviously true of secondary schools where, whether we like it or not, league tables still have an impact.		It wasn't an issue, it was felt that they were integral members of the range of schools that were offering provision to XX kids, that it was important that they were involved and included in all debates and discussions. XX academy seem at least on the surface to me to have been very up for any collaboration and working together, there has not been any 'we are separate from you'.	I think it's about having the right people in post and I think from a local authority level I think that the person leading on everything needs to have the respect and credibility, and I don't think they have
LA1 Int. 2 A (C) Type 1	League tables do not give parents the best evidence for their child but until they are abolished they will continue to be the main factor individual schools will be fighting for.	We could also do more to support each other. We do not have a mechanism where this is done routinely and without the recipient school feeling blamed for needing to ask.	Certainly don't feel we are treated differently. Collaboration is also difficult here as there are tensions arising from misconceptions about academy status e.g. they are awash with money.	Academies have more freedom to innovate which could be an advantage to the LA if they were prepared to work with us. We want to work with the LA so that we are part of the whole offer in the area. I don't see us as working outside the LA provision. Greater stability within the LA – a director who stays for a reasonable length of time and makes clear the LA's perspective on 14-19.
LA1 Int. 3 F		I think the word partnership and collaboration are used as though there is very little difference between the terminology. I do think that some of the work I'm doing feels to me like partnership because I am getting benefits and other partners are getting benefits and people are coming together willingly to engage because they feel its	I recall that we did have a discussion about whether we wanted academy principals or not and we decided that the network is more important than whether we agree of not with academies. The academy's development was at an embryonic stage and it wasn't ready for the partnership that it was engaging in.	The biggest mistake the LA made was to chair the delivery group and take it out of the hands of the deputies. The most successful aspect of any organisation in terms of it running is if the person is doing a function understands what their

		meeting an agenda or a need that is of a high priority to them. It has to have a sense of purpose, direction and outcome that meets the agenda of all of the people involved. How do you manage the partnership so that the other two schools feel in partnership and are of equal status?		function is and understands how it is going to be quality assured and understands what the outcomes they have to achieve in order to be successful as part of a bigger organisation, that seems to be lacking in the LA.
LA1 Int. 4 F		I don't think it can be imposed from above; it has to be generated from within the stakeholders themselves. One institution would have a number of partners and collaboratives depending on whichever the individual issue is. There are clear advantages, it could be economies of scale, it could be because of the expertise, it could be because of the context in which both operate. What cannot happen what does not happen is the fact that a central organisation tries to promote partnership for reasons which to them seem sensible because they are charged to get schools to work together for example and yet to the individual stakeholders doesn't make sense. It's obvious in partnership arrangements there is always some sort of benefit but at times it can be a 90/10 per cent benefit. That's when moral obligation comes into it, moral purpose comes into it. I think true and	I don't think there was any protracted debate. The view was that being such a small authority we didn't want any exclusion and it was important for us therefore if we were going to continue to work together and collaborate we needed the academies to be part of that collaboration. To give full credit to the academy principal, he has made it perfectly clear on umpteen occasions that he wishes the academy to be fully involved in collaboration partnership debate and working alongside other schools in XX.	The agenda is determined by the LA, the LA is clearly under some sort of pressure to tick a host of different boxes.

		meaningful collaboration, partnership working has to be organic, in other words it has to start small and work up. Partnership working gives staff enormous experience, huge experience expansive experience.		
LA1 Int. 5 A (C) Type 2	People don't tend to let go of too much that might help too much because ultimately this is a league table race and we can't get away from that that.	All secondary schools here have essentially comprehensive schools not like some LAs which help in partnership working. LIG was one of the best collaboratives I've seen because we put on the agenda one thing which was school improvement and everyone wanted to contribute and I would come away from LIG brimming with fresh ideas, new ideas. I think we get better collaborative work in pairs where people support each other	When we were going through the consultation process to become an academy, part of the consultation involved going to the heads meeting and asking for their opinion. They felt that the academy shouldn't disenfranchise itself and it is really important that whoever should be the academy principal should attend TASS meetings. Yearning too strong a word but a very strong feeling that it's important for academies to remain within the local secondary heads arena. Academies in families such as XX have the opportunity to support common CPD – moving bright staff around to develop their skills. I sense a friction. I think perhaps what it is, it's such a contentious area in terms of the fact it's a bit like, you know, the gold rush that people want to be the first ones in.	
LA1 Int. 6 F		Your agreed definition should be the start of the conversation. If it's a false relationship, the development is not going to happen, but if it's just about being excited about a particular idea it may not also give you the broad outcomes you could have possibly enjoyed. I think going back to that is actually the test, is it adding	I think it helped that it was already an established group and people belonged to it and so when the first academy came along there was a discussion about whether that relationship was to continue and it was felt very much in everybody's interest that they were.	

		something to what we already have. Is the whole greater than the individual parts? Do we want to work so that we are multiplying so that everything we do we get more back, that means it's more likely to be successful, it's more likely to be sustainable.		
LA1 Int. 7 F	There would be an easy way to extend collaboration and that would be just take out league tables and say to people, 'Ok, this group of heads are responsible jointly for the performance of this group of schools'. People have to make sure that the base they are operating from is secure and you can only risk a certain amount of collaboration if your job is on the line.	I don't know whether I am talking about storming, norming, performing and all that, I don't know whether that's where I'm really at, but if I am, I'm saying we've probably in XX in collaborative groups never got into the storming in a way that we should in order to come out the other side and be performing.	The group already existed, the heads which became academies were already part of the group and nobody took any steps to remove them so it's continued. I'm not sure how conscious the decision was, we just assumed that all schools in XX ought to be able to work together and to co-operate. I think we are now operating in a climate where that school, having become an academy, is operating to its own benefits and sod everybody else and frankly therefore what we might have invested whether it be emotionally or teacher time or whatever, hasn't really had pay back	The people who are in post as having responsibility for some aspects of 14-19 got no drive, no ambition except on paper, but they don't make things happen
LA1 Int. 8 C		You would have genuine partnership even if somebody was taking a leading role in something because they've got the capacity, they've got the expertise, but there isn't ever a minority partner who is only getting second bite of the cherry or something. We get close to it and then we shy away from where we are and it's a very difficult thing because for a true partnership as we keep talking about, you are going to have to be able to call people out and say this is wrong, this	Before I came, but I understand that it was discussed in detail and certainly ever since I've been there the academies have been represented.	I think we need someone who is going to say, 'actually the easy stage isn't good enough for you to move on further with that' and that's where I think the LA has to take some direction and I feel at the moment we haven't got that happening, Whether it's a can't or won't or hasn't realised it, I'm not quite sure about.

238

		is not helping.		
LA1 Int. 9 VA	I think heads are passionate about their own institution and therefore they are passionate about defending their own institution. The biggest thing would be my perception of that school; you know if I didn't think it was going to be a good deal I wouldn't be sending my pupils there. You know what I mean is, is their ethos going to match my ethos.	Specialist college collaboration was quite one-sided because we did all the giving and they had all the getting. If you talk about deeper collaboration it has to be where each partner is prepared to give up some of its benefits for the good of the whole. I would say schools go into collaboration for the benefit of them inevitably but deeper collaboration would be where you give up some of your benefit for the good of the whole. It's got to be of benefit to be otherwise how am I going to tell my governors.	I have a feeling that the academies have observer status, if we ever vote (which we don't) but I'm not sure. I don't think the problem is where the academies are there or not	

Phase 1 Interview Analysis by Themes (3)

	14-19 development	Parental perceptions	Quality assurance
LA1 Int. 1 C	I think what we don't have is a clarity of what we want form collaborative working 14-19.		
LA1 Int. 2 A (C) Type 1	I think the focus here needs to be on developing a clear vision and a clear strategy. We need to remove the barriers which are currently impacting on how the strategy can be implemented. I think we need to develop greater clarity about raising standards	I think it would help if we had for instance outcomes by area not by individual school for public consumption. I haven't really thought about how parents would feel in all possibilities of collaboration across an area. I think special measures wouldn't be the main factor – it would be more about ensuring the quality of the particular course I was sending the child to was good.	It is important that there are good QA mechanisms in place of all aspects of collaboration so that you can demonstrate whether it is meeting the objectives you set out with and is therefore effective. We need to do more to hold people to account
LA1 Int. 3 F	There is a lack of clarity about the 14-19 agenda	Parents were happy about the institution but they were concerned about the quality of individual teachers	I don't think they looked enough at the protocols around what the working arrangements were going to be between schools. The protocols have to be in place where trust and confidence are

			there. Having clearer protocols about how the operational systems work
LA1 Int. 4 F	There are some serious serious questions about whether or not the strategies partnership is truly responsible for determining the agenda, most heads feel that it's already pre-set by the LA. It's because largely 14-19 collaboration almost exclusively is on diploma development and diploma delivery and that is all that it is. In terms of meaningful, true meaningful 14-19 collaboration, no, I think we are light years away from it. The 14-19 agenda and 14-19 delivery which might or might not involve co-operation and collaboration, then let's consider that at a local level because where it can work I think is on a local level. It might be the case that you have to completely restructure the educational provision away from 5 key stages. 14-19 crosses two of these currently. There has to be a vision of 14-19 provision within XX and a formulation of such a vision in the first stance.	There were some concerns raised by my parents that if their child is going to be taught by staff of other schools that were not working at the same level, were they going to be disadvantaged.	We now have put a quality assurance practice into place but there's a question mark in my view concerning the rigour and robustness of that process. Before any collaboration takes place in my view the quality assurance issues have to be part of the key debate and that's the key agreement.
LA1 Int. 5 A (C) Type 2	We have been as a school and as an academy pretty proactive. Lead school in the creative and media diploma. Now with a change in government and possible changes, we can see people taking a backward step and that would mean a lot of effort and energy which has gone into this so far being lost. I think that as soon as people are put into an arena where they are expected to set the agenda and lead items, it actually secures buy in from them, an involvement	I can see the problem very much, but I would like to think it wouldn't be a thought process that the heads have gone through	
LA1 Int. 6 F	I think the strategic partnership has hit some problems around just the size of the group and what they are trying to do, and I think if they were going to do it again, it would be probably set up in a slightly different way, with smaller groups feeding into the larger group just to help development and decision making. 14-19? Don't know quite what my job is. I don't feel like we, heads aren't contributing in the way that they should. I am not sure who is leading, perhaps it's the leadership of 14-19. Our 14-19 partnership was that it got taken down one particular line which was diplomas and whilst aspects of that had some merit the problem it then meant that we didn't focus actually on developing the broader partnership.		

	And the 14-19 partnership can't be about one issue, not long term and particularly not of that size.		
LA1 Int. 7 F	The 14-19 strategic group is way to be to actually do any effective decision making. It is tending to receive reports and nod at various points. I think it's very much on the surface. I think there are little collaborations that make things work and work effectively, but they are very patchy and I don't think if you said take the authority as a entirety, I think the answer is no. It shouldn't be possible for me to miss the last four meetings of the 14-19 and it doesn't make a difference.		If you're teaching down that corridor, I can walk down there and have a look and satisfy myself about the quality of what's going on. If it's in another school, I'm starting to think, 'I'm not sure that's quite right' how do I deal with that?
LA1 Int. 8 C	I feel there is very little added to the agenda by most people it's just a consideration of the information coming out from officers for headteachers to critique. So really it is being led by people who wanted to work one way but actually you have got schools and headteachers and deliver groups who are saying 'well we can't get it to run the way in which we want it to run so we've set up sort of ad hoc arrangements' that over time are becoming formalised. I cannot recall really any questions being asked us about what we are setting, what we are trying to do. But nobody has really said, this is what we need to be looking at, why is there a problem with what we have got?	I have certainly sent hat work and as you say, it doesn't matter what the status of the school is, it is about the local perception. I think there is also an awful lot of snobbery in people's staff rooms and that will lead to genuine collaboration or not.	I think it is really important to actually be looking to say when you are setting up collaboration that you need to be thinking about how you can evaluate and monitor what is going on. Unless you are actually having the conversation about what indicates genuine partnership and then you go back and actually analyse it, you are not going to be able to call someone and say, actually we are not doing this here.
LA1 Int. 9 VA	There are if I may say so, vast numbers of people from the LA, I think the heads are normally outnumbered hugely, and now XX chairs it. I have never heard a decision made. So in a sense the agenda for XX, we don't have control over. I seem to remember that the three different meetings I've been at have had three different chairmen so that would be a problem because how are you going to have it with a lack of consistency.	Parents now in many ways regard schools like supermarkets and if they can't get it at Asda, they'll go to Tesco so, you know, you've got to think.	

Phase 2 Interview Analysis by Themes (1)

Interview	Trust / Honesty	Leadership	Clear vision	Academy/maintained working
Phase 2 Int. 1 A (C)		You look at the senior team and the subject leaders who would be involved in that collaboration and making it effective. I think that comes		

		from the top really doesn't it		
Phase 2 Int. 2 A				
Phase 2 Int. 3A	There are difficulties and I think the final one is the trust we place on whether our students are getting the same deal at another school. At the end of the day we are here for a purpose and we have to deliver that purpose and I think there is anywhere you go when academies are new into a city some mistrust and suspicion as to what the academies are going to do and be like. So it's that, I think, getting to grips with why is the collaboration there, being honest about is it actually working, are we all getting out of it what we want to get out of it and are we all open about working within the collaborations.		I think if collaborations are going to happen it's because there is an identified need and there is a benefit to all parties .	As an academy we want to be offering unique courses through our sponsorship with the local college that we don't want to offer to the consortium because we want to use it as a 'come and be part of our academy'.
Phase 2 Int. 4 A Converter		Well that's the thing about somewhere like XX you have always git a bit of capacity. And it's this business all the time about capacity. When a school I think is operating in a tough area under challenge you can never take your foot off the pedal in those schools and so really that has to be their prime aim		In the first instance there was only one academy and that met with a little resistance particularly in the north of the Borough. It was an LA project and they took the money away. I suspect we would have just thought 'oh that's finished now' whereas I think as an academy we think differently
Phase 2 Int. 5 A (C)	I think its small groups who share the same ethos, the same values the same desire of delivery that can work together, trust each other and deliver on the ideals and goals for the betterment of the students. I think it's about having			At the time I was in XX it was very hard to engage, people had the understanding that we had a lot more money a lot more freedom basically we could do whatever we wanted. Certainly I think there was quite a lot of fear and anxiety about the

	those open honest relationships with schools that actually share best practice with each other.			academy movement and then there were a number of schools who I think had been islands a long time and actually didn't want to collaborate.
Phase 2 Int. 6 A (C)	We have found out that communication is very poor. So one of the results of last week's meeting was, we have got to open up communications clear, honest.			I think there is a willingness to work with schools that they are linked to, but not enough heads or principals have been proactive enough to say come on, enough of the words, let's see some actions
Phase 2 Int. 7 A				We have a link with XX 6th form college. We collaborate with them for the gifted and talented programme. We offer placements for their students who are doing community placements. We certainly do deal with other schools certainly in terms of the minority curriculum very much. I think I collaborate in the sense of talking to other heads and sharing and discussing things with other heads as much if not more than I did as a local authority head
Phase 2 Int. 8 A				There was jealousy and it was politically motivated and you know it was perceived that we were cheery picking and all of those things, none of which was true
Phase 2 Int. 9			Where there is a clear aim and a clear if you like mission to be accomplished then I think people work very very positively together. That experience of sharing it's well worth the investment and I think that anybody when they can see there is a purpose you will do it	
Phase 2 Int. 10 A (C)				The XX collaboration is two academies and two maintained schools.

				From day to day there is absolutely no mention of related status.
Phase 2 Int. 11 A (C)		Collaborative opportunities were locally led and even within the group of collaborating schools somebody needs to take the lead and I think there has to be a general consensus that the lead is OK, you know, not a leader that sort of thrust themselves forward necessarily or perhaps you have to do that a bit but also perhaps a leader that is more sensitive to the circumstances of other schools.		
Phase 2 Int. 12 A (C)				
Phase 2 Int. 13 A (C)	For the first couple of years I think there was a lack of trust but not from our perspective. But obviously as time's gone by and it's recognised that we are not a threat then I think that, you know, there is more and more willingness to collaborate now. I think the difference between co-operation and collaboration is trust. Some of the things I have attended have been very much about co-operating with one another, but still thinking about your own organisation and what you can get out of it for yourself rather than when you develop that trust then its more about what we collectively can do and I think that's the moral purpose that underpins that.		also sit on the XX CPD group and that's less effective and I think that's to do with that there isn't a clear coherence around what it is we are trying to do and so it's more about a nice friendly little chat which is non -impact. True collaboration I think only occurs when there is a sense of moral purpose and there is a sense of people joining together to make a difference. It's about making a difference to a really impoverished community so that we are not at war with one another but actually we share intellectual social capital and both of us are stronger for that	When we first opened we weren't really invited to be part of that and that was quite interesting because in its previous incarnation our principal had actually chaired it, then left to help another school, came back as academy principal and really we weren't encouraged to go. As we have continued to develop our relationships with other local schools, there is more collaboration around.

Phase 2 Int. 14 A	Professional trust is really important and that comes through not just sitting down and talking to people but actually experiencing what's delivered on the ground. When you actually move to developing proper service level agreements that are robust, which are hard edged in some ways and everybody signs up to that, then that is very powerful particularly where it involves staff from one institution going to observe lessons and provision in another. That is a difficult hurdle to overcome but I would say an important and necessary one actually and that can only come when you have developed a real degree of trust and understanding between partners	Its noting a certain maturity in the partnership coming to a realisation that actually one's explicit input or leadership is no longer required to sustain that collaboration and actually being grown up about saying well actually others are better placed now to provide the leadership for this and we could serve young people both within our own institution and elsewhere better by realigning our resource and our leadership capacity elsewhere.	First of all it's where the aims and objectives of the partnership are very clear and it is based on ensuring as high a quality provision as possible for the youngsters leading to the best possible outcomes for the learners. Where there are high levels of trust and understanding but also a real willingness and a readiness to have what XX has recently called courageous conversations as well, to not shy away from the big issues when they come up in order that people can move forward together to ensure the sustainability and the strength of the partnership	
Phase 2 Int. 15 A (C)	I don't go to the meetings because of the behaviour of the other heads but behind the scenes XX and I do quite a lot of good and he sort of you know comes to me for a lot of help and support with difficult kids. And so as a result of that there is a real trust that has grown up between XX and I. Where collaboration I think really works for me is when heads trust each other. The heads trust each other and share and I know it sounds weird but XX (independent school head) and I have a shared sense of moral purpose in the same way as XX (primary community school) and I do.		It kind of works and I suppose the reason why the collaboration with XX Primary works so well is because XX has this great moral purpose, completely gets the plot, completely shares the vision. Neither of us have poverty as an excuse for underachievement. Whereas most if the other heads that we know spend most of their time justifying the reason why standards are low is because of the poverty	
Phase 2 Int. 16 A				We play a key part in that (local heads group) because the University particularly are very

		246		keen that we were the kind of academy that work with local schools not as some have been set up almost in opposition to. Consequently we are perceived as a gateway through which other schools can access university facilities Everything we do must be replicable otherwise we then are seen to be drawing university resources away from other schools in that way people , you will remember the way people first reacted to academies.
Phase 2 Int. 17 A (C)	We have got a really good and effective area inclusion partnership and the simple answer I will give to why that does it work is trust, and it works because even though we were becoming an academy, the fact that I was still sat at the table and I was prepared to be up front and open about what we were doing and why we were doing it, was something they respected. So there are lots of things happening in a small area that people are looking out for, 'what am I going to do that best suits my school'? Now within that context that element of trust remains and people will talk to each other but what it forces us to do is to be upfront and honest with each other.			
Phase 2 Int. 18 A (C)	Come and look at what we are doing, I won't try to sell you something I thought was duff in the first place, and that openness, allowing them to see things in action and ask questions…..takes the			We do collaborate with other schools outside the Trust, for example we have collaborated with the grammar school to introduce a programme. We collaborate for inclusion so on a monthly basis we go to

	wind out of their sails.		247		an inclusion forum with other schools in the area so we can move around our likely to be permanently excluded students
Phase 2 Int. 19 A (C)				Have a lot of experience working as a partnership of schools in the local area and schools that are collaborating on the agenda such as specialism, schools that are collaborating because they are a family of schools, feeder schools going into secondary schools, EAZs, excellence clusters, local delivery groups
Phase 2 Int. 20 A				I think the future will be these arrangements and these clusters coming about through legislation, you know, rather than the sort of ad hoc arrangements when things go wrong. I think schools will be required by law to organise themselves into clusters with strong schools within the cluster taking the lead. It's often too late when a school fails so the whole purpose of forming clusters is that the strong schools in the cluster will monitor the performance of other schools to ensure that there is, that failure does not take place or decline does not take place.
Phase 2 Int. 21 A Converter	They are very important and they can be an impediment yes and also with regard to the local authority critical. Trust is the basis of all interactions and one pitches ones relationships on the degree of trust that you believe exists, you can have in them, confidence you can have in the relationship.				The challenge for this school was to integrate itself into the ethos of working together, the new culture of everybody supporting each other and so on, we worked very hard to re-forge links with the local authority and we have. We have very close links and genuinely close friendships forged, a very good relationship and when

				we became an academy they were very encouraging. We don't compete with the local comprehensive schools. We have good working relationships with them because we don't.
Phase 2 Int. 22 A	But I think that comes from actually establishing your reputation, you know, if you are going to work collaboratively with lots of different partners that you will deliver and you will do it in a fair and honest way and that you see the purpose in doing it.			I can only go to a meeting if the heads have a clear outcome, and I'm not prepared to go to LA meetings if there isn't going to have an impact on my school and so it's about my own time. I collaborate with two other state schools and three independent schools which I set up as a partnership. So that's a strong collaboration looking specifically at programmes of study for students where they work together.
Phase 2 Int. 23 A (C)	So I think all of that trust though comes through honesty and is absolutely pivotal.	For me I don't get it, I don't believe that that works. I think you have to have somebody who is accountable for it so in our model we have always had rotating chair, so every 12 months one of the heads steps into that role because if you don't have that, the equality actually can breed discontent because it's not equality, because no matter how much you do it there is always going to be winners and losers		I think as a federation we have always taken the view that we educate children who live in XX City Council and their parents pay council tax to XX City Council so to suggest removing yourself from that debate and that dialogue I think is wrong.

Phase 2 Interview Analysis by Themes (2)

	14-19	Processes and structures	Impediments to collaboration.	Role of LA
Phase 2	We are	Co-ordinated provision,	The academy	It will all depend

Int. 1 A (C) Type 1	headteachers discuss all the major issues to do with 14-19 at secondary heads meetings which the Director or Assistant Director always attends	other institutions will be able to offer courses and provision which we don't have and we could avail ourselves in a practical and coherent manner There is us and a couple of schools in the south of the borough and we would be looking for more co-operation with them There is a lot of collaboration with our primary feeders One of the new directors at the DfE said of course collaboration between schools, not just 14-19, collaboration is what's the keynote Co-coaching programme between our teachers and XX and XX junior executives. It's in its third year and they get a huge amount out of it as well as us It's a bit like the old commonwealth exchange scheme isn't it. – that would be wonderful collaboration really would be, but in terms of development of leadership that would be brilliant as well.	chains look after themselves for their 14-19 provision and I think the amount of collaboration and co-operation will be somewhat limited. It is complicated by the fact that there are two major chains plus the diocese operating in the borough so co-operation is difficult	on how much power is left with LAs Dare I mention the two words Local authority, DfE – Michael Gove doesn't want any of that. LAs have two to three years left at most
Phase 2 Int. 2 A Type 1		As an EBD special schools, we ran an internal exclusion unit for 38 primary schools, it wasn't about one person being superior or anything else, it was collaboration and about achievement and attainment that keep children in primary schools Collaboration needs a consistent structure and consistent approach	Too much competition between schools locally Successive governments are breeding competition and they are asking educationalists who aren't by definition, naturally entrepreneurs It's difficult to collaborate when I am vying for students from other schools Poaching of teachers by other institutions offering more money Competition is not good for communities as it makes schools die	
Phase 2	I mean to be honest		The issues,	That as part of the

Int. 3 A Type 1	my own view on diplomas, we would never have , in my previous school and here, would never have gone wholeheartedly into diplomas because they are untried, untested education method and I wouldn't be happy putting a lot of students in for that, not knowing what their outcomes would be.		though, arise through when there is a limit on what you are allowed to teach so for example one of our neighbouring schools is a specialist language college so they want to provide all the A Level language teaching. We have an outstanding MFL dept but in theory should not really be offering that	LA, because you'd have the pressure from the LA not to do that, we are able to say, 'well this is how we are doing it'.
Phase 2 Int. 4 A Type 3		My job I suppose is to be aware of the risks that might fall to the governing body band to flag up issues that I think may arise. We have tried this year to be more active and create a strategic partnership across the two schools. We have mirrored our school leadership team and what we are trying to do now is to develop a language across both schools that allows us to talk together with the roles much more closely affiliated and we hope eventually that we can almost interchange the two leadership teams. We asked for some funding to look at ways in which partnership across academies could foster partnership and collegiality because we were concerned that otherwise we would just have the bobbing dog, and out of that came green shoots because they understood that partnership is absolutely crucial for the children in the area. And also in that small group of schools an acceptance of collegiality now whereas certainly 18 months ago it was dog eat dog, a stab in	There seemed to be a culture until recently as I said earlier of people competing or schools colleges competing with each other to be able to get a bigger share of a very limited market so rivalry between establishments	I am wedded I suppose to the comprehensive ideal, I just am, and I've always found LAs, if we think what an LA should be, it should be what holds and takes care of, it's the what do they call it, the place of last resort almost and they have a responsibility and I have always wanted to be part of that responsibility. In the first instance it has changed my relationship with the LA and that's good as we were under a lot of pressure. LAs have an incredible influence they have got to change their psyche to become influencers, become collaborators, recognise the big picture and then persuade people to come and join in

		the back. I also think it has to move to a point where it's symbiotic rather than parasitic and I think that's where we are now in that we are getting more symbiotic		
Phase 2 Int. 5 A (C) Type 1		Here we do quite a lot of collaboration within the XX network rather than XX and at this stage because we are relatively new tends to be larger scale events rather than a lot of sharing of good practice. In my experience of this borough in particular, I don't know of any successful collaborative relationships based on really delivering shared academic qualifications. I think successful collaboration for me would be maybe two or three possibly four so a much smaller group of schools that worked together and really defined what the partnership would look like. I think it should be left with schools to really choose collaborative arrangements and who they would feel comfortable working with	I think a lot of schools go on the league table results that although we enjoy everyone's success, we certainly want our institution to be better to improve.	I think XX has talked quite a lot in my opinion about collaboration but it hasn't gone terrifically far
Phase 2 Int. 6 A (C) Type 1	The collaboration, the openness of the collaboration on this particular point 14-19, was not sufficient enough to inform principals like myself	It's not been open enough from the beginning from stage 1, you know to say, 'well let's investigate, let's see if we need this, let's see if we need whatever it may be		They want to speed things up, you know, so therefore they jump certain forums and don't get enough people involved, enough significant people involved. I think it could have been better, it can be better
Phase 2 Int. 7 A Type 1		So we will collaborate with anyone where the curriculum offer we can do a deal with that's in the interest of the students and where we can share good practice from schools. We have looked to find as many external organisations that we	It was the last conservation government that actually deliberately introduced the concept of competition as a good thing between schools. I think schools	Local Authorities often do not have the people with sufficient vision or creativity or expertise or experience in post. So I am not going to cry over the demise of the local authority

		can link to as possible and with lots of exciting possibilities particularly at year 11	themselves have lived through that and come out the other side frankly and there is, we are beginning to get our wagons into a circle and understand the benefits of collaboration	
		At the end the ultimate test of any collaboration has to be to the benefit of the education of the students in your school and although you want to, you would like to collaborate with others who want to have something from you, if it's going to have a detriment to your school in terms of taking teacher expertise or anything else then you would have concerns about it. Collaboration has to be something that's mutual.		
Phase 2 Int. 8 A Type 2	They put together this 14-16 thing called the XX guarantee which we took part in and it was awful. So we bailed out and it was partly because of the parlous state of XX College that was nearly closed actually it was awful, it's bouncing back a bit now. But the 14-16 thing caused us real problems and was a disservice to our kids to be honest because it wasn't delivered	There is a forum of primary schools which I chair called Community Learning Area networks (CLANs). We are surrounded by primaries so we tried to get this forum together and we did, and then the LA caught up with that in a sense and put a structure into place CLAN. We benefitted very little but I saw it as really an important part of our community work. And there was some good work some good collaboration there. On a secondary level very little collaboration. XX and I know each other very well and we are co-ordinating our admissions because XX let people down again in terms of testing and so on. We meet to talk about common things such as white XX girl's underachievement. We are about to embark on something quite hopefully quite profound in terms of collaboration with a similar problem. Teachers working together Lots of good practice they have got that we haven't and so on, I am		We did our own thing because I never to be honest never had a great faith in the local authority

		sure a great mutual benefit really		
Phase 2 Int. 9 A (C) Type 2	I think less purposeful was the 14-19 agenda which went across XX and XX. We found the collaboration 14-19 to be the biggest waste of time, man hour time of talking round and round in circles and getting absolutely nowhere to the point that actually from our point of view no longer happened	We work in a number of collaboratives and some of those are more or less important to us. One = XX partnership and I would say that's a very effective collaboration. We have clear defined things that we wish to do as a group of schools and we do them and deliver on them and we are very driven and things happen. 2= XX Learning Partnership which is a collaboration of both primary and secondary and one of the most important results of that is that we open in January our own alternative provision unit.	Where it is imposed and nobody can see the point of sitting trying to do something that somebody stands in the way of you being able to achieve, then it is a purposeless activity. When there isn't (a purpose) you are always too busy to do it	So again after years of procrastination I think it best to say with the Local Authority, we have decided to go that alone
Phase 2 Int. 10 A (C) Type 2	XX and XX are 8 miles apart. Up to 2 years ago they were separate clusters. The LA moved them into one cluster. As soon as they did that problems were exponentially magnified beyond	Where there is a clear reason and everybody sees it as a benefit and there is something in it for everyone. The relationships that existed in the one town across 4 schools had grown to become robust, positive, frank but good good relationships. When other town has still a lot of tensions within it and what happened was that those tensions made the overall collaborative attempts dysfunctional for everyone. The XX cluster had significant buy in from the schools and the town. When it was coming to an end the heads not just the secondary the primary in the town as well started a discussion well is this worth keeping and now each school has put into a pot to keep the staff salaried because the work that they were doing we think is valuable		It's a clear defined thing we want to do that the LA's failed to deliver on for them and when we tried to collaborate with the LA to deliver it they failed to deliver on it for us as well. So God helps those who help themselves. It's in all our best interest.
Phase 2 Int. 11 A (C) Type		The schools, primary and secondary collectively taking		The XX went through a couple of years of

2		ownership of the initiative (XX) and driving it forward in the way they choose to do. It became a very serious player in XX proving standards in the town, particularly amongst the primary schools. We also provided a forum for secondary schools to share ideas. One is that collaborative opportunities arose from shared need		turbulent times and was more or less on the point of being wound up by the DfE. The director of education had sought I think to do things to us
Phase 2 Int.12 A (C)Type 1			I have always felt that league tables encourage that that competitiveness. If a league table was area wide then you would have more opportunity to work collaboratively because it is so competitive, because we are all trying to get the best kids up our 5A-Cs with English and maths, that doesn't sit well with a philosophy that is collaborative, equality and inclusion	
Phase 2 Int.13 A Type 2		By design we have always, we recognised the importance of collaboration because its XX kids irrespective of what your badge is and we wanted to be able to collaborate. We can choose to collaborate with whoever we want to. So for example we are keen to collaborate with any organisation irrespective of where they are or groups of organisations who we feel we can either we can support them or they can support us or we can mutually benefit from it. The ones that aren't so good or aren't as effective are ones where we are not collaborating	I also sit on the XX CPD group and that's less effective and I think that's to do with that there isn't a clear coherence around what it is we are trying to do and so it's more about a nice friendly little chat which is non - impact I wouldn't want to have a collaboration forced on me just because somebody in an old inspection regime is in a nice leafy suburb and then gets an 'outstanding' result	

		we are just co-operating with one another. There are stages in building collaboration, you start with a willingness to work together don't you, and then a willingness to co-operate, and then when you have trust then you certainly start to collaborate and then you start to have mature relationships don't you. You know when it works truly it has a massive effect on some of those life chances of young people. So that's when collaboration in essence works		
Phase 2 Int. 14 A (C) Type 2	To make sure there was a broader curriculum offer which meant that their interests could be met. In order to do that we had to develop partnerships and that included big companies like XX with whom we worked to develop 14-16 pre-apprenticeship offer for motor vehicle technologies working with private training provider in Nottingham supported by the LSC. Diplomas, working through the logistical issues to do with supervising youngsters while they are on minibuses, all the safeguarding issues, ensuring quality of provisions and offsite locations and certainly there were phone calls between headteachers and principals which were sometimes pretty robust about things that were going on	Its noting a certain maturity in the partnership coming to a realisation that actually one's explicit input or leadership is no longer required to sustain that collaboration and actually being grown up about saying well actually others are better placed now to provide the leadership for this and we could serve young people both within our own institution and elsewhere better by realigning our resource and our leadership capacity elsewhere. It's important to point out that alongside trust there is also mistrust and you know alongside collaboration that really works there are examples of failures as well and where that has been the case it is where an institution or a provider has acted outside the parameters of an agreement that has been put in place. First of all it's where the aims and objectives of the partnership are very clear and it is based on ensuring as high a quality provision as possible for the youngsters leading to the best possible	Actually what our development did was to get rid of some historical antagonism and difficulties that existed around state funded, independent schools or grant maintained and foundation and trust schools and actually help bring people closer together. There is considerable competition for places and that makes collaboration more difficult	

		outcomes for the learners. Where there are high levels of trust and understanding but also w real willingness and a readiness to have what XX has recently called courageous conversations as well, to not shy away from the big issues when they come up in order that people can move forward together to ensure the sustainability and the strength of the partnership		
Phase 2 Int. 15 A Type 1	For some inexplicable reason, they (the LA) are always allowed to be there, giving presentations and talking b******s to us. The 14-19 agenda didn't work because of the LA and that's probably true nationally I would suspect. (pupils moving across institutions) But that was an entire misunderstanding of the 14-19 agenda, you see, that was what killed the 14-19 Agenda. And I just said to my lot, 'go find someone half way decent to collaborate with, we are not collaborating with that lot because what's the point. The LA was seeing it as a local group of schools who had similar outputs bussing kids backwards and forwards between them. Well that was never going to work. Because the agenda was highjacked by the LAs perhaps that's not true, perhaps what happened was the Labour government put the money through the LA in	You are far better off working with secondary heads that you get on with rather than the ones you are told to get on with. We work extremely collaboratively with…our most deprived primary school and the head there is visionary and she gets it, she just gets it and we work very very collaboratively there. It kind of works and I suppose the reason why the collaboration with XX Primary works so well is because XX has this great moral purpose, completely gets the plot, completely shares the vision. We work collaboratively with XX Independent school. There are certain times when its right for a school to look inward actually and there are times when its right for a school to look outward and the nature of your collaborations and who you collaborate with may change according to the part of the journey you are on really.	When you get that kind of thing together it's never going to work because it's not something that's coming together because it wants to be together, it's come together because of geographical stuff. So what they do to unify themselves, they just talk about c*** that nobody is actually interested in at all. You are far better off working with secondary heads that you get on with rather than the ones you are told to get on with. I don't think the way the 14-19 collaborative stuff was set up was ever workable	For some inexplicable reason, they (the LA) are always allowed to be there, giving presentations and talking b******s to us. The 14-19 agenda didn't work because of the LA and that's probably true nationally I would suspect. So what we did was we went and found other collaboratives. The LA were not keen on that, they wasted in my view, hundred, and hundreds of thousands of pounds. The LA was seeing it as a local group of schools who had similar outputs bussing kids backwards and forwards between them. Well that was never going to work. Because the agenda was high jacked by the LAs perhaps that's not true, perhaps what happened was the Labour government put the money through the LA in the first

	the first place, that's probably were the mistake was made, that actually because of that schools were cynical so they didn't embrace it, so it didn't take off which is now making it difficult to maintain the good practice that exists. I don't think the way the 14-19 collaborative stuff was set up was ever workable			place, that's probably were the mistake was made, that actually because of that schools were cynical so they didn't embrace it, so it didn't take off which is now making it difficult to maintain the good practice that exists.
Phase 2 Int. 16 a (C) Type 2	So that led us down a vocational route post 16 and of course you know you were talking about 4-19, 16-19 collaboration is a) hugely encouraged and b) hugely fraught not least because of the emergence and collapse of things like diplomas. With the result that city collaborations 16-19 has been very very shaky	So its lots of small doors that we can open up through collaborations like that of course because of the university our sister academies across the north west of the city are also keen to work with us and our neighbouring schools		So when the local authority said you can't do that I was able and particularly as an outsider of the academy, say they are actually talking rubbish, you can do it
Phase 2 Int. 17 A (C)Type 2	So we are still involved in the confederation work which is around 14-19		There wasn't a great relationship between them particularly because that was at the point in time when competition and collaboration were strange bedfellow but what happened over the last five years has been that the work between heads and the schools in the south has been really successful.	I suppose my one anxiety around becoming an academy is that having a local authority in the background you have always at least, whatever you thought of them you could always get on the phone and say 'hey what do I do about this' But actually what has happened over the past two years is that the school Partnership Trust (sponsor) has slowly but surely become our local authority.
Phase 2 Int. 18 A (C)Type 2		So I think it's working on collaboration where it's appropriate. I think because they		

		wanted to come out of special measures and they could see that we have something that worked, they were open to accepting change and working with us as a team and I think the collaboration between us and Wilmington academy is more effective because of that. They know where they are now and they know where they want to get to and there is a lot of sharing of ideas. So they take bits that they feel that work effectively, I mean it's a two way partnership That's where we can learn from them so it's never us doing to them it's supporting them through a process and recognising that they will have things that they can give us back in return.		
Phase 2 Int. 19 A Type 3		Raising standards in a school in self-denial was that the business of collaboration and psychologically sometimes you have to introduce something that formalises the collaboration in order that people should absolutely abide by that collaboration. We learnt at one point that we needed to formalise the whole matter to be truly effective		
Phase 2 Int. 20 A Type 1		Schools are collaborating with schools now you know in all sorts of different partnerships, loose partnerships and collaborations to tight federations.		I suspect as LAs diminish in size and importance and lose money and school improvement will be the preserve of schools, outstanding schools, good schools, good heads supporting those that are less effective. If you are a great believer in independence as I am, you have to

				be careful that you don't support or gradually become part of an LA type network, I don't think that will happen. If you get too big you become a mini LA. There is a real danger of that
Phase 2 Int. 21 A Type 3		We have various networks that we work within, but more than that there is an informal networking that happens online on a day to day basis and collaboration that you know we experience very similar issues and want to share good ideas and good practice. We are a training school as well so that has quite a lot of local implications for collaboration and we are a music college …..with outreach to primary schools in the local area		
Phase 2 Int. 22 A Type 2		Now what happens is without the structure of the LA lots of other networks still work within the authority anyway. I have a lot of partnerships internationally and with business. For me it's about what's the outcome that I want and then I look at how I am going to get there and its very straightforward	I was chair of the secondary heads at the time and I was advocating that all academies should be invited (to heads meetings) and there was a bit of tension around.	Because I have been on both sides of it in the same authority, that's very unusual and now the position of the LA is weakened and obviously because all sorts of things have happened. I think it's not because its academies or whether it's because it's you know LA schools, is that there is less of a role for the LA so even state schools are saying, you know, 'why are we here apart from supporting each other? I think because the messages weren't loud and clear, shared by everyone and people giving in equal measure,

				you can see why things collapse. It's not just this LA, it's any LA. They just don't have the people power to be able to do it now and it will get worse and worse
Phase 2 Int. 23 A (C) Type 2		Complete ownership and engagement of all partners so everybody understands the vision, everybody understands what their contribution to the vision will be, that you need a set of policy statements to monitor it so that you know exactly what good looks like in the relationship. I think communication is absolutely vital that even children and staff who are not involved in it know it's happening. XX are now co-sponsors and that's a good relationship with them. They bring a lot of expertise in terms of governance. They certainly bring a business model of quality assurance. I have learnt a lot personally for my own development about quality assurance through them which has been invaluable		I think the relationship between the academies and the LA in XX is still quite a secure one.

Phase 2 Interview Analysis by Themes (3)

	Parental perceptions	Quality assurance
Phase 2 Int. 1 A (C) Type 1	A number of schools that were seriously failing schools have become academies and are doing better and so parental perceptions are changing. But their view of schools that we might be doing work with would be as it was 10 years ago. Parental perception is a key issue I think	Quality assurance will be through Ofsted looking at data
Phase 2 Int. 2 A Type 1		
Phase 2 Int. 3 A Type 1		The sort of quality assurance across the different establishments I think is an issue
Phase 2 Int. 4 A		

Type 3		
Phase 2 Int. 5 A (C) Type 1	If you are in a partnership and are realistic about what is being delivered I think parents are an easier win	
Phase 2 Int. 6 A (C) Type 1		
Phase 2 Int. 7 A Type 1		
Phase 2 Int. 8 A Type 2		
Phase 2 Int. 9 A (C) Type 2		
Phase 2 Int.10 A (C) Type 2		
Phase 2 Int.11 A (C) Type 2		
Phase 2 Int.12 A (C) Type 1		
Phase 2 Int.13 A Type 2		
Phase 2 Int.14 A (C) Type 2		Diplomas, working through the logistical issues to do with supervising youngsters while they are on minibuses, all the safeguarding issues, ensuring quality of provisions and offsite locations and certainly there were phone calls between headteachers and principals which were sometimes pretty robust about things that were going on
Phase 2 Int.15 A Type 1		
Phase 2 Int.16 A (C) Type 2		
Phase 2 Int.17 A (C) Type 2		
Phase 2 Int.18 A (C) Type 2		
Phase 2 Int.19 A Type 3		
Phase 2 Int.20 A type 1		
Phase 2 Int.21 Type 3		
Phase 2 Int.22 A Type 2		
Phase 2 Int.23 A		That there is a clear line management and accountability built into it so that people know

(C) Type 2		how they are being called to account, how they are being measured.
		The quality bit is really important because one of the challenges we face, I don't think we have cracked it, is how do you ensure that the quality of experience that you children get when they go to someone else's school is as good as you hoped it would be in your own and that for me is what the partnership with thrive or fail by.
		They certainly bring a business model of quality assurance. I have learnt a lot personally for my own development about quality assurance through them which has been invaluable

APPENDIX 5: Dimensions of weakly and strongly collaborative 14-19 systems (Hodgson and Spours 2007)

Dimensions/Local Actions	Weakly Collaborative	Strongly Collaborative
1. *Vision, purposes and underpinning principles* e.g. • Vision statements for the curriculum and for 14-19 partnership • Learner entitlement statements	Vision statements and learner entitlements largely confined to the government agenda of providing 'alternative' learning experiences.	Vision statements and learner entitlements cover all aspects of 14-19 learning, including GCSEs and A Levels, and attempt to take a more unified and integrated approach to learning.
2. *Curriculum, qualifications and assessment* e.g. • Mapping provision • Building progression routes • Deciding on a Diploma offer • Strengthening vocational provision	Development of vocational pathways and programmes from 14+ for some learners. A primary goal is motivating disaffected 14-16 year-olds, using college and work-based provision.	Developing holistic programmes across all types of learning with a focus on more flexible, applied and practical approaches for all learners from 14+.
3. *Planning, funding, organisation and governance in a 'local area'* e.g. • Local Authorities (LAs), Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) and Connexions working together to deliver the Entitlement • Forming partnerships and clusters	Confused or contested relationships between LAs, LLSCs (Local LSCs) and providers, with lack of clarity about local leadership. Partnerships and clusters are under-developed, dependent on external funding and easily destabilised (e.g. by institutional competition or changes in key personnel).	Clear and accepted local governance arrangements with a high degree of collaboration between LAs, LLSCs, local providers and wider partners (e.g. Connexions, employers, voluntary and community organisations), thus increasing governance capacity and leadership. Capacity to consider post-16 institutional rationalisation to boost the range and efficiency of provision.
4. *Professionalism, pedagogy and leadership* e.g. • 14-19 Pathfinders • Learning Visits	Conformity to government reform agenda without a strong professionally informed sense of what	Strong sense of local professionalism, leadership and a shared knowledge of the area; a more

• Development networks and joint Continuing Professional Development (CPD)	is required at the local level. Limited leadership and CPD, with a dependence on nationally generated support and key local individuals.	reflective, longer term, planned and locally generated approach to capacity building using pooled local and national funding and locally agreed tariffs for learner programmes.
5. *Physical learning environments and communications systems* e.g. • Building new skills centres • Building Schools for the Future • Information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure • Pooling funding for shared resources or specialisms	National government steering mechanisms and policy (e.g. performance tables, targets and funding) continue to drive institutional self-interest and inhibit collaboration. Little development of local accountability mechanisms.	New government mechanisms (e.g. 14-19 Entitlement, prospectus and progression targets) used to strengthen local accountability frameworks. Development of agreed local quality assurance systems and area-wide performance measures.
6. *New accountability framework* e.g. • Performance measures • Progression targets • Local quality assurance and improvement systems	National government steering mechanisms and policy (e.g. performance tables, targets and funding) continue to drive institutional self-interest and inhibit collaboration. Little development of local accountability mechanisms.	New government mechanisms (e.g. 14-19 Entitlement, prospectus and progression targets) used to strengthen local accountability frameworks. Development of agreed local quality assurance systems and area-wide performance measures.

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