

# **PERCEPTIONS OF A LEADERSHIP CRISIS IN THE EARLY YEARS SECTOR (EYS)**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Over the last 20 years, the EYS has featured heavily as a priority with regard to UK policy reform, and the continuous reframing of Early Years funding and regulatory frameworks. The increased attention without the benefit of a national strategy has created high levels of turbulence within the sector with successive governments committing to a complicated demand-led childcare market system with supply-side subsidies, delivered through a mixed economy of providers but with a large and ever-increasing private for-profit sector. There is no universally agreed value system for the EYS which has resulted in the sector attempting to operate with confusing and often-times, conflicting policy directives. This directionless pathway has created a two-tiered system that sits on the divergent principles of ‘marketisation’ and ‘universalism’ which has incurred some major areas of controversy. The EYS operates with a kaleidoscope of qualifications, experiences, professional heritages, contractual conditions and expectations which is further compounded by the continuing debate about what is best for young children, who is best to deliver it and what level of professional leadership is necessary for early education. In reviewing the current literature, little consideration has been given to the ‘totality’ of the EYS and dynamics of the structural, environmental, economic, political and cultural interplay within a diverse and complex system which is seemingly at a critical stage. In order to achieve this, a mixed-method case study approach was utilised to gather views from a range of perspectives on the PVI sector and the maintained sector as components of the EYS. The chosen method was a combination of semi-structured interviews, a questionnaire and data sourced from public records on current practice. Findings from this research offer valuable insight into the perceptions of a leadership crisis in the EYS as well as provide a number of suggestions for improvement from external and internal perspectives. Therefore, this thesis may be valuable to policy-makers, educators and stakeholders wishing to shape and direct the efficacy of the EYS.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AEI – American Enterprise Institute

AST – Advanced Skills Teacher

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

BERA – British Education research Association

CPD – Continued Professional Development

DCSF – Department for Children, Schools and Families

DfE – Department for Education

DFEE – Department for Education and Employment

DfES - Department for Education and Skills

ECEC – Early Childhood Education and Care

ECOS – European Environmental Citizens’ Organisation for Standardisation

EYFS – Early Years Foundation Stage

EYNSFF – Early Years National Single Formula funding

EYPS – Early Years Professional Status

EYS – Early Years Sector

EYTS – Early Years Teacher Status

EYSFF – Early Years Single Formula Funding

GCSE – General Certificate of Secondary Education

HR – Human Resources

INSET – In Service Training

LFS – Labour Force Survey

MNS – Maintained Nursery School

NPQH – National Professional Qualification for Headship

NPQICL – National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership

NVQ – National Vocational Qualification

OFSTED – Office for Standards in Education

OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

OPSI – Office of Public Sector Information

PVI – Private, Voluntary and Independent

QCA – Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

QTS – Qualified Teacher Status

RQ – Research Question

SCAA – School Curriculum and Assessment Authority

SCITT – School-Centred Initial Teacher Training

SEF – Self Evaluation Form

SEN – Special Education Needs

SSA – Education Standard Spending Assessment

TA – Teaching Assistant

UK – United Kingdom

USA – United States of America

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### 1.1 Background of the study

Interest in the Early Years has gained momentum during the latter part of the twentieth century and continues to feature as a national and international priority with regard to policy reform and implications for the future of the EYS. The EYS is a complex subdivision of working with children and young people comprising a kaleidoscope of qualifications, experiences, professional heritages, contractual conditions and expectations, compounded by the continuing debate about what is best for young children, who is best to deliver it and what level of professional leadership is necessary for early education. The concept of a leadership crisis is based on my lived experience as a leader and this perspective will be given a fuller exposition later in Section 2.4. However, concerns for the EYS begin to unfold when there is disturbing evidence which indicates that there is a shortage of 10,000 trained nursery teachers nationally (Finnegan, 2016) and consequently therefore, an imminent shortage of pedagogical leaders in the EYS. This report highlighted a dramatic decrease in people applying for Early Years teaching roles from 2,300 in 2013/14 to just 860 in 2014/15 which is “partly driven by issues with the status and pay for Early Years”. Equally disturbing is evidence of a sharp decline in basic Level 3 qualifications “following the introduction of requirements for GCSE English and Maths as a requirement for completion of Early Years Educator qualifications” (p.17). Although this report specifically refers to the PVI sector, any explanation of the present position of the EYS must be placed within the wider context of services for children under five which consists of a combination of public (state and maintained) and private, voluntary and independent childcare provision (PVI).

Research on the positive impact of the Early Years on a child's lifelong learning trajectory frequently places emphasis on high-quality Early Years experiences being delivered by a qualified workforce (Moyle *et al*, 2002, Melhuish, 2004, Sylva *et al*, 2004). "It is difficult to assess quality of childcare provision as observers, governmental agencies and childcare providers cannot agree on common standards or definitions of 'quality' and what little academic and research evidence exists suggests that the type of care setting has less impact upon outcomes and childhood development than technical indicators such as staff qualification levels, staff-to-child ratios and equipment levels" (PriceWaterhouseCoopers 2006, p.8). However, key findings from Sylva *et al* (2004) indicate that "quality was higher overall in settings integrating care and education and in nursery schools" with quality indicators including "having a trained teacher as manager and a good proportion of trained teachers on the staff" (p.1-2).

The EYS continues to develop according to childcare market supply and demand needs producing seemingly inextricable complexity and dissonance between a vision for the Early Years as designed by varying political motivations and the importance of 'getting the Early Years right' as understood by experts and leaders in the field (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000, Bertram and Pascal, 2002, Gammage, 2006, Nutbrown, 2012). Gammage, (2006) elaborates: "we have more than the individual comment and observations of past philosophers, clerics and poets, more than the preoccupations of teachers and other professionals engaged in work with children. We now have convincing evidence from neuroscience, from longitudinal development studies and from population studies that early childhood is the period when the human organism responds to the environment with such malleability that the very architecture of the brain is affected" (p.2). Gammage further asserts the detrimental effects of poor Early Years experiences as critically limiting physical and mental wellbeing and

“casting a long misshapen shadow across the developmental profile of children, affecting later school and other vital social learning, blighting adulthood and even (perhaps) creating destructive circumstances for others within the social orbit” (p.2).

Pedagogical arguments have to be balanced against political investment in the EYS and societal expectations of returns on said investment. “The degree to which a state involves itself in early education and the extent to which early education is regarded as a care/welfare or an educational aspect of policy, influences the funding, focus and the status of early education and, in turn, the process of early education itself” (Hayes 2007, p.8). The concept of childhood is described by Whiteman and De Gioia (2012) as “a multifarious concept that is inextricably entwined with social, cultural and historical moments that influence and are influenced by a multitude of perspectives, places and practices” (p.1). It has to be noted that changing attitudes and perspectives to childhood continues to impact on policy change in the EYS (Baldock *et al*, 2009, Pugh and Duffy, 2010, Whiteman and De Gioia, 2012) although Moss (2001) cautions us to remember that “the universal term ‘child’ should not blind us to the multiple social constructions that attach to any particular child” (p.3).

Pugh and Duffy (2010) state that the Early Years used to be viewed as “an optional extra” but is “now perceived as crucial to achieving many of the government’s and wider society’s aims” (p.1). This paradigm shift appears to be connected to the prevailing motivation behind investment in Early Years as human capital for future economic benefit. The economic philosophy is grounded in the hopes of improving “educational outcomes for children and their parents” with a view to enabling “parents, particularly mothers, to go out to work, or increase their hours in work, thereby lifting their families out of poverty” (Strategy Unit 2002, p.9). The EYS in its present context is complex, intricate and multi-layered (Moss

2001, Nutbrown 2012, Whiteman and De Gioia, 2012) and while research reinforces the fact that leadership has significant influence on achieving and maintaining effectiveness, the underpinning principles have to be clarified against the constraints of ever changing social, financial, political, environmental and technological climates as well as the complex and ill-defined EYS.

Today's world operates in a shifting landscape with the effect of demagogical earthquakes and seismic-like waves every time a new political party comes into power. The shifting plates of transitional power, transitional core values, transitional agendas, transitional economies, transitional technology and so on, creates a constantly moving and constantly evolving context for Early Years which is being impregnated with change and reform *ad infinitum* with very little possibility of giving birth to sustainable strategies. A leadership crisis would greatly impair the sector's ability to make sense of the myriad of components that are constantly in motion in the EYS and would also impact on the ability of the sector to stand up to recent unprecedented invasive scrutiny and calls for enhanced accountability. The influence of leadership is deemed as underpinning an effective workforce (Leithwood *et al*, 2006, Yukl, 2006) and there is an agreed correlation between leadership and improved outcomes for children (Hallinger and Heck, 1996, Leithwood *et al*, 2006, Bush 2007). Yet despite continuous highly publicised political calls for improved educational leadership, there is little reference to the lack of leadership skills within the wider EYS to effectively moderate, facilitate and implement relentless policy change. Rodd (2006, p.7) points out that "the terminology that is used to denote the leader of an educational setting and that which is used to signify the leader of a childcare setting have acted to maintain the unproductive division between care and education". However this is just the 'tip of the iceberg' in a sector that is undermined by the fluid and constantly evolving context of political design.

Education as a universal human right has increased exponentially in value due to democratic values, variance in economic growth and the general perception that education is the launching pad to future success. However, as a result of constant policy reform, education leaders' workloads have multiplied extensively with the "regulatory gaze" being focused on "technical competency and performativity" (Osgood 2006, p.6). Advocates of professionalism believe that the calls for increased professionalism in the EYS could lead to a "strengthened position and increased respect for those who work in ECEC" (Osgood 2006, p.5). However, Osgood postulates that professionalism is "social engineering" which stems from the discursive premise that there is always a crisis in education that needs to be fixed by successive political parties. This social engineering is "characterised by regulation and control through a standards agenda and represents adherence to a mechanistic reductionist project, wherein those who represent the power elite (government departments and agencies) act as regulators of the behaviours of the subordinate (practitioners)" (p.6).

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

In an ideal situation Members of Parliament, Theorists, Economists, Educators, Parents and the society at large would have a universally agreed value system for the EYS which would in turn ensure a consistent approach that would be sustainable beyond the political party that is in power. However, the current EYS is afflicted with the undue burden of rapid and relentless change and the opinionated vagaries of opposing political parties. These dynamics, alongside rolling policy development, continue apace to shape (or misshape) the EYS and set the political stage for achieving the overarching outcome of reduced public spending in response to austerity measures. In order to explore the identified phenomenon, a survey questionnaire of a cross-section of the EYS was conducted alongside semi-structured interviews as the basis for research using Case Study methodology. The work of Butler

(1988) and Woodhead (2006) have been utilised in this study to provide an understanding of a predominantly female workforce and the changing perspectives on working with young children. Additionally and more critically, the work of Freire (1996) and his discourse of “political hegemony” and “critical awareness”, Fuller *et al* (2007) and their discourse of “expansive/restrictive work environments” and Howard (2008) and his discourse on “political correctness” have influenced this research and provided a focus on the implications expressed by interviewees as well as generating understanding from leaders in the EYS workforce. Freire (1996) maintains: “just as objective social reality exists not by chance, but as the product of human action, so it is not transformed by chance. If humankind produce social reality (which in the “inversion of the praxis” turns back upon them and conditions them), then transforming that reality is an historical task, a task for humanity” (p.33). This scaffolds the interpretative position of Ribbins and Gunter’s (2002) humanistic and instrumental domains which positions this study in the wider theoretical framework and serves to avoid imposing the researcher’s perspective of reality onto research participants. The concept of human action producing social reality and any transformation of that reality being a task for humanity, has been essential in generating the characteristics of, and reasons for the perceptions of a crisis in the EYS and also in creating strategies to shape the notion of transformation within the EYS.

### **1.3 Stimulus for the study**

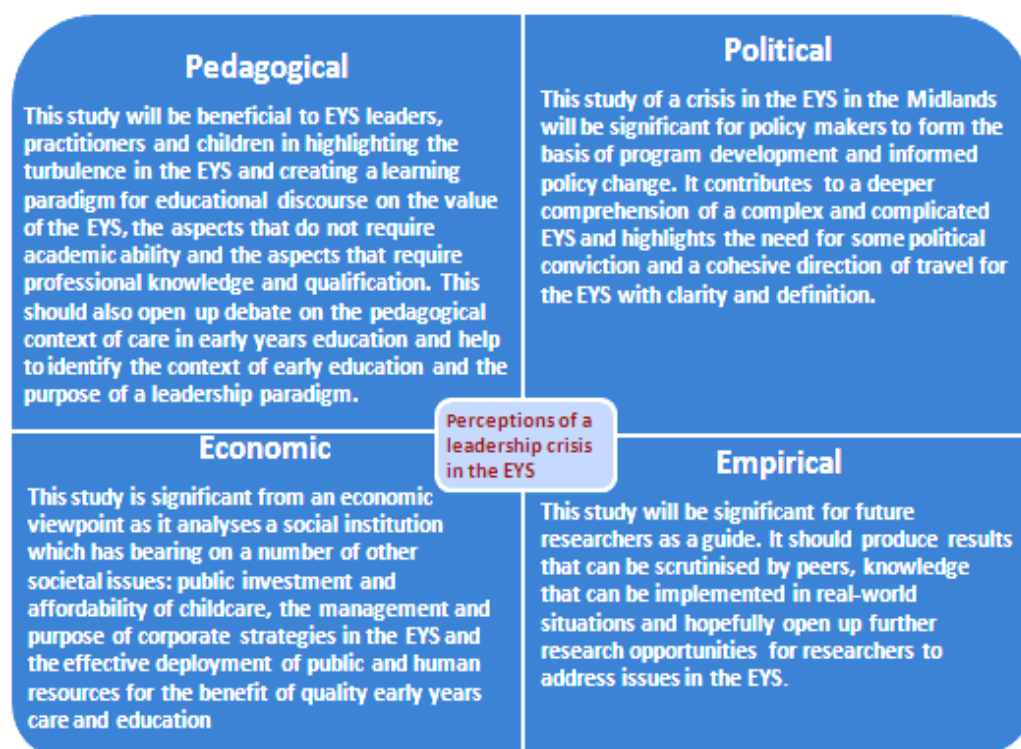
The lack of understanding of the contribution of leaders in the EYS is rarely critically examined thereby allowing them to abide the burden of a role that is dissimilar to what everyone thinks it is about. The EYS is rife with equivocation vis-à-vis the subtle yet persistent divide between childcare and education. An ambiguous political rhetoric regarding the impact of high-quality Early Years intervention prevails, whilst still not valuing said



importance or equating it with the right levels of public investment. Evidence of a growing crisis in the EYS would have specific relevance for political goals and raising standards overall and is therefore of crucial political and pedagogical concern despite the political penchant for sitting on the sidelines of this issue. The insufficiency of research literature, the complexity of unclear professional parameters, internal and external pressures, and the ever growing scope of the remit of the EYS form the primary incentive for the study. The study will highlight the characteristics of, and reasons related to the phenomenon by exploring the current context of the EYS from a more localised perspective. The main objective is making sense by means of empirical evidence to inform action through evidence-based intervention.

#### 1.4 Significance of the study

This section will provide a brief description of the significance of the study within the context of four categories: ‘Pedagogical’, ‘Political’, ‘Economic’ and ‘Empirical’ (see diagram 1.1 below).



*Diagram 1.1 Significance of the study*

The current context as described makes it necessary to ask these questions:

- What are the characteristics of the perceived leadership crisis in the EYS?
- Why do we have a perceived leadership crisis in the EYS? (How did it develop into a crisis?).
- Which strategies could be developed to address the perceived leadership crisis in the EYS?

### **1.5 Structure of the thesis**

This thesis contains six chapters which are organised as follows:

Chapter one is an introduction to the research topic, it précis the significance and scope of the research. A brief review of the current context of the EYS and a brief outline of the background of the research are also provided.

Chapter two reviews some influential epistemic research and the academic and theoretical frameworks which facilitate clarification, examination and interpretation of the complexities and distinctive features of the perceived leadership crisis in the EYS.

Chapter three addresses the research design adopted to achieve the stated aims and objectives and presents a detailed explanation of the methods and methodology utilised. This chapter also explains how the research was carried out with specific reference to participants in the study, the instruments used and the justification of their use as well as the specific attention given to ethical concerns, problems and limitations of the research.

Chapter four reports the findings without interpretation, inference, or evaluation. As a case study investigation however, interpretive and factual details have been interwoven in respect of furnishing evidence for the research questions outlined in Chapter one.

Chapter five presents a discussion of the findings, as well as the development of a framework for reasoning regarding explicit knowledge which has come to light. It also seeks to develop leadership strategies to address the crisis in the EYS by combining epistemological and empirical knowledge.

Chapter six concludes the research by providing a summary of the problem, the main findings and the discussion. It also provides recommendations for the EYS alongside suggestions for further research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores dominant themes that relate to the three core research questions and the literature associated with the perceptions of a leadership crisis in the EYS. The chapter is structured first as a historical overview of the EYS, secondly as a current overview of the sector, and thirdly as a thematic review that presents six dominant themes with ensuing sections which cover the characteristics of, and reasons and recommendations for the perceived leadership crisis, offering a description of diverse theoretical perspectives which are germane to each theme. An examination of the narrative that informs this research and facilitates discourse was undertaken by reviewing books, empirical research studies and papers from experts in leadership and management and school effectiveness, to provide a theoretical framework for capturing the fundamental nature of this phenomenon. The first review of literature was undertaken between 2009 and 2012 and due to a period of illness, a second review was carried out between 2015 and 2017. As a result, the literature review covers a wide date range of sources; from literature searched for historical content in 1967 through to current issues in 2017. However, the length of the literature review demonstrates the relevance of this research within a changing context and has also led to the discovery of insightful trends such as circumstances that were being experienced and have intensified over the time period. The literature connected to the EYS generally zones into issues of sufficiency, access, affordability and a wide and ever increasing range of Early Years policy reform. Literature on the totality of the EYS and the context of leadership within that, is still underrepresented in current research literature (Rodd, 2006, Siraj-Blatchford and Manni, 2007, Miller and Cable 2010).

During the review process it became clear that there was very little literature to be found on personal experience subjects like succession planning, work/life balance, the operational context of PVI sector and the culture within Early Years environments. To provide contextual information and ensure a firm foundation for this review, literature from the compulsory school sectors was used due to more extensive studies being readily available; documentary sources and despite their limitation, empirically based publications on the PVI sector were also used to provide a diverse yet balanced viewpoint. This chapter therefore proposes to place the research into context and systematically review this wider field which has contributed to the understanding of the perceptions of a leadership crisis in the EYS. The relentless pace of political reform in the EYS has also made it necessary to explore the impact of change as a contributing factor to the perceived leadership crisis.

Hart (2008) refers to the “progressive narrowing of the topic, through the literature review, that makes most research a practical consideration” (p.14). He suggests that this process encourages the researcher to think rigorously about their topic. In this regard, a comprehensively systematic search was performed by using key relevant search terms such as: ‘leadership development’, ‘succession planning’, ‘educational reform’, ‘educational leadership’, ‘recruitment’, ‘retention’, ‘leadership in the EYS’ and ‘politics and the EYS’. This produced a number of papers and books that were considered for relevance and reduced to a smaller number to be more fully explored. Relevant articles and journals also highlighted papers that provided references ranging from as far back as the ‘1940s’ to many published in the last decade with due regard being given to recent papers on issues which are currently impacting the Early Years. The review focuses mainly on UK based authors, although literature from North America, Europe and the Australasia region will be used in the

discussion regarding the EYS, as it is important to consider different regional and cultural constructs in this area.

Documentary sources were considered essential to add contextual weight to the reviewed literature. Prior (2003) refers to the symbiotic relationship between “human agents” and “things” such as documents (p.3). Prior also likens documentary sources to an ‘inert opera libretto’ (p.173) “which cannot be read on its own but has to be understood in the context of the whole action, drama, music and performance of the opera” (Cohen *et al* 2007, p.201). The review therefore considers government reports and literature from relevant agencies such as the Department for Education (DfE), the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), and the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) as well as journals and the internet, which have been utilised to support “pattern recognition” (Prior 2003, p.38) and building of the case.

The overriding observation from an extensive review on the EYS is one of a wide range of labels, terminologies and definitions. The EYS within the UK consists of an array of maintained and PVI settings offering a range of services for young children including childcare, education, health, family support and early intervention. For the purposes of this research we are looking at Early Years education and care based on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum (DCSF, 2008) as offered in Nursery Schools, Nursery and Reception classes in Primary Schools, Children’s Centres and a range of PVI settings. The specific focus is on issues associated with leadership, education and care that support learning and development for children in the period before they begin Year 1 in primary school; within this scope the complexly multi-layered EYS and the perceived threat to the sustainability of its current context will be examined. This chapter also explores the

divergent approach to Children Services as clarified by policy-based sources, as well as the literature linked to workforce and management matters given that the systems and people supporting the EYS are the most significant aspect of this study.

## **2.2 Historical overview of EYS**

The development of a publicly-funded Early Years system in the UK over the past 100 years has been erratic and lacking a planning strategy (West, 2010, West and Noden, 2016). The roots of Early Years policies and programs in Europe are grounded in two main mid-19<sup>th</sup> century developments as explained by Kamerman (2006):

- “Protective services for neglected children and the children of the poor working mothers; and
- Preschool education focused on enhancing or enriching the development of middle-class children” (p.15).

Kamerman further explains that during and after World War II, responding to the needs of an increasing number of women in the labour force who needed good-quality and affordable childcare began to shape policies for the EYS. The basis of class and poverty appears to be embedded in the very roots of the Early Years system, as infant schools were cited as providing “inferior” care and education for working-class children, while middle-and upper-class children were cared for at home by nannies and attended part-time kindergarten.

Kamerman contends that failure to integrate the early education philosophy of the kindergarten with the poorer quality education that was on offer for working-class children “contributed to the decline in popularity of nursery education in 20<sup>th</sup> century England” (p.11). Moss and Penn (2003, p.52) refer to reforms that seek to establish the EYS as a

“comprehensive, integrated and coherent early childhood service, reflecting contemporary needs and conditions” as history repeating itself.

### ***2.2.1 The Shaping Agenda***

Possibly the most significant educational report for the existing model of nursery education is the Plowden Report (1967) which endorsed child-centred education and established nursery education as part-time and not before the age of three. Plowden made the case for nursery education when she stated that “that nursery provision on a substantial scale is desirable, not only on educational grounds but also for social, health and welfare considerations” (p. 117). Moss and Penn (Devereux and Miller, 2003) noted that this report “profoundly shaped the delivery of nursery education in the UK, part-time nursery classes attached to primary schools became the norm” (p.23). Another aspect of the shaping agenda is attributable to the catalytic power of The Education Reform Act 1988 (HMSO, 1988) which is still unintentionally shaping Early Years education in the UK. It was the first time a National Curriculum for England and Wales was set out, which resulted in a significant and comprehensive reorganisation of the educational system in England and the implementation of a subject-based approach for teaching children of compulsory school age. It promoted the teaching of core and other foundation subjects and embedded the concept of raising standards in the wording of the document which details “attainment targets”, “Programmes of study” and assessment arrangements (p.2) alongside the child’s entitlement to “a balanced and broadly based curriculum” (p.1). Although not applicable to children under statutory school age, this Act had an undeniable effect on nursery education:

- It heralded more active government involvement in curriculum planning, which had a ripple effect on decreasing teacher autonomy.



- The subject-based approach inevitably conflicted with the child-centred approach to nursery education.

Alexander and Flutter (2009) sum up the tension between the Plowden Report and the National Curriculum in this statement: “‘At the heart of the educational process lies the child,’ announced the Plowden Report in 1967. ‘The school curriculum is at the heart of education,’ retorted the government in 1981, during the countdown to England’s National Curriculum” (p.3). This statement exemplifies the tension between the vision of the educationalist and the vision of policy-makers, and is further complicated by the fact that “during the 1980s and early 1990s there was a lack of political conviction that young children mattered” (Pugh and Duffy 2010, p.8). Pugh and Duffy detail the perplexing and sometimes conflicting messages about what was required from an Early Years policy at this time:

- Should it be “most concerned about preparing children for school, or with day-care for working parents?
- Should it provide stimulation for a developing brain or equal opportunities for women?
- Was it about cost savings for employers, able to retain staff when they became parents or about reducing the benefit bill for single parents, enabling them to return to the workforce?
- Or was prevention the main driver – whether of developmental delay in children or juvenile crime?”(p.9).

This is quite an interesting observation regarding the 1980s and 1990s when the EYS was still being shaped; these issues are still relevant today and now inform an active aspect of the

reforming agenda. They provide an important basis for integrated working, which promotes Early Years policy as all of the above, and then some!

### ***2.2.2 The Reshaping agenda***

Since the Plowden Report in 1967, Early Years education has shifted from the periphery of government policy to being a component of government vision and aspirations. After the accidental impact of The Education Reform Act 1988 on Early Years education, the Rumbold Report (Rumbold, 1990) constituted a focused agenda for Early Years curriculum development during the period of escalating education policy initiatives: “these initiatives have been part of a wider policy remit to develop a modern childcare and education system which reflects significant changes in pre-school provision, and responds to the needs and priorities of different policy players and stakeholders” (Wood 2007, p.126). In the 1990’s social protection policies became a hard target in the policy-making agenda. This was more than likely heralded by two significant aspects of the reshaping agenda which are the 1989 Children Act and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which came into force in 1990. Although the primary focus was still education, these various initiatives addressed wider issues such as “social inclusion and inequality”, and raised public awareness of the need for a more systematic approach in tackling issues to do with the wellbeing of young children (Faulkner and Coates 2013, p.9).

Pugh (2001) points out that although the Rumbold Report had very little recognition from the government at the time; it became known as the “basis for best practice in the Early Years settings” (p.10). Four years later; Early Years education was back on the political radar due to the respected Royal Society of Arts Report (Ball, 1994) which restated the importance of the Early Years, and promoted fundamentals for “high-quality” provision: suitable early learning

curriculum; recruitment; continued professional development and retention of staff; high staff:children ratios; purpose built buildings and equipment designed for early learning and development; and parents as partners in their children's learning (p.6). These tenets have prevailed in the EYS and even withstood recent attempts to deregulate staff:child ratios, as reported in the BBC news. Headlined as 'Nursery ratio changes abandoned', the article explains that "ratios for two-year-olds were going to rise from four children per adult to six children per adult, and for children aged under one from three children per adult to four children per adult" (Harrison, 2013).

In 1996, the Conservative government introduced a Nursery Voucher scheme through the curriculum document, *Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning on Entering Compulsory Education*. The scheme was abolished in 1997 by the incoming Labour Government, but it left an indelible mark on Early Years education by allowing parents to use nursery vouchers for their children in any kind of Early Years provision, if these provisions could demonstrate that they were moving children towards 'Desirable Outcomes'. This is significant, as Desirable Outcomes are defined as learning goals to be achieved by children by after their fifth birthday when they enter the compulsory school system. These learning goals were designed to provide a foundation in Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum (DfEE, 1996). SCAA (1996) specified early literacy and numeracy, which traditionally fell under the education agenda and were now open to anyone, with the added incentive of £1,100 per child aged four years old for part time 'education' for up to three terms. Despite a growing variety of Early Years provision, nursery schools and nursery classes were always acknowledged as an integral part of the Early Years policy vision during this period. This changed under the Conservative Government as the "the central ideology" at the time was "free-market enterprise" and it was foreseen that nursery education would be expanded through the PVI sectors in "competition with the state maintained sector" (Faulkner and Coates 2013, p.9).

This clearly had implications for the PVI sector suddenly having to meet a school readiness agenda. In addition, the maintained sector would suddenly be in competition with the business sector without the capacity to compete with the flexibility of the PVI offer. The table below itemises key dates that help to reshape the EYS in Britain from 1998 to 2001.

<b>1998</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsibility for early years passes from Department of Health to Department of Education and Skills</li> </ul>
<b>1999</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government announces responsibility for regulation of early years services will pass to Ofsted</li> </ul>
<b>2000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage published</li> </ul>
<b>2001</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsibility for regulation of day care and childminding passed to Ofsted</li> <li>Local Authorities obliged for the first time to provide information, advice and training services in early years field</li> </ul>

*Diagram 2.1 Key dates in the development of Early Years Adapted from Baldock et al, (2009, p.36)*

During this period according to Naumann (2011):

- Childcare became an integral part of New Labour's economic policy.
- A 'Sure Start' programme was introduced to provide public Early Years services in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.
- "The government initiated various supply-side measures of 'pump priming' and start-up funding, which encouraged private providers to establish ECEC services, but it did not increase state funding for LA's to fulfil their obligations" (p.46).

During the Labour administration, funding was devolved to Local Authorities; originally funding for the maintained sector and PVI providers were dealt with differently, "free early education in maintained primary and nursery schools was funded by the government's Revenue Support Grant (specifically the Education Standard Spending Assessment (SSA), based on population, cost and additional educational needs) and local council tax" (West and Noden 2016, p.6). Local Education Authorities then distributed this with regard to relevant

regulatory specifications. Conversely, the allocation of funds for PVI providers has been markedly varied since 1998. “When the Nursery Education Grant was in place, Local Authorities operated as ‘paymasters’ on behalf of the government. However, once this grant ended, each Local Authority was responsible for determining the rate at which PVI providers would be funded” (p.7). It seems possible that a lack of strategic vision for the EYS at governmental level at this point, inevitably resulted in a lack of co-ordination in the national development of the EYS.

### ***2.2.3 The Performing agenda***

During the early 2000’s the Labour government were committed to raising standards and invested more in public funding of Early Years education by providing funding directly to nursery schools for part-time places for four-year-old children. The funding was dependent on regular inspections using the framework which was revised as Early Learning Goals in the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (QCA, 2000). The Care Standards Act also came into force at this time and widened Ofsted’s remit into inspection of preschool settings. These initiatives appeared to support quality assurance for parents and would also provide a basis for demonstrable value for money for the government but also spearheaded an indelible focus on “technical competency and performativity” as explained by Osgood (2006), as despite the increasingly blurred parameters between the PVI sector and the maintained school sector, Early Years education was still focused on early numeracy and literacy. Pugh (2001) sums up these new initiatives as feeling more “like a bolt-on approach to policy-making than a coherent policy for children from birth to six years” (p.12).

### ***2.2.4 The Reforming agenda***

Early Years becomes less linear and far more complex from this point onwards with the introduction of the 2003 Green Paper (DfES, 2003) which led to the Children Act 2004. This

Green Paper represented a “comprehensive programme of reform for children’s services” with the key underpinning principles being: “more closely integrated frontline delivery of educational, health, social and specialist services; earlier intervention to provide support before problems become serious; closer working between professionals who might be involved with the same child or young person; more coherent planning and commissioning of services at the combined local level—and the establishment of Children’s Trusts (or similar arrangements) to support this; and greater involvement of children, parents and carers in the development of services” (Education and Skills Committee 2005, p.3). The diagram below summarises policy reform from 2002 through to 2008.

<b>2002</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criminal Records Bureau begins work</li> <li>• Education Act allows schools to provide day care</li> <li>• Birth to Three Matters published</li> <li>• Guidance on Children’s Trusts issued</li> <li>• Government Inter-Departmental Review of Childcare published</li> <li>• Unified Sure Start Unit established in DfES</li> </ul>
<b>2003</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laming Report on Victoria Climbié case</li> <li>• Green Paper Every Child Matters published</li> <li>• Announcement of ‘Children’s’ Centres programme</li> <li>• Children’s Commissioner for Northern Ireland takes up post</li> </ul>
<b>2004</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Common Core Prospectus’ for early years drafted</li> <li>• Bichard Report on the Soham murders published</li> <li>• System for ‘light touch’ regulation of nannies announced</li> <li>• EPPE (Effective Provision of Pre-school Education) Report published</li> <li>• Government’s Ten Year Strategy for Childcare published</li> <li>• Children Act 2004</li> <li>• Children’s Commissioner for Scotland appointed</li> <li>• Childcare Working Group set up by Assembly government in Wales</li> </ul>
<b>2005</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children’s Commissioner for England appointed</li> <li>• Announcement of changes to the periods between inspection of care and education services for young children</li> <li>• England’s children’s commissioner starts work</li> <li>• General election – Labour Party wins third term in office</li> <li>• Children’s workforce Development Council for England starts work</li> <li>• National Sure Start evaluation published</li> </ul>
<b>2006</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline framework of new EYFS published</li> <li>• 2006 Childcare Act</li> <li>• First cohorts of candidates finish secure EYFS</li> </ul>
<b>2008</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of new EYFS in England</li> </ul>

*Diagram 2.2 Key dates in the development of Early Years Adapted from Baldock et al, (2009, p.36)*

The Every Child Matters Green Paper (DfES, 2003) spearheaded the Children's Centre agenda which focuses on Integrated Services and local change. The government agenda for the Early Years had broadened extensively and was envisaged as a ten year programme (West and Noden, 2016). At this stage policy development started taking place at a redoubtable pace with OPSI (2006) overtly endorsing the PVI sector by deeming Local Authority provision to be "the last resort", once all other mechanisms of provision have been exhausted. The underlying principle behind this as stated by OECD (2006) is, "to supplement public expenditure, widen the sources of service supply, introduce competition into the provision of services and provide parents with more provider choice and greater flexibility in services" (p.108). Whilst the principle sounds egalitarian; Campbell-Barr (2014) views the concept as a "neo-liberal choice agenda" resulting in "funding streams that looked to increase the levels of provision and those that looked to stimulate purchasers, such as the funding of free Early Years education places and the Tax Credit initiative" (p.7).

Diagram 2.3 below is a synopsis of policy reform regarding funding Early Years over the last twenty years.

<b>Year</b>	<b>National policy development</b>
1996	Nursery voucher (Phase 1 Pilot, 4 local authorities)
1997	Nursery voucher (Phase 2 England) April Abolished September
1998	Entitlement to free part-time education for 4-year-olds 12.5 hours a week, 33 weeks a year
2004	Entitlement extended to 3-year-olds
2006	Entitlement increased to 38 weeks
2009	Offer of 10-15 hours to most disadvantaged 2-year-olds
2010	Entitlement increased to 15 hours a week spread over 3-5 days
2012	Same entitlement spread over 2-5 days
2013	Entitlement extended to 20% most disadvantaged 2-year-olds (eligibility criteria specified)
2014	Entitlement extended to 40% most disadvantaged 2-year-olds
2015	Early years pupil premium introduced for 3- and 4- year-olds

*Diagram 2.3 Policy developments regarding public funding of Early Years education.  
Adapted from West and Noden (2016, p.10).*

In addition, from 2017, 30 hours free childcare for three- to four-year-old children of working parents would be accessible if certain criteria are met. It is noticeable that the quality agenda appears to have slipped from the political purview in recent times (Naumann, 2011, Butler and Harvey, 2016, Stewart and Waldfogel, 2017), and it would also appear that the EYS agenda is prolifically geared towards parents at this point; in principle this could be contestable, due to workforce developments between 2007 and 2013 which have been running apace entitlements for parents (see Diagram 2.4 below).

<b>Year</b>	<b>National policy development</b>
<b>2007</b>	The Children's Plan introduced the requirement for every full day-care centre to have a graduate on its staff. Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) was introduced.
<b>2008</b>	The Labour Government published the 2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy to ensure that everyone who worked with children and young people had the skills, knowledge and motivation to ensure that young people are safe and can develop and succeed across the outcomes that underpin Every Child Matters.
<b>2013</b>	More Great Childcare: Raising Quality and Giving Parents More Choice – Introduction of Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS) to replace EYPS.

**Diagram 2.4 Policy developments for the EYS workforce. Adapted from Faulkner and Coates (2013, p.16-20)**

Stewart and Waldfogel (2017) clarify the current position on graduate leadership of the EYS which has seen the removal of financial support for graduate training, the elimination of Local Authorities' CPD role and also the lifting of the requirement for graduate-led early education in Children's Centres. They also point out that "one third of staff working in group-based care still lack either English or Maths GCSE or both. A current proposal to remove the requirement for maintained nursery and reception classes to have a qualified teacher is particularly worrying, and could affect children in disadvantaged areas most of all" (p.3).

Policy reform for the EYS is both layered and intricate; alongside workforce reform and reform regarding childcare access, is ongoing funding reform. "In 2006-07, funding for eligible under-fives, including the delivery of the free entitlement in both maintained and



non-maintained sector providers was consolidated within a new, earmarked Dedicated Schools Grant” (West and Noden 2016, p.7). At this point the government attempted to manoeuvre Local Authorities’ towards a single rate for funding the EYS. However, the legislative framework for maintained schools meant that children under five had to be treated in the same way as children over five, and they attracted additional funds through Local Authority school funding formulas for “additional educational needs”, while PVI’s were funded on actual places broken down into sessions (p.19). In 2011 a new local Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) was implemented to “incorporate a standardised transparent method for setting the basic unit of funding” for both maintained schools and PVI providers (p.7). In April 2017, a new Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) was brought in to replace the EYSFF (DfE 2016, Jarrett and Perks, 2017). DfE (2016) stipulated that “funding levels should be determined by relative costs of delivery (and influenced by market prices in local markets). Instead they are driven by historic spending patterns and widely varied/unpredictable council decisions.” Funding reform has been turbulent for the sector over the last decade and the current position would appear to further concrete a market ideology; alongside the removal of funding for a graduate-led sector, this could certainly be perceived as a step backwards for the communities that are most in need of high-quality early education provision.

Added to this funding landscape is the constantly evolving benefit and tax credit system. Projected changes to this system are seen by Stewart and Waldfogel (2017) as “undoing much of the progress of the early 2000s”, they state that even well designed policies for supporting parents and ensuring access to high-quality early education, would struggle to fulfil their potential against these conditions (p.4). The element of complexity is inescapable with the added layers of public opinion, time constraints and depleting resources supporting

Moss and Penn's (2003) contention that history is repeating itself especially when protective services are a key factor of the current EYS and early education appears to be still selective in regard to quality and affordability. Naumann (2011) states that "policy developments in welfare states continue to be shaped by historical trajectories but not in a steady or linear fashion; nor do they evolve neatly from one 'paradigm' or 'regime' to another, but may include the maturation of old welfare-state promises alongside the exploration of new paths" (p.50). It would appear to be counterproductive for respective governments to reform the EYS based on seemingly divided philosophies, even whilst attempting to forge new pathways. Unfortunately, the magnitude of the impact of reform can only be viewed in retrospect. Pisano (2011), though speaking more broadly about education in general, pointed out that after thirty years of "intensive critical analysis and educational reform" there is a sense of bewilderment with regard to the next steps in the debate about "achieving an educational policy consensus" (p.52).

### **2.3 A current overview of the EYS nationally**

"Britain has never had a national policy on Early Childhood Services based on a considered, informed, sustained and broad public vision. There have been long periods of public neglect, when options have been regularly closed off in a thoughtless manner because early childhood has not had a regular and valued place on the public agenda" (Moss and Penn 2003, p.2).

These authors contend that the sporadic bursts of political activity have failed to identify or address crucial questions about "direction, purpose and concept", due to the "lack of a shared and sustained vision" for the EYS. They further explain that there is not one "immutable concept" for Early Childhood Services and clearly articulate an understanding of the complexity of the EYS explaining, that a nice, neat definition will oversimplify the intricacies of the operational context (p.52). Nationally, nursery education for three-and four-year-old children have historically been met as one distinct strand of public provision for children

under the age of compulsory education. The other strand was traditionally referred to as Early Years care. The EYS became divided between ‘care’ and ‘education’, mainly due to the fact that ministerial responsibility sat with both the Department of Health and the Department for Education. These two categories of provision differed in terms of purpose, establishments, staff qualifications and administrative organisation. Early Years education as delivered in nursery schools, nursery and reception classes in primary schools fall under the strand of public provision as maintained schools and are generally run by Local Authority education departments although in the current educational context, they could also be run by new providers that have entered the state school system. This public provision was traditionally co-located alongside private sector care services sometimes in a variety of combinations to suit parental need (Hillman and Williams 2015, Butler 2016). The funding scenario today is still fragmented and far more complex; however, these two strands have been syncretised ostensibly through seemingly arbitrary political design to become the current EYS, with public funding being “available to nursery and primary schools in the statutory sector, as well as to private and voluntary sector nurseries so long as they meet nationally approved standards” (Pugh and Duffy 2010, p.12).

The EYS, for the purposes of this research, represents the vast spectrum of provision that delivers Early Years provision in the UK with the main defining factors being the age range of birth- to-six-years-old, and the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum (DfE, 2012, DfE, 2014). In this way, it looks critically for evidence of the perceived crisis whilst recognising that the review is not exhaustive. The necessity of the EYS is not in question, however the context of the current EYS is twofold: first it is at a pivotal position for exploration and transformation, and secondly, it is restricted by the expectations of the party that is in power, so even though economic growth and investment is

essential, the EYS is deferential to the values that will influence transformation from both inside and outside the EYS. OECD (2000) itemises a national overview of the EYS (see Diagram 2.5 below), which despite being nearly eighteen years old, comprehensively highlights the current context of the EYS with a few minor adaptations.

<b>Nursery school</b>	A state-funded school normally providing early education for children between the ages of 2 and 5 prior to the commencement of compulsory education at primary school during the regular school year.
<b>Nursery class</b>	A class serving children 2- 4 years of age and is located in a state-funded primary or infant school.
<b>Reception class</b>	The first class of compulsory education in a state-funded primary or infant school, serving children aged 4 -5+. Full-time places (9-3:30 during school terms only) are provided.
<b>Special school</b>	A school serving children with special needs from three years of age and upwards. The school may be a day or boarding school operating during the regular school terms.
<b>Pre-schools/playgroups</b>	Occasional, sessional, or all-day pre-schools or playgroups serving children 2-5, run by parents, a non-profit organisation or by a for-profit business.
<b>Independent schools</b>	Run by private companies or trusts, these schools serve children from three years of age and upwards and operate on a fee-paying basis.
<b>Before and after school club</b>	Activities for children three and older operating before and after school hours.
<b>Holiday club</b>	Activities for children when school is not in session
<b>Local authority day nurseries</b>	Locally-funded centres for children from birth to five years of age who are considered to be at-risk of educational failure.
<b>Private day nurseries</b>	Nurseries run by employers (workplace nurseries) or private companies, providing part time or full day sessions to children from birth to five years of age.
<b>Parent-toddler group</b>	Informal group for parents and children under five.
<b>Childminder</b>	Caregiver who provides full- or part-time care for children in their own home.
<b>Nanny/au pair</b>	Caregiver who provides full- or part-time care for children in the family's home.
<b>Children's Centres</b>	Centres that offer a range of services, including full-day care for children birth to five, drop-in facilities, outreach, family support, health care, adult education, parenting classes.
<b>Combined maintained sector school/Children Centre</b>	Centres that offer both early education and day-care for children birth to five, sometimes with extended day and full year options, offering a range of services, including full-day care for children birth to five, drop-in facilities, outreach, family support, health care, adult education, parenting classes and practitioner training.

*Diagram 2.5 Overview of the Early Years Sector in England. Adapted from (OECD 2000, p.6-7)*

## 2.4 Thematic exploration of the perceptions of a leadership crisis

As a nursery school head teacher I had a number of concerns about the EYS:

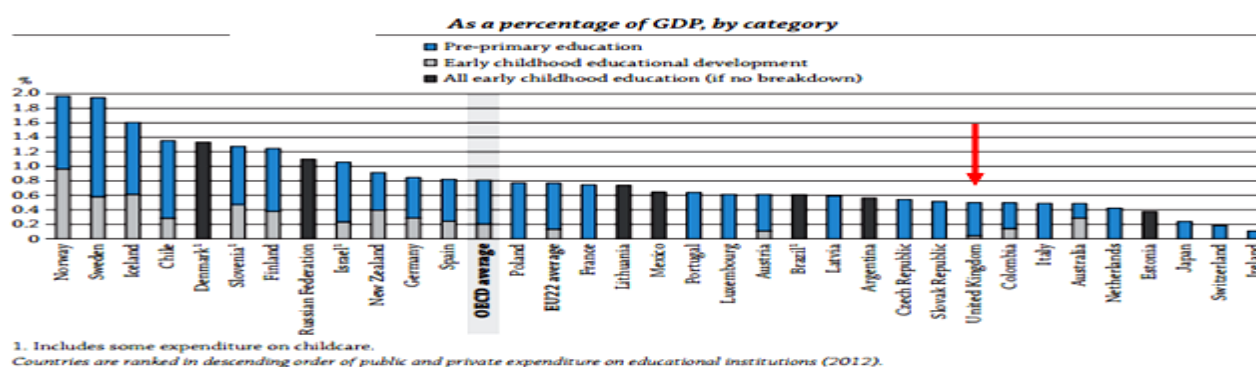
- The almost covert disappearance of nursery schools and children's centres (Early Education, 2015, Butler and Rutter, 2016).
- Recruitment and retention issues in an aging and predominantly female workforce and the impact on succession planning (Rhodes and Brundett, 2008, Brind *et al*, 2011).
- Confusing and complex funding mechanisms and the impact of deep budget cuts on quality, resources and staffing (Early Education, 2014, Butler and Rutter, 2016, DfE, 2016, Andrews *et al*, 2017).
- The confusing qualifications landscape and the poor status of being a teacher in the EYS (Cooke and Lawton, 2008, Nutbrown, 2012, Faulkner and Coates, 2013).
- Working in a sector that competes with private businesses for the educational outcomes of young children (Lloyd, 2010, Faulkner and Coates, 2013, Hillman and Williams, 2015).
- The lack of consistency in a sector which operates with education based and non-education based practitioners delivering the same Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum (Campbell-Barr, 2010, Miller and Cable, 2010, Butler, 2016).
- The confusion of an inspection regime where an 'outstanding' grade needs to be interpreted against different legislative frameworks (Ofsted, 2015).

Having examined the historical evolution of the EYS and begun to consider how it contributes to the current context, this section of the literature review provides a firm foundation for the discussion generated by wider reading, and will also provide a foundation for the core research questions connected to the characteristics of, reasons for, and recommendations regarding the perceived leadership crisis. This section will first explore three themes: 'Structural', 'Environmental' and 'Economic'; and will then discuss the

characteristics of the crisis: the poor design of the sector, its exponential growth, its fragmentation, the destabilisation of the current EYS, as well as a conceptual contradiction at the sector's heart, entailing an irreconcilable dualism. Secondly, it will explore two themes: 'Political' and 'Cultural', and the reasons for the development of the crisis: deficit thinking, path dependency, internal conflicts and the tenuous position of leadership in the EYS. Lastly, it will explore paradigmatic themes within the literature and recommendations from the literature.

### 2.4.1 Theme 1: Structural – Characteristic: Poor design of the sector

“The institutional structure of the ECEC system in England, which until 1998 evolved in the absence of any large scale government intervention, has exhibited strong continuity as a profoundly mixed economy with a large private for-profit sector in both care *and* education for the under-fives” (Lewis and West 2016, p.1). In Scandinavian countries Early Childhood education is publicly-funded and seen as a public interest while in the USA, Early Childhood education settings are mainly private: “The output of the society is limited” which makes “Early Childhood education, look like a private interest” (p.19). The current UK context has one of the highest enrolments of four-year-olds into nursery and primary education in 2014 even though the UK’s annual investment in education is still one of the lowest at 0.5% of our overall Gross Domestic Product (GDP).



**Diagram 2.6 Expenditure on Early Childhood Educational Institutions as a percentage of GDP (2013) (OECD 2016, p.304)**

Nivala and Hujala (2002) explain that there will always be a need for ‘early education’ and ‘care’. However, they point out that this is according to the emphasis that different societies place on early childhood education. The USA context is quite similar to the UK, which Dahlberg and Moss (2005) refer to as a “liberal welfare state” which “places more reliance on the individual paying fees for services and less on financing through taxation” (p.132). OECD (2006) explains that investments in Early Years services are still limited because “in the liberal economies, although States may help families in their child-rearing tasks, governments generally judge that they have little responsibility to support universal ECEC institutions, except to facilitate the labour market or to prepare young children for schools” (p.39). Since this report; investments in the EYS by successive governments have been considerable, even though not optimal, the concern however, is whether investments are sustainable against a poorly designed system. Lloyd (2010) explains that the UK is almost unique in Europe in relying on a “childcare market of private businesses to deliver a significant proportion of nursery education”, Lloyd further explains that other European countries that operate childcare markets, do so in a different way. “For instance, whereas the Netherlands and France employ similar mixed economies of childcare for the children of employed parents, early education is delivered within the school system. As a result, its quality is unaffected by the impact of market dynamics on the operations of private childcare businesses delivering this service” (p.146).

Gammage (2006) suggests that ethical dilemmas exist in the strategic design of Early Childhood Services as “some prefer to pay for specific religious beliefs; some to pay for the ‘right peers and climate’. Yet others (particularly the Nordic countries) point to good early childhood experience as an especial ethos, a social ‘glue’ in a well-functioning democracy, a state need, not something to be simply regarded as a privilege or a commodity. Be that as it

may, political perspectives vary, from those on the Right seeing it as a purchase and choice approach, to those of the Left who see it as a way of producing a more equal and balanced society”(p.10-11). The UK “operates a strong centralised system” which means “the state remains strong despite appearing to devolve”, which could be a defensible position in respect of the government’s remit for focusing on families ‘in need’; however the “debate about the meaning of education has been overshadowed by a government agenda of increasing places and improving standards” (Dahlberg and Moss 2005, p.132-133). The prevailing issues appear to be a lack of definition of the nature of the EYS in the UK and the swinging pendulum of political diktats: “governments in Sweden and Britain have adopted very different approaches to preschools, which are inscribed with quite different values and understandings, for example about the boundaries between public and private (the preschool as public or private good, as entitlement or commodity), about the relationship between care and education, about the responsibility of national government, local government and individual institution, or about the construction and value of work with children. All these are intensely political issues, but also political issues that need to be decided at the national level” (p.134).

In the UK, the EYS operates in a climate of recurring change with perceptible fluidity between early childhood care being the responsibility of parents and a growing interest in Early Childhood education as ‘social insurance’. These conflicting policy goals which bifurcate in principle appear to sit behind the poor design of the sector. On the one hand the service is based on a supply-and-demand market place, and on the other hand is seen as a universal service to ensure ‘social insurance’ (Naumann, 2011, Lewis and West, 2016). Lewis and West (2016) describe the fall-out of this divided foundation as the deterioration of policy coherence (p.1). Butler and Rutter (2016) explain that a disproportionate focus on free



childcare could lock the UK into a “low-quality funding model, distract policy-makers from investment in early intervention services and will not address fundamental access and flexibility challenges” (p.6) thereby feeding the poor design of the sector and undermining ‘social insurance’ policy aims. Whilst there is substantial verification of the positive impact of a “well-designed investment in childcare”, the “nature of investment has to be comprehensive and of a high quality to anticipate a return on investment” (Butler and Rutter 2016, p.6). This is challenging in the current context of the EYS when the service is not “necessarily designed to fit working patterns and the design of work incentives could be improved” (Hillman and Williams 2015, p.7).

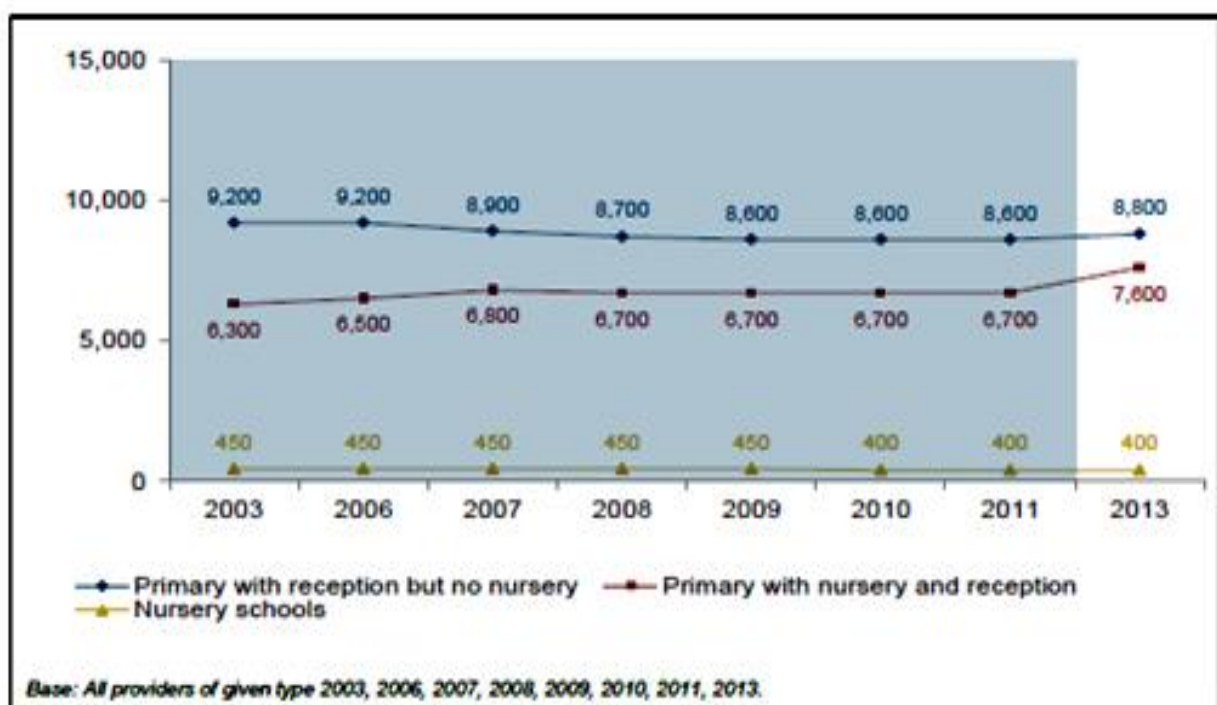
Improving on the design of the sector would entail having the right “structural resources” in place according to Butler (2016), who states that this would mean “expert, well-motivated practitioners with sufficient time to monitor children’s development and plan care; the right processes, such as arrangements for continuing quality improvement and professional development; and joint-working between early education and childcare settings and wider Early Years services” (p.3). Butler’s perspective is reminiscent of Freire’s concept of understanding a system and how it fits into concentrically wider systems for optimum effectiveness. Moss and Penn (2003) remind all concerned that in the current dysfunctional system “services and their staff, children and their parents suffer” (p.2). Freire (1996) takes this concept further by stating that “the concrete situation which begets oppression must be transformed” (p.32). This sentiment has support from Moss and Penn (2003) who believe that the child-care market and maintained sector can co-exist if the system is transformed and given clear purpose. It appears that a bold step from government officials may be needed, not only to “do things right” but also to “do the right thing”, and focus on the people within the systems and structures: “It requires clear direction to be given to service development, not leaving development to the free play of market forces” (Moss and Penn 2003, p.x). Clear

strategic direction is essential but so is the role of individuals in the transformation process; Freire (1996) states that “to combat subjectivist immobility which would divert the recognition of oppression in patient waiting for oppression to disappear by itself, is not to dismiss the role of subjectivity in the struggle to change structures” (p.32). It is apparent that those actively operational within the EYS cannot sit by waiting for things to change; they need to be reflective and clear on what is going to make things better.

#### **2.4.1.1 Characteristic: Exponential growth of the sector**

The EYS has grown exponentially over the last ten years seemingly under its own momentum; Blackburn (2014) values the current UK childcare market at £4.9bn. The sector is dominated by PVI providers and the rapid expansion in PVI provision is partly due to increased public investment (Brind *et al* 2011, Blackburn 2014, Hillman and Williams, 2015). Brind *et al* (2011) confirm that there has been “a dramatic transformation of the childcare market in England over the past decade” (p.2). Approximately 1.5 million of 3.1 million childcare places in childcare and Early Years are filled by the PVI sector leaving only 352,600 within nursery schools and nursery classes in primary schools and 734,000 reception places in primary schools (DfE 2016, p.4). Over twenty years ago, Ball (1994) described the growing trend towards privatised Early Years provision as “a slow growth of publicly-funded services and rapid expansion of the private sector” which is “lacking in commitment, co-ordination and cash” (p.34). Start Strong (2014) explains that “in those countries which have had historically low levels of ECEC provision, such as the UK and Australia, rapid expansion in childcare and nursery education in the last 20 years or so has been achieved through the encouragement of private for profit sector provision” (p.18). Market economics has influenced the EYS for over twenty years and to such an extent in the current context, that it is hard to perceive that a profit imperative was not always attached to early education.

However it appears that the Early Years market is here to stay as Lee (1996) suggests that the service industries will remain central to the “economic controversy” because “not only have they become part of the de-industrialisation and productivity debate, but they have also become part of the related arguments about privatisation and the role of the public sector” (p.8). The inescapability of neoliberalism and market economics is now so embedded and so ubiquitous in nature that any alternatives appear to be inconceivable. Consequently, in contrast to the outgrowth of the PVI sector there was a reported 10% decrease in the number of nursery schools with approximately only 400 remaining in England, “compared to 520 in 1999” (Early Education 2015, p.2). Diagram 2.7 below depicts the loss of fifty nursery schools between 2009 and 2010.



**Diagram 2.7 Number of school based providers between 2003 and 2013. Adapted from (Brind et al 2014, p.36).**

The PVI sector has grown rapidly, and is overrun with “over localised, mostly small, single-site providers with limited scale economies” (Upton 2016, p.1). Market consolidation would help to mitigate this issue but there has been very little consolidation (Blackburn, 2014,

Upton, 2016): Upton (2016) states that a lack of consolidation is not necessarily seen as a weakness in the system however, as a consequence, “there is a great deal of variability in prices paid by parents, and high rates of price inflation overall” (p.4). It would however appear that the lack of consolidation has created “frenzy and chaos” which has undermined the development of “values-based management cultures and opens the door for opportunistic grabs at individual power and wealth” (Senge 2006, p. xvii). Policy aims for the EYS are not always explicit and “the rapid expansion of provision seen over the past two decades may have privileged quantity over quality, and not given adequate consideration to the detailed aspects of Early Years settings that drive positive outcomes” (Hillman and Williams 2015, p.10).

Hayes (2007) explains that the Early Years “is hugely diverse in terms of settings, practices and the needs of parents and children. This diversity is welcome and reflects the different realities of childhood for children across time and context” (p.6). Consecutive UK governments have continued to commit to a mixed economy of providers and the promotion of parental choice (Hillman and Williams 2015, Lloyd, 2015). The DfE (2016) states that parents value autonomy in choosing their Early Years provider; however it is still the position that Early Years provision in disadvantaged areas is far less likely to have the same high-quality as provision in more affluent areas (Ofsted 2011, DfE 2013, p.26). Upton (2016) explains that while the DfE accepts that the childcare market is complex and consists of “a broad range of provider types and business models”, their assessment is that “the market functions reasonably well” (p.4). It would be advantageous to have some concrete measure of ‘reasonably well’ and whether this is assessed against performance, suitability or outcomes of the sector. Regardless of the government’s assessment; the lack of accessibility for high-quality provision would be little comfort for the targeted disadvantaged who are still entrenched in negative situational and demographically homogenous issues associated with

location, class, race, culture, low or no income, a cycle of intergenerational reliance on government benefits and for added complexity, any combination of these factors. This would also seem to be a contravention of successive governments stated remit for 'social insurance'.

Beveridge (1942) addresses post-war reconstruction of British society and the concept of 'social insurance' as "one part only of a comprehensive policy of social progress" (p.6). It is interesting that the post-war issues of "want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness" which are highlighted as "giants on the road to reconstruction", formed the basis for setting up free education, council housing, social security and a national health service - as in the current context, a similar set of 'giants' appears to be the basis for leaning towards privatisation of the same set of services. Beveridge also suggests that there was no justification for this situation but in defence of the current context, seventy years earlier issues like immigration, religious differences and multi-culturalism would not be as widespread as they are now. These issues have contributed further complexity to an already diverse framework of social need resulting in an indelible change in the landscape of British society and subsequently the complexity of conditions for young children. Moss (2001b) does present a counter argument, stating that the UK's diverse Early Years provision is calculated to "meet the diverse needs of parents" however Moss points out that "strong market orientation, polarised employment and high levels of poverty means that "the system is more socially divisive than most other countries" (p.31). If it is accepted that good quality care and education are a universal right for young children then the challenge would appear to be about delivering to meet diverse needs without being socially divisive.

A key factor in the growth explosion in the EYS has been the significant investment and governmental reform in recent years, both of which promote health, social care and education all working together in the EYS as integrated services and multi-agency work (Laming 2003,

Laming, 2009, Marmot, 2010, Field, 2010, Allen, 2011, Munro, 2011). The complex matrix of Early Years services spans “early education, children’s centres and health and social care” and is the responsibility of Local Authorities to integrate into “a coherent local offer ensuring each component contributes to wider policy objectives”(Butler and Hardy 2016, p.7).

However, Local Authority Early Years staff have seen their roles being diminished by recent changes in legislation and reduced budgets to Local Authorities (p.29). This context of having responsibility but steadily reducing capacity to undertake said responsibility would seem to be a key component of a poorly designed sector. Despite this research being twelve years old, OECD (2006) encapsulates the tensions for present and future governments in investing in the EYS, stipulating that the central issue is really about how much and what level, against these questions:

- “What measure of public funding and support should governments provide to families with young children in their jurisdiction?
- What are the services outside the home that need to be created?
- What is the adequate level of public funding, taking into account the present climate of controlled public spending?
- Can new sources of funding be created to finance early childhood services at a level consistent with quality and social equity?
- Should governments be involved in regulating and mapping services?” (p.20).

#### **2.4.2 Theme 2 Environmental – Characteristic: Fragmentation**

The concept of ‘fragmentation’ is prevalent in the literature to be found on the EYS in the UK, and appears to be deeply embedded in the perceptions of a leadership crisis. The

nuances regarding fragmentation are similar in some cases but different in others, which denote the extent and the seriousness of this issue (Cooper, 1963, Ball, 1994, Moss 2001b, Pugh 2001, Bottery 2004, Woodhead and Moss, 2007, Moss, 2012). Over the years, fragmentation resurfaces in the literature as a ‘catch phrase’ to describe a number of issues:

- “Professional training for work with children was as varied as in some cases it was expert” (Cooper 1963, p.142) – ‘training’.
- “Children attend different centres at different ages, for different lengths of time and are taught and viewed in somewhat different ways by different sorts of professionals” (Gammage 2006, p.4) – ‘service development’.
- The unplanned nature of the expansion of childcare provision has led to a significant degree of fragmentation in provision” (Butler and Rutter 2016, p.15) – ‘Early Years provision’.

Marshall (1996) states; “we fragmented ourselves, our beliefs, our behaviour, our organisations, our learning, our schools, and our world” (p.2). Senge (2006) concurs, explaining fragmentation as conditioning, he suggests that from an early age the concept of breaking apart problems is taught. Freire (1996) refers to this propensity as “oppressive cultural action” which places emphasis on a “focalised view of problems rather than seeing them as dimensions of a totality” (p.122). “Whilst the intentions are about making tasks and subjects more manageable, there is a hidden and enormous price to pay when we can no longer see the consequences of our actions; we lose our intrinsic sense of our connection to the larger whole. When we then try to ‘see the big picture’, we try to reassemble the fragments in our minds, to list and organize all the pieces” (Senge 2006, p.3). The current EYS is a complex, chaotic assembly of fragments: schools; the privatised ‘childcare’ market

infused with overlapping duplication; a myriad of qualifications; the lack of definition; EYFS and the EYNSFF - just to name a few.

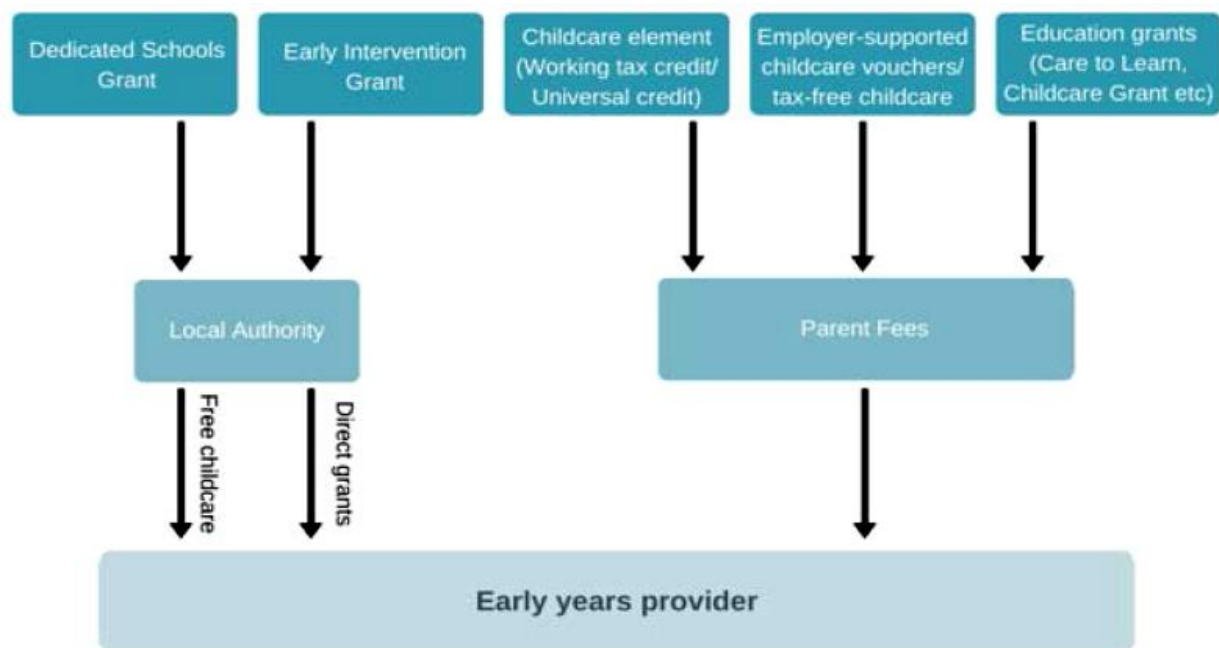
#### **2.4.2.1 Characteristic: Destabilisation of the current EYS**

The UK has a mature childcare system which is internationally recognised for its “near universal participation in early education” (Butler and Rutter 2016, p.16). However, successive governments have committed to a demand-led and supply-side childcare market, despite a number of concerns. Demand-led funding has led to “above inflation rises in childcare costs both in and outside of the UK” (Rutter 2015, p.7), and has created a heterogeneous childcare market that is difficult to cost; in other European regions where childcare is supply-led, provision is more homogenous and the true cost of childcare can be more definitively calculated (Penn and Lloyd 2013, p.14). “Whilst the government and in turn Local Authorities have substantive control over funding for free childcare, the ability of parents to top up funding to a sufficient level to fund a ‘full’ day-care service is a matter of market economics”(Butler and Rutter 2016, p.60). The hybrid or unclassified UK welfare context appears to have created complications that are steadily destabilising the EYS; documentary sources confirm that new policy initiatives have made the design of the sector even more complex (DfE, 2016, West and Noden, 2016, DfE, 2017, Andrews et al, 2017). Jones and Taylor (2015) point out that “these schemes typically have a relatively high number of recipients and award small amounts of money and, as a result, can be expensive to run, have a high risk of fraud and limited ability to determine the effectiveness of resulting outcomes” (p.3).

Diagram 2.8 below depicts the current funding system which Butler and Rutter (2016) also say is “excessively complex, delivers poor value for money and does not offer the means to effectively influence service provision” (p.6). This has a negative impact on the PVI



childcare market which suffers from high running costs with sole traders finding it difficult to survive in the current financial climate. “Operational difficulties included staff turnover, cost of premises, perceived shortcomings of the tax credit system and a drop-off in demand for places for three-and four-year-olds because of earlier entry to school” (Capacity 2005, p.5).



**Diagram 2.8 Current childcare funding system in England. Adapted from (Butler and Rutter 2016, p.60).**

Over a decade later, the sector is still faced with these difficulties and over twenty years ago Moss and Penn (1996) stated that “early childhood services are in a critical state and at a critical stage. The services are fragmented, inflexible, incoherent and full of inequalities, unable to meet the changing and varied needs of families” (p.vii). They further synoptically highlight the very basis of the concept of a destabilised EYS; “long periods of public neglect”... “interspersed by spasms of political activity which fail to identify or address critical questions about direction, purpose and concept because they draw on no shared and sustained vision” (Moss and Penn 2003, p.2). It seems obvious that a system that has no cohesive vision will eventually start working against itself. Osgood (2006) speaks about centralising reforms which are promoted as “giving greater freedom, but actually act to

deregulate and then re-regulate, which has the effect of de- and then re-professionalising” the workforce (p.6). This can only serve to further destabilise an already complex and fragmented EYS.

Freire (1996) states that “it is in the interest of the oppressor to weaken the oppressed still further, to isolate them, to create and deepen the rifts among them” through “the repressive methods of the government bureaucracy to the forms of cultural action with which they manipulate the people by giving them the impression that they are being helped” (p.122). The idea of political hegemony could seem plausible when fragmentation within the EYS is the result of government bureaucracy; however, it is debatable how much of the disintegration is deliberate and how much is the result of the lack of a national strategy for the EYS amidst the preservation of the *status quo* within a sector that is crying out for transformation. Woodhead (2006) perceives that “framing early education policy in terms of child rights” would be the right step towards stabilising the sector. He however acknowledges that this concept “departs radically from a conventional, instrumental paradigm, notably through the insistence on every young child’s entitlement to quality of life, to respect and to well being. Each entitlement is valued as an end in itself and not just as a means to achieve some distant goal of achieving potential” (p.27). The concept would seem to be in keeping with stated governmental aims for universal outcomes for young children; but conflicts with the concept of children as human capital.

### **2.4.3 Theme 3 Economic - Characteristic: Dualism within the EYS**

DfE (2016) imply that the maintained sector and the PVI sector are viewed as equal when they state that “the funding levels that different providers receive for delivering the same

entitlement vary considerably and not necessarily for good reasons”(p.5). However, Miller and Cable (2010) point out that professionally the EYS “has different starting points and has followed different paths. Individuals are also on a continuum of professional development and will vary at any point in time in relation to their professional knowledge, understanding and skills. The range and variety of spaces they are working in, the cultural, geographical and policy context of their work, working relationships and pedagogical practices” (p.2). Despite this, the entire EYS works to one Early Years curriculum and with the same expectations. Cooke and Lawton (2008) among others, cited this as a concern when the EYFS was first implemented, as it meant that the curriculum would be subject to how it is understood by providers and the workforce across the country, that were, and are still, not operating from a level playing field. The sector has historically operated on a division between ‘care’ and ‘education’ (Bertram and Pascal, 2002, Rodd, 2006). There appears to be a tenuous attempt to link care and education as equal aspects of child development when OPSI (2006) defines childcare as “any form of care for a child” including:

- (a) “education for a child, and
- (b) any other supervised activity for a child” (p.10).

However, there was no real attempt to articulate a vision of integrated care and education beyond this statement. This endemic divide has created “a schism between the maintained sector, where care is teacher-led, staff are paid with a public sector pay framework and work within their school’s professional framework, and the private and voluntary sector, where a minority of settings are led by a qualified graduate” (Butler and Rutter 2016, p.15).

Another factor that contributes to dualism is the issue of qualifications; DfE (2017) states that “a large percentage of Early Years staff were qualified to at least level 3” whereas “staff in

school-based settings were more likely to be qualified to degree level than those in other settings” (p.6). Against this backdrop it would seem counterintuitive to have the same expectations from the delivery of the EYFS; and despite DfE’s (2016) statement regarding ‘delivering the same entitlement’, it does appear that whilst not explicit, the goalposts are set differently as Butler and Rutter (2016) explain that “private and voluntary providers are subject to less stringent quality requirements than maintained settings” (p.15). The EYS has continued to grow at a phenomenal rate and has a high workforce quotient, but there is still no compromise on how to pitch the EYS at the right point where the triad of care, education and context are correctly balanced. It appears that education could be the tipping point that throws this balance off, due to an apparent lack of consensus about the level of qualification and leadership expertise needed.

Nutbrown (2012a) describes a lack of coherence surrounding a number of issues regarding qualifications, status, professional development and professionalism in the EYS. This lack of coherence translates into dualism in which the concept of ‘equal but different’ plagues the sector and where political actions appear to maintain the *status quo* while purporting to do things differently. Nutbrown (2012b) recommended that “government considers the best way to maintain and increase graduate pedagogical leadership in all Early Years settings” (p.44), with QTS being identified as the level of leadership expertise that is most effective in the EYS. Despite this, calls for a more professional workforce have resulted in a confusing matrix of ‘professional’ roles some of which are promoted as having ‘parity’ but carry different contractual terms and conditions and different salaries. EYPS is a prime example. When it was introduced it “was marketed as being equivalent to qualified teacher status, but not matched by equivalent pay and the qualification was not widely recognised” (Faulkner and Coates 2013, p.19). This trend has continued with the EYTS. Diagram 2.9 below depicts

the details of the two items which were not accepted from the nineteen recommendations from Nutbrown (2012b).

<b>Nutbrown Recommendation</b>	<b>Recommended Action by the Government</b>
<b>16)</b> A new early years specialist route to QTS, specialising in the years from birth to seven, should be introduced, starting from September 2013	<b>Not accepted.</b> We agree with Professor Nutbrown that there is a need to transform the status of the profession and we want more high quality graduates to consider a career in early education. We do not however, consider a route to the award of QTS is necessary to do this. We will introduce Early Years Teachers who will be specialists in early childhood development trained to work with babies and young children birth to five. The training route and the new Teachers' Standards (Early Years) will build on the strengths of the EYPS programme. Early Years Teacher Status will be seen as the equivalent to QTS; therefore entry requirements to Early Years Teacher training courses will be the same as entry to primary teacher training. This change will give one title of 'teacher' across the early years and schools sectors which will increase status and public recognition.
<b>17)</b> Any individual holding Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) should be able to access routes to obtain QTS as a priority.	<b>Not accepted.</b> Those with EYPS are graduates already trained specifically to work with babies and children from birth to five years. Existing Early Years Professionals will in future be seen as the equivalent of Early Years Teachers. Early Years Professionals will therefore not need to obtain QTS to increase their status, although routes are already available to QTS if they wish to take them.

*Diagram 2.9 Dualism within the EYS workforce. Adapted from (More Great Childcare, DfE 2013, p.43-44).*

Cooke and Lawton (2008) state that the “differences between the responsibilities of Early Years workers and those of professions such as teaching are narrowing, but gaps in pay and status are not” (p.33). This opinion may be debatable, as the basis for such a comparison would require equal starting points and an in-depth understanding of the responsibilities of Early Years workers and professionals within both the maintained and PVI sector; also, the differences or similarities between running a business and running a school. Despite all this, it would seem counterproductive to create a dichotomous situation of ‘parity’ without congruity and not foresee that it may be a source of contention between the teachers who have achieved their QTS, and the ‘teachers’ who will be given ‘parity’ with QTS.

Another aspect of dualism within the sector is the Common Inspection Framework, which was “designed to bring together the inspection of different education, skills, and Early Years settings to provide greater coherence across different providers that cater for similar age ranges” (Ofsted 2015, p.4). The idea behind this being; to support consistency in the inspection of different remits while ensuring comparability. Superficially, it would appear that the entire EYS is inspected under one framework, which could further complicate a divided sector that is operating from different starting points, however, deeper reading highlights the different legislative frameworks that inspectors have to adhere to with regard to the EYS; a shallow understanding of this process might incur further controversy within the sector. The underlying tension regarding dualism within the sector seems to lie with the concept of political correctness. Howard (2008) explains that political correctness has the unfortunate perspective of a very narrow view, and of utilising a narrowness of language that projects “a shared commitment to the existence of a universal truth, rather than particular ones” (p.8). Howard specifically refers to political correctness in regard to foreign policy, nevertheless, how political correctness operates in any field, is of particular relevance to the EYS. He explains that political correctness “is not an ideology, based on a fixed, written and wide-ranging statement of beliefs, it is instead an underlying attitude, one that is very difficult to pin down” (p.6). Reviewed literature has already established the EYS in the UK as immense and complex, yet the narrowness of perspective on the sector’s operational heritages is reminiscent of “shining a small torch onto a vast object and expecting to comprehend its size, scope and intricacy from a moment’s glance” (p.1). The concepts of ‘parity’ and the generalisations attributed to the EYS workforce carry the essence of promoting the ‘underdog’ or instinctively championing “the rights of the victims of authority”, despite not being clear who the victim is or who has been vested with authority (p.7-8). This misleading notion carries the potential for damage; “political correctness, it might be said, is not ‘the

luxury of the powerful society’ but a vice of the complacent – that is, of those who take the success, or even the survival, of their own society for granted”(p.12). It would seem safe to infer that the EYS is viewed “through a highly distorted looking glass, one that has been shaped, to an important degree, by political correctness” (p.44). Howard advocates smashing the glass to enable a much clearer light; “to shatter the glass we must, at the very least, widen the vocabulary that we use to describe what we see around us” (summary page).

The EYS workforce is categorised as “low pay, low status” (Cooke and Lawton 2008, p.32); incidentally, within the sector itself “there are sharp differences in pay for staff in maintained and private and voluntary settings” (Butler 2016, p.16). Rolfe *et al* (2003) state that staff turnover in the PVI sector is “high in comparison to turnover in the economy as a whole” (p.59). They itemise a number of measures that would alleviate the recruitment and retention issue which included “an improved career structure” and “greater encouragement for training, and opportunities to train during work hours” among others (p.70). Retention is a problem for the PVI sector for a number of reasons; pay and conditions compare poorly with other occupations also the operational workforce is young and predominantly female, and they incur gaps in service to have their own children (Butler and Rutter, 2016). Recruitment and retention issues are also an ongoing challenge in the maintained sector (Southworth 2007, Rhodes and Brundett, 2008). Southworth (2007) refers to the “baby boomer generation” of Head Teachers stating that “clearly, we have an ageing group of school leaders” (p.178). This is difficult to substantiate in MNS headships due to the paucity in research data however; Brind *et al* (2011) state that “nursery schools were most likely to report that they had experienced either a fair amount or a great deal of difficulty (14 per cent), in filling Head Teacher vacancies” (p.169).

Dualism would appear to contribute to additional pressure and distress within the sector. Butler (1988) substantiates that political acts do “maintain and reproduce systems of oppression” however “one might argue that without human beings whose various acts, largely construed, produce and maintain oppressive conditions, those conditions would fall away” (p.525). This sits squarely with Freire’s (1996) theory of oppression and transformation, Butler (1988) also emphasises that “transformation of social relations becomes a matter, then, of transforming hegemonic social conditions rather than the individual acts that are spawned by those conditions” (p.525). This places some responsibility on the sector for changing the social conditions surrounding the EYS to improve workforce conditions and bring about the transformation that is needed.

#### **2.4.4 Theme 4 Political – Reason: Deficit thinking**

The remit of the role of the EYS appears to be conflicted; the expectation that families will prepare young children for school vies with the “underclass”, “at risk” discourse that leads the funding of EYS services which could be summarized as a ‘deficit thinking model’ (Delpit 1995, Polakow 1997, Diaz-Soto 2000, Swadener 2010, Valencia 2010). Swadener (2010) describes “the language of deficiency” as “pervasive in public policy discourses concerning young children and their families” (p.10). Perhaps a direct response to burgeoning disadvantage in the present economic climate, and a widening achievement gap, is a deficit model which subjectively justifies investment in the Early Years in terms of ‘social insurance’ for ‘at risk’ families, rather than as the first significant stage of education for all children. Swadener is of the opinion that “early childhood and the broader field of education should move beyond the persistent tendency to pathologize the poor and to construct children in poverty and their mothers as an urban, or rural, ‘other’” (p.13). Although from a US context ‘the language of deficiency’ is prevalent in UK policy discourse and Swadener, who



speaks passionately from a feminist perspective, very effectively elucidates the phenomenon of promoting poverty as “rooted in failed and fallen women, failed mothers, failed children, and a failed work ethic, but not a failed and diminishing public economy, nor the histories of class, race and gender discrimination, not the actual consequence of failed public policies” (p.13).

Pearl (2002) eloquently explains the interplay between systemic factors and education in the context of deficit thinking: “systemic refers to established processes whereby values, traditions, hierarchies, styles and attitudes are deeply embedded into the political, economic, and cultural structures of any society. The systems that have emerged are the consequences of historical influences modified by current political pressures” (p.336). Pearl specifically addresses the issue of school failure and success of Chicano pupils in the US but the study is relevant to any group of people labelled as ‘at risk’ or vulnerable within any social structure. He goes on to explain that the “historical legacy of inclusion and exclusion is increasingly infused throughout education” (p.336) which could be the result of well-meaning but misguided policy development. Unfortunately, this model can unintentionally embed stereotypes and “lock us into false dichotomies, including oppressor/oppressed, donor/recipient, and benefactor/beneficiary roles, which function to preclude authentic collaborator or reciprocal ally relationships” (Swadener 2010, p.18). Despite being mindful of the labelling of families, issues of need cannot be ignored in public policy discourse and strategies have to be developed to deal with social need. However the existing anxiety for the EYS is that “service users needs do not present themselves in neatly compartmentalised boxes and that to meet effectively the demands of education, health, housing, and social care practice requires reliance on a range of knowledge and skills not routinely the preserve of just one professional grouping” (McKimm and Phillips 2009, p.20) – a clear argument for a

cohesive early years strategy which acknowledges relevant professional input to meet these demands.

#### **2.4.4.1 Reason: Path dependency**

Policy reform is complex: “the inter-relations between socio-economic forces, the political system, the machinery of government and the media in determining the eventual policy expression are context-specific” (Perry *et al* 2010, p.23). EYS policy reform therefore; should not be underestimated: “it is also linked with women’s employment and equality of opportunity; child development and child poverty issues; labour market supply; children’s health, social welfare and early education. In addition to more programmatic and qualitative issues, ECEC policy makers need to address issues of provision and access, family benefits, parental leave from work, family-friendly measures, modes of funding, and the status and training of personnel” (OECD 2006, p.47). New initiatives, and inevitable reorganization, are construed and implemented against a background of ambiguity and uncertainty, thereby relegating Early Years education to a compilation of recurring new schemes and programmes designed by politicians and interpreted in various ways by a plethora of stakeholders. The level of disruption has become more extreme as the pace of change has intensified over time; the frequency and speed of current EYS policy reform seems to imply that there is not enough time between policy-makers decisions, to see policy development through a timely process in a meaningful way. There are inevitable consequences of the accelerated pace of policy reform, as indicated by Perry *et al* (2010). These conclusions from their evidence really stood out in respect of the Early Years:

- “Policy is changing more rapidly and often in a way that ignored the need for change to bed in.
- Evaluations after implementation seem more common and better funded than research before reforms.

- Given the short career life of Ministers and the limited life of governments on one hand, and the need for long term implementation of educational reform on the other, there should be a search for consensus between political parties on non-controversial ground” (p.5-6).

It would seemingly be helpful for the EYS to sit within the sphere of ‘non-controversial ground’ especially with regard to its complexity. Unfortunately, there is indication of a worrying political trend of simplistic solutions being formulated to deal with complex issues which is explained by Marshall (1995) as “the Newtonian world view” where science reduces complexity to simplicity through a process of “predictive cause and effect” (p.9). Although science is, and continues to be, instrumental in investigating phenomena, there should be some scope to accommodate the ethereal, intangible yet realistic complexity that humanity brings to any situation: “Human systems are complex, dynamic, and organic; change is unpredictable; and reality is what one evokes and experiences” (p.10). This conflates with Freire’s concept of ‘subjectivity’ within the process of transformation; disavowing knowledge of this element will probably undermine perceived solutions as inadequate, resulting in a waste of time and resources.

The EYS is persistently viewed through the lens of consumerism. Despite the context of early education which is ostensibly a universal right, there is a perceptible bias towards consumerism in Early Years services by successive governments, so much so, that there appears to be some scepticism in developing a clear, simple Early Years system as exists in other parts of Europe. While it is understandable that consumerism is integral to the democratic order, it can’t be ignored that it is also integral in reinforcing market economics and complexity within the educational system. The present context of the EYS has seen this diverse sector reduced to competing for the same resources despite the inherent differences

between businesses and schools. The EYS appears to be measured in terms of economic efficiency thereby ensuring a commercial balance between benefit and loss while operating with the lowest possible cost per unit. Understandably, governmental activity serves the purpose of promoting economic growth and stability and influencing the economy however; economic efficiency maximizes the provision of goods and services for the public from available resources. In other words, the reallocation of resources to improve one situation *will* result in making others worse-off. The adoption of a business approach to education is not new; In his mantra about education not being a business, Callahan describes this phenomenon as far back as 1962 when “educational questions were subordinated to business considerations; that administrators were produced who were not, in any true sense, educators; that a scientific label was put on some very unscientific and dubious methods and practices; and that an anti-intellectual climate, already prevalent, was strengthened” (Callahan 1962, p.246). This is further compounded for Early Years as there appears to be a persistent reluctance to fully commit to Early Years as an educational sector and as a consequence of this; “gaps between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’ are widening” (Senge 2006, p.xiii). This notion is contested by Ofsted (2017) who state that “the proportion of good and outstanding nurseries and pre-schools is now almost identical in the least deprived areas compared with the most deprived” (p.27). However this statement is not substantiated by evidence of a significant narrowing of the gap between the most and least disadvantaged (Butler, 2016, Butler and Hardy, 2016, Andrews et al, 2017). A vital point to remember is that economic efficiency is not increased if the quality of service is lowered to enable a lower cost in production; this is only relevant when the quality of service is unchanged or heightened. The key question is whether the quality of the EYS has been lowered in the name of economic efficiency.

The current EYS appears to be the result of a successive adaptation of existing systems and adherence to historical policy reform, even if different alternatives would seem to be more beneficial. Pugh (2001) reiterates her 1996 description of Early Childhood services as follows:



**Diagram 2.10 The Continuous Cycle of Path Dependency. Adapted from (Pugh 2001, p.10).**

It would appear that over two decades later, circumstances within the EYS have all but remained the same. Moss concludes that “what is lacking in the British reforms so far is any sense of vision, or the related searching for any critical questions. Instead, reform has been an extremely pragmatic, very British affair, strong on making things work better, adapting the

existing systems rather than take a longer term view” (Moss 2001b, p.36). The concept of path dependency is evident in policy decisions in Early Years and as Pierson (2004) explains, “once a particular path gets established”... “self-reinforcing processes make reversals very difficult” (p.10). Cerna (2013) concurs and further explains that “once a country has set on a certain policy path, it remains difficult to change this path because actors and policies have become institutionalized which necessitates great efforts and costs by actors who desire change” (p.4); another pivotal question is whether policy decisions will ever “add up to a coherent new welfare-state design” or continue to present as “a contradictory mixture of policy goals and solutions” (Naumann 2011, p.38). Stevens (2015) indicates that policy debates appear to be: “confined to very well-worn ruts in the early childhood policy road” instead of “defining our real goals and pursuing the most promising avenues to address those” (AEI blog).

#### **2.4.5 Theme 5 Cultural – Reason: Internal conflicts**

It is universally accepted that good education is important and but there is a “widespread misconception that work with young children can be carried out effectively without the benefit of specialized knowledge” (Powell and Dunn 1990, p. 63). Ball (1994) emphatically states that “the argument that ‘anyone can teach and care for young children competently, because most people do as parents’ is as fallacious as a claim that ‘anyone can drive cars competently because most of us do so’, it overlooks the need for the competence derived from training, assessment and qualification. But above all, it misses the point of quality” (p.13-14). There are still wide variances in the quality of Early Years due to “different workforce characteristics” and a continuing “mixed qualifications profile” within the sector (Butler 2016, p.11). Ball had concerns about the EYS failing to provide high-quality Early Years services: “Nursery education and Local Authority day nurseries run the risk of creating the ghetto effect because of scarcity and rationing of places. The reception classes in primary

schools run the risk of imposing an inappropriate curriculum with insufficient and non-specialist staff. Playgroups run the risk of providing too brief a period of attendance, with inadequate equipment and inadequately-trained staff. The private sector is unlikely to serve the children from disadvantaged backgrounds, where the potential for benefit is greatest” (p.6-7). This statement encapsulates the broader scope of the internal unrest within the sector. Attempting to unpack this statement highlighted issues like; the ‘schoolification’ of young children as implied by Hopkin *et al* (2010) whose findings suggest “that maintained sector providers lead children to perform better in more cognitive measures”... “but when it comes to social development measures, children perform better when they attend private or voluntary sector providers” (p.84). Grenier (2006) however, maintains that “having qualified teachers working directly with young children does not lead to inappropriate, over-formal practice. The opposite is true. In my experience of working with and visiting many private and community nurseries, as well as nursery classes and nursery schools, it is invariably those with the least qualified staff that have the most formal practice. It is in private nurseries, that you are most likely to see worksheets; children grouped together for formal lessons” (p.162). The context of Early Years practice appears to be controversial; it is a broad and varied field but the element of depth comes from “praxeological enquiry” which is about “deeply questioning ‘how’ and ‘why’ things are done. It is about those involved systematically gathering evidence to gain a greater knowledge of their own and others’ impact on the services that they offer and giving them a greater knowledge, understanding and confidence to make constructive changes for the better” (Pascal and Bertram 2012, p.482-483).

This concept of praxis frames working in the Early Years within a far deeper context - one of pedagogical leadership, active participation as learner and a deep sense of authenticity and credibility in seeking knowledge and understanding in working with young children. Cathy

Nutbrown in her review of the Early Years workforce consulted widely with practitioners and leaders across the EYS. Her main findings suggests that although pedagogical leaders are already present in the EYS they are “too few and not in all settings” (Nutbrown 2012, p.56). She describes pedagogical leaders as “practitioners who have extensive knowledge and understanding of child development, of play, of individual needs of children and their families and how to support them all. They are experts in their field. They know how to develop children’s interests and plan to extend their learning and apply this expertise to everyday practice (p.56). She further explains the pedagogical leadership role as a sharing role to ensure that other practitioners are working with children in a “warm and welcoming” manner that supports their “physical, cognitive, social and emotional development and learning” (p.56). Pedagogical leadership is an important strand of a contextually adaptable and complex leadership dynamic in the EYS and an aspect of many “theoretical debates about types of knowledge as well as providing a basis for critiquing assumptions about knowledge and skills of employees at different levels, with diverse job roles and from various sectors” (Fuller *et al* 2007, p.745). Fuller *et al*’s concept of the ‘expansive/restrictive continuum’ correlates with the ongoing debate on workforce development within the EYS and summarises why quality is variable across the sector.

The EYS as a labour market predominantly operates business for profit in which the workforce may have “a limited job role and little access to training and career development” (Fuller *et al* 2007, p.747) as employers attempt to “‘sweat’ more productivity from their human resources” (p.745-746). The focus on praxis as explained by Pascal and Bertram (2012); is not “simply about everyday practicalities, professional development, competencies, skills or outcomes, but about deeper concepts, reflexivity, processes, actions and interactions whilst being deeply cognoscente of environments of power and values” (p.480). Nutbrown



(2012a) speaks of the “commitment and passion evident across the sector” and also that “excellent practice exists across the Early Years sector, in all types of settings, and amongst people with very different levels of qualifications” (p.5). However, this statement does not clarify whether this excellent practice is considered as such at the level people are working at or if it is agreed ‘praxis’ across the board whatever level people are working at within the sector. Fuller *et al* (2007) have described a list of behaviours associated with the expansive/restrictive continuum’ which are depicted in Diagram 2.11 below.

<b>EXPANSIVE</b>	<b>RESTRICTIVE</b>
Participation in multiple communities of practice inside and outside the workplace	Restricted participation in multiple communities of practice
Primary community of practice has shared ‘participative memory’: cultural inheritance of workforce development	Primary community of practice has little or no ‘participative memory’: no or little tradition of apprenticeship
Breadth: access to learning fostered by cross-company experiences	Narrow: access to learning restricted in terms of tasks/knowledge/location
Access to range of qualifications including knowledge-based VQ	Little or no access to qualifications
Planned time off-the-job including for knowledge-based courses, and for reflection	Virtually all-on-job: limited opportunities for reflection
Gradual transition to full, rounded participation	Fast – transition as quick as possible
Vision of workplace learning: progression for career	Vision of workplace learning: static for job
Organisational recognition of, and support for employees as learners	Lack of organisational recognition of, and support for employees as learners
Workforce development is used as a vehicle for aligning the goals of developing the individual and organisational capability	Workforce development is used to tailor individual capability to organisational need
Workforce development fosters opportunities to extend identity through boundary crossing	Workforce development limits opportunities to extend identity: little boundary crossing experienced
Reification of ‘workplace curriculum’ highly developed (eg through documents, symbols, language, tools) and accessible to apprentices	Limited reification of ‘workplace curriculum’ patchy access to reificatory aspects of practice
Widely distributed skills	Polarised distribution of skills
Technical skills valued	Technical skills taken for granted
Knowledge and skills of whole workforce developed and valued	Knowledge and skills of key workers/groups developed and valued
Team work valued	Rigid specialist roles
Cross-boundary communication encouraged	Bounded communication
Managers as facilitators of workforce and individual development	Managers as controllers of workforce and individual development
Chances to learn new skills/jobs	Barriers to learning new skills/jobs
Innovation important	Innovation unimportant
Multi-dimensional view of expertise	Uni-dimensional top-down view of expertise

*Diagram 2.11 Expansive/Restrictive workforce development. Adapted from Fuller et al (2007, p.746)*

Dyer (2016) states “the Early Years sector can still be characterised as a ‘restrictive’ work environment” (BERA blog). This presumably applies to the PVI sector, as it has already been established that staff within the maintained sector work within their professional framework with a legal entitlement to CPD. The context of the EYS operating in both these polar opposite camps explains some of the internal conflict within the sector. Dyer noted in her research, that while EYS staff could speak confidently about their values and the ethics that underpinned their practice, expression of their agency was limited despite participants being qualified at Level 5 and above. The divided nature of the EYS appears to contribute to a territorial perspective within the EYS workforce, which in turn contributes to a diversified stratification of professionalism, and hierarchical perceptions of teachers as professional, but limited professional identity of non-education but well qualified staff within the sector. This is a conundrum that needs transforming for the health and effectiveness of the EYS; Freire (1996) emphasises the need for true reflection on the concrete situation by “the oppressed” as “true reflection - leads to action”, he also stipulates that political action must be “pedagogical action in the authentic sense of the word” (p.48). This concept speaks to the need for better knowledge and understanding of the entire EYS to inform ‘pedagogical action’ for the sector.

#### **2.4.5.1 Reason: The tenuous position of leadership in the EYS**

Leadership functions in complex social systems that are characteristically defined by structure and behaviour, entrenched in bureaucracy, compounded by beliefs, attitudes, expectations, hopes and aspirations of people with differing motives and conflicting individual needs and values. Yukl (2006) confirms that, “leadership has been defined in terms of traits, behaviours, influence, interaction patterns, role relationships, and occupation of an administrative position” (p. 2), however, Aubrey *et al* (2012) point out that “one interesting distinction between the field of EC leadership and other fields that have been

studied, is the extent to which women occupy leadership roles, which contrasts strongly with the business world” (p.6). Siraj-Blatchford and Manni (2007) state that “current literature on leadership and management has ignored issues of gender” and much of the literature “in the wider context of education ... is based upon men’s experiences and male approaches” (p.9). Mistry and Sood (2012) concur speculating that “perhaps it is time to question the appropriateness of the traditional masculine model of leadership to look at the effectiveness of feminine leadership traits” (p.30). However; Butler (1988) cautions against “the reproduction of gender identities which sustain discrete and binary categories of man and woman” especially with regard to “bringing female specificity into visibility” (p.523). Perhaps leadership and its traits should be classified without gender to avoid stereotypes and to support transformation of the EYS.

Rodd (2006) explains that “leadership in early childhood appears to be a phenomenon that has been delved into off and on for the past thirty years, yet it continues to be an enigma”, she adds that this may be partially attributed “to the apparent vagueness and haziness about what is meant by leadership in early childhood and its practical relevance” (p.5). There is some blurriness to EYS leadership as “historically, there has been a tendency to rely on business or school-based understandings of leadership, which have limited application for ECEC” or “on educational leadership research and literature, which has focused on positional leaders, largely school head-teachers” (Murray and Clark 2013, p.291). Murray and Clark speak in defence of a participative ideology based on encouraging practitioner engagement and involvement (p.292). This approach appears to ‘skate over’ the fact that the EYS is comprised of businesses and schools and hence, is in need of these two context-specific understandings of leadership for the relevant aspects. This does not in any way negate purposeful, pedagogic leadership and a participative ideology (p.292) within a sector that cares for and educates

young children. The debate therefore is whether this is achievable in the business model that currently exists and whether the school based context is working at its optimum. Miller and Cable (2010) cite Osgood's (2006) work with staff from the PVI sector, whom she referred to as "competent technicians" rather than "critically reflective emotional professionals", observing that their "discussions about what it means to be professional, did not include for example, dominant notions of accountability, measurability and the need to demonstrate measurable outcomes" (p.7). This concept conflates with leadership within the expansive/restrictive continuum and how factors of business, funding, staffing, training and legislative frameworks impact on context-specific organisations (Osgood, 2006, Fuller *et al*, 2007, Dyer, 2016).

Murray and Clark (2013) more specifically, appear to be addressing leadership style within the context of leadership as a basis for combining pedagogic and organisational leadership however, a viable model of this leadership already exists according to Early Education (2015) who claim that; "nursery school Head Teachers are a unique cadre of *specialist Early Years leaders* who are highly qualified and knowledgeable about Early Years pedagogy" (p.5). Their outstanding reputation (Sylva *et al*, 2004, Ofsted, 2013, Early Education, 2015, Jarrett and Perks, 2017) should attest to the effectiveness of the fusion of pedagogic and organisational leadership despite their positional leadership as Head Teachers. After an arduous search, very few documents were found that specifically addressed the perceptions of Head Teachers and teachers with an Early Years focus. Therefore it was necessary to draw on research literature and articles on teachers views on headship in the wider field of education to develop a composite perspective for nursery school headship. This emphasises the need for research into the correlation between MNS Head Teachers and their impact on the outcomes of children who attend nursery schools. Hargreaves *et al* (2007) indicate that the status of,

and therefore the views and perceptions of teacher colleagues regarding EYS teaching and headship, would improve if “teachers (and Head Teachers) in other phases (primary and secondary) were better informed and more appreciative of their work” (p.95). The fact that EYS headship is conducted in a setting containing children for whom education is non-compulsory; may contribute to the perceived lack of status and lack of respect for the role. Kane (2008) clarifies that there is “still an element of society that views’ nursery education as “baby sitting”, and that you start to “learn” when you go to school”. It appears that nursery school headship could also be generally perceived as an “easier option as a career path and all you need is to like children” (p.43). A viewpoint such as this positions the MNS Head Teacher’s role as lacking in skill, expertise and pedagogical ‘knowhow’.

Educational leaders operate in a state of constant flux responding to the external pressures of political change, and subsequent policy decisions in an environment of competitiveness and conflict (Southworth, 1999, Southworth, 2007). Southworth (1999) speaks of Head Teachers being caught in a “management trap of increased bureaucracy... (p.50) and “externally driven reform ... associated with imposition and compliance, as well as poor conception, clumsy implementation and unrealistic deadlines” (p.53). Despite the age of this research and the fact that it was conducted in Canada, there is relevance in the present UK context of the EYS. Ang (2011) states that “Early Years settings are dynamic organizations that are changing and evolving” ... “their leadership role and practice need to be simultaneously adjusted and enhanced in response to these changes” (p.298). The complex nature of modern social systems bears some investigation into whether current EYS leadership and management paradigms are sufficient and effective for the sector. Within the EYS, nursery school leaders need to develop an understanding of educational environments as “dynamic organisms, continually evolving, rather than static organisations” and they lead complex organisations

where “education contexts differ ... between individual children, families, local communities, defined by socio-economic class, ethnicity, etc. with fluctuating staff morale and energy levels, the arrival of new staff and students and the departure of others amongst numerous other factors” (Siraj-Blatchford and Manni 2007, p.10). This inner sphere of dynamism is encased in the context of “post-bureaucratic organizations evolving into federations, networks, clusters, cross-functional teams and temporary systems (which) need a new kind of alliance between leaders and the led” (Aubrey *et al* 2012, p.8). This context could be broadened to include the unique dynamics of running a care-based business with an educational remit or conversely leading a maintained school with business imperatives; such is the reality of the current EYS. Aubrey *et al* (2012) point out that “leaders will have to learn new skills, neither understood nor taught in business schools (and certainly not in education) and hence rarely practised” (p.8). The concept of “leadership in transition” is not new, Marshall’s (1995) work on educational transformation, speaks of a “self-organizing system”, a system that will encompass “a compelling and shared vision ... a deep set of core values” and “a commitment to goals and objectives, collaboratively established, collectively assessed, and individually supported” (p.12). These sentiments acknowledge the commitment of individuals within a collective approach as well as the need for collaboration to transform disparate systems which have been socially constructed (Butler, 1988, Marshall, 1995, Freire, 1996); “we created dichotomies, divisions, departments, boundaries, and closed systems” (Marshall 1996, p.2) which continue to benefit ‘the few’ not ‘the many’.

The EYS is made up of a variety of systems with varying degrees of complexity, which is then structured and organised by a number of other complex social systems. A complex system such as this requires strong, expert leadership to manage operational dynamics, and to deliver and navigate the increasingly diverse range of services for children. Leadership

collaboration across the sector seems inevitable and indeed essential to effect change for the survival of the EYS. Marshall (1996) recommends “a simple set of rules that govern the interaction of the individual components of the system to each other, and not the total system itself” (p.3). It would appear then, that for the effectiveness of the EYS as a whole, leaders in whatever aspect of the sector should be operating with a ‘simple set of rules’ which allow them to understand the ‘totality’ of the EYS and how the system dovetails to enable system stability.

Leadership in the EYS is crucial, especially with regard to the need to “facilitate the gradual and systematic implementation of appropriate changes” (Rodd 2006, p.4). Pierson (2004) explains that “many existing social arrangements are likely to exhibit strongly inertial qualities. These tendencies toward persistence imply that pressures will often build up for some time without generating immediate effects. When some critical level is reached, however, actors may reassess their options or expectations about others ‘likely actions’, leading to relatively rapid change” (p.85). The EYS has been experiencing “acute and chronic change” over an extended period of time (Rodd 2006, p.182). Against this background it may be easy to conclude that EYS leaders appear to be constantly ensconced in cobbling the remnants of frequent changes, amidst a complex scenario of unclear professional parameters but with expectations of compliance, in an increasingly multifaceted and multi-layered EYS. Without the benefit of better “policy alignment” at governmental level, “this multiplicity perspective inevitably leads one to look for solutions at the level of individual roles and groups ... this is so because it is only at the individual and small group level that the inevitable demands of overload can be prioritised and integrated” (Fullan 2001, p.52). West (1999) succinctly captures the current essence of change and organisational culture as experienced in the current EYS: “formal authority shackled by informal power” (p.193),

essentially, responsibility without the capacity to influence. The concept of sustainable change and sustainable improvement is trounced by a reform-driven climate, which is subject to interpretation and rife with unstable, underfunded Early Years policy and practices.

The nature of the perceived leadership crisis is so complex and tangled that it is difficult to comprehend the entirety of this protean phenomenon where themes converge, overlap and interact with each other in diverse ways. Leadership in the EYS has to be understood at macro-and micro-levels and within specific contexts. Hujala (Nivala and Hujala, 2002) speaks about the difference in “values and language of leadership” between the micro-and macro-levels and questions whether the discussions on micro-and macro-levels match up. She gives an insightful perspective on macro-level leadership as focusing on “policy issues and finance” conceptualised through “effectiveness, accountability and economic policy”, whereas micro-level leadership focuses on “education, pedagogy and supervision”, and is conceptualised through “caring, upbringing and educating” (p.92). The skills required of Early Years leadership appear to be difficult to define in view of variance on a micro-and macro-level, and becomes even more complicated with regard to Early Years in the context of private business. Nutbrown (2012) explains that “progression routes available to early years practitioners are not well understood, and many people have reported a lack of opportunities available to them, especially to progress to senior and leadership roles” (p.44). The lack of consistency of job titles, roles and progression in the EYS would appear to at least be partially responsible for the tenuous position of leadership within the sector. Nutbrown proposed a set of consistent job titles and roles which would aid a clear progression route in the sector. The diagram below is adapted to highlight the leadership context of Nutbrown’s proposal.



<b>Job title</b>	<b>Level of full and relevant early years qualification</b>	<b>Role includes</b>
<b>Early Years Practitioner</b>	<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Leading practice within a room, working directly with children and families, could be a manager in a small setting</b>
<b>Senior Early Years Practitioner</b>	<b>Level 4 and above</b>	<b>Leading practice across a number of rooms, working directly with children and families, could be a manager.</b>
<b>Early Years Professional</b>	<b>Graduate with EYPS</b>	<b>Leading practice across a setting, working directly with children and families, could be a manager.</b>
<b>Early Years Teacher</b>	<b>Graduate with QTS</b>	<b>Providing overall pedagogical leadership for a setting, working directly with children and families and supporting staff with lower levels of qualifications</b>

*Diagram 2.12 Consistent EYS leadership roles. Adapted from Nutbrown (2012, p.46)*

In addition to this streamlined progression route Nutbrown also suggests that nursery schools and children's centres with outstanding practice should share their expertise with early years settings in their region, "this approach offers a positive way to drive improvement and develop pedagogical leadership in a sector-led and flexible way, responding to local need" (p.54). However, there is very little literature to be found on nursery schools, nursery and reception classes and the PVI sector, and their leadership contributions to the EYS to support this suggestion. A comprehensive search did not produce any literature that compares EYS leadership in nursery schools to EYS leadership in primary schools or between maintained schools and PVI settings which would be useful for a deeper and less politically-correct understanding of the sector.

### 2.4.6 Theme 6 Paradigmatic – Recommendations

The literature has already suggested a number of strategies that would support the paradigmatic theme and encourage the onset of a '*transforming agenda*' – the future of the EYS. There are a variety of detailed recommendations for effecting changes to the current perception of a leadership crisis in the EYS. However, a paradigm shift would require some sweeping policy decisions to displace the current malaise within the sector which would initially cause more turbulence. Recommendations will be presented diagrammatically in this chapter in an attempt to address the five previous themes that have been reviewed. The first three diagrams address recommendations for research question one and the characteristics of the perceived leadership crisis. The other two diagrams address recommendations for research question two and the reasons for the perceived leadership crisis.

#### Poor design of the sector and Exponential growth of the sector

- Moss and Penn (2003) suggest a national policy based on a “considered, informed, sustained and broad public vision” (p.2).

This simple statement seems obvious in reference to any system but it belies a complex and time-consuming process and would involve the government and those operational in the EYS to understand the ‘totality’ of the sector and how it fits into other systems as suggested by Freire (1996).

*Diagram 2.13 Recommendations regarding structural characteristics of the perceived leadership crisis*

### **Fragmentation and Destabilisation of the current EYS**

- **“The most effective approach to funding pre-school childcare is supply-side funding where investment is made directly in services. This approach provides the means to offer universal access to services and effectively shape quality, affordability and flexibility” (Butler and Rutter 2016, p.6).**

This recommendation would appear to require a philosophical approach at governmental level to address the contradiction of a ‘neoliberal market approach’ and the principle of ‘universalism’ which forms the basis of the EYS (Naumann 2011).

*Diagram 2.14 Recommendations regarding environmental characteristics of the perceived leadership crisis*

### **Dualism within the sector**

- **“The Department for Education should commit to a vision of graduate-led early education and childcare by making teaching in the early years a priority area for teacher recruitment and incorporate early years into the Teacher supply Model” (Butler 2016, p.4).**
- **“Creating an ambitious business development programme to support social enterprises and foster those business models that are most successful in offering high-quality care to diverse communities” (Butler 2016, p.6).**

This seems to do away with the concept of a negative division between care and education and would reframe the sector with an equal balance of ‘care’ and ‘education’ that does not operate as mutually exclusive of each other but rather as applicable to the relevant early years context and relative to the service the setting is offering. This would require “recognising and tackling popular fallacies” Howard (2008). Howard further explains the challenges of shifting “a distorted viewpoint” which is “embedded too deeply in our culture to be pushed aside” (Howard 2008, summary page).

*Diagram 2.15 Recommendations regarding economic characteristics for the perceived leadership crisis*

### Deficit thinking and Path dependency

- **“A human rights perspective reframes conventional approaches to theory, research policy and practice in ways that fully respect young children’s dignity, their entitlements and their capacities to contribute to their own development and to the development of services” (Woodhead 2006, p.4)**

Woodhead (2006) explains the dangers of entrenched unidirectional perspectives i.e. ‘a developmental perspective’ or ‘a political and economic perspective’ or ‘a social and cultural perspective’, and it is understandable that this would be a huge undertaking but a human rights perspective would appear to envelop all these different perspectives and would appear to be a well rounded approach (p.4).

- **“Replacing the ineffective Childcare Act 2006 ‘sufficiency duty’ with a properly funded entitlement for childcare for pre-school children from age one extending across a full day and for 48 weeks of the year” (Butler and Rutter 2016, p.5).**

A universal entitlement for childcare would seem like a positive step but with regards to the concerns of sustainability of current universal entitlements (Butler and Rutter, 2016); this would seem to entail a substantial financial commitment from the government and a systems change from a market economics approach to the early years.

*Diagram 2.16 Recommendations regarding political reasons for the perceived leadership crisis*

### **Internal conflicts and The tenuous position of leadership within the EYS**

- **“The expertise of maintained nursery schools in providing suitable places for children with SEND, and sharing their expertise with the sector must be protected and enhanced” (Early education 2015, p.3).**
- **“Use a simple formula that offers sufficient funding to enable settings to deliver high quality care. This does not mean that the same amount of funding is suitable for all settings” (Butler and Hardy 2016, p.38).**
- **Context specific leadership training for “early years leaders in pre-school settings (i.e. playgroups, nursery schools, private day nurseries etc) whose training needs are not currently being (collectively) met” (Siraj-Blatchford and Manni 2007, p.7).**

These appear to be incremental steps towards external transformation of elements of the workforce issue in the EYS however, Freire (1996) asks a really pertinent question which gives ‘food for thought’ for leaders in the EYS; “How can the oppressed, as divided, unauthentic beings, participate in developing the pedagogy of their liberation?” (p.30). Butler (1988) from a feminine perspective, concurs with Freire (1996) that there is strength in a unified approach in a predominantly female led workforce as “a shared cultural situation which in turn enables and empowers” in “certain unanticipated ways” (p.522).

*Diagram 2.17 Recommendations regarding cultural reasons of the perceived leadership crisis*

## **2.5 Summary of chapter**

There is a considerable accretion of research writing on educational leadership and the multiple elements that impact on the strategic and operational characteristics of this experience. In addition, there is a range of accessible discourse on leadership shortage, the crisis in recruitment and retention and the growing complexity of the role of the Head

Teacher. However, there is a distinct dearth in the body of research which highlights the context of leadership in the EYS despite the relevance and significance of the same issues and the possibility of an even greater negative impact. The literature reviewed, highlights the complexity of the role and the flexibility and fluidity needed for leaders in the EYS to execute their role. The literature reveals weak and contradictory guidance in the development of the EYS nationally, which indicates its susceptibility to external forces and the inconsistent and sometimes capricious ideas that are generated through politics. The need to evaluate the EYS in its entirety has emerged as a priority in addressing the ambiguity that surrounds the sector. Exploring the leadership crisis in the EYS has allowed for better understanding of the nature of the role, the internal and external pressures, the lack of professional identity and value that surrounds an important, demanding and crucial area of work, and the very real impact of political idiosyncrasies which only add to the complexity of the role of the EYS leader. The review of literature has indicated the importance of leadership in the improvement agenda for young children especially in view of the recent calls for a better qualified work force to work with young children in the Early Years. The literature on the historical overview of Early Years political reform has provided valuable insight and stimulated reflection which helped to clarify the current position of the EYS. It was noticeable that the literature exuded uncertainty, trepidation, frustration, and a sense of desperation but despite this, hope keeps filtering through. The need for a richer research base in support of publicly-funded Early Years education is inevitable if there is ever going to be any hope of creating an arguably stronger evidence base for moving the rhetoric towards consequential change within the sector.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Research Design and Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter is dedicated to an explanation of the research methodology that underpins the exploration of the perceptions of a leadership crisis in the EYS. Research designs, organise and structure the components of the study to coalesce, in order to address the central research questions. The architect's role in building construction is the concept used to articulate the role of research design in a research project (Hakim, 2000, Blaikie, 2000). Blaikie warns that not planning thoroughly could result in "precarious and disastrous outcomes" (p.2). Thus, I needed to be clear on my philosophical standpoint and the inferred consequences to ensure that the research is rigorous and robust enough to capably address the research problem.

#### **3.2 Philosophical Approach**

The sophistication of technology and the growing acceptance of a variety of research methods have radically changed the philosophical and theoretical framework of research but "how we come to ask particular questions, how we assess the relevance and value of different research methodologies so that we can investigate those questions, how we can evaluate the outputs of research, all express and vary according to our underlying epistemological commitments" (Johnson and Duberley 2000, p.1). Research has its own recondite language and principles, with concepts and terminologies behind social research being frighteningly complex. Grix (2002) speaks about the difficulties in differentiating between crucial terms like 'ontology' and 'epistemology'. He further explains that "knowledge of these terms and their place in research is essential to understanding the research process as a whole" (p.175). Merriam (2009) succinctly clarifies ontology as knowledge regarding "the nature of reality" and epistemology as concerning "the nature of knowledge" (p.8), therefore research into the

perceptions of a leadership crisis in the EYS depends on how I construct knowledge and social reality based on my personal values, beliefs and experiences, which will then impact on my ontological and epistemological assumptions. Grix (2002) further advocates: “a clear and transparent knowledge of the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin research is necessary in order:

- (1) to understand the interrelationship of the key components of research (including methodology and methods);
- (2) to avoid confusion when discussing theoretical debates and approaches to social phenomena; and
- (3) to be able to recognise others’, and defend our own, positions” (p.176).

My ontological and epistemological assumptions are broadly in line with the interpretivist paradigm and as such this research is predominantly qualitative as my position differs from a purely scientific tradition, where there is no social reality. Instead, the focus is on “multiple realities shared by groups of people”, and “reality and truth” are “the product of individual perceptions” (Denscombe 2010). Researchers in the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm acknowledge complexity in social reality and seek to understand rather than attempt to logically order and explain phenomena. From an ontological perspective, there is an acceptance that reality is unique to each individual as people interpret and create their own understanding of social phenomena; therefore there is consensus in the authenticity of multiple viewpoints of one significant event, so the essence of this research is to attempt to deduce theory from the perspectives of different individual participants (Miles and Huberman, 1994, Cohen *et al*, 2007, Merriam, 2009). There is a confluence between epistemological and ontological assumptions, as Crotty (1998) aptly points out: “to talk of the construction of meaning is to talk of the construction of meaningful reality” (p.10). The identified research questions indicate the need to utilise a phenomenological approach to

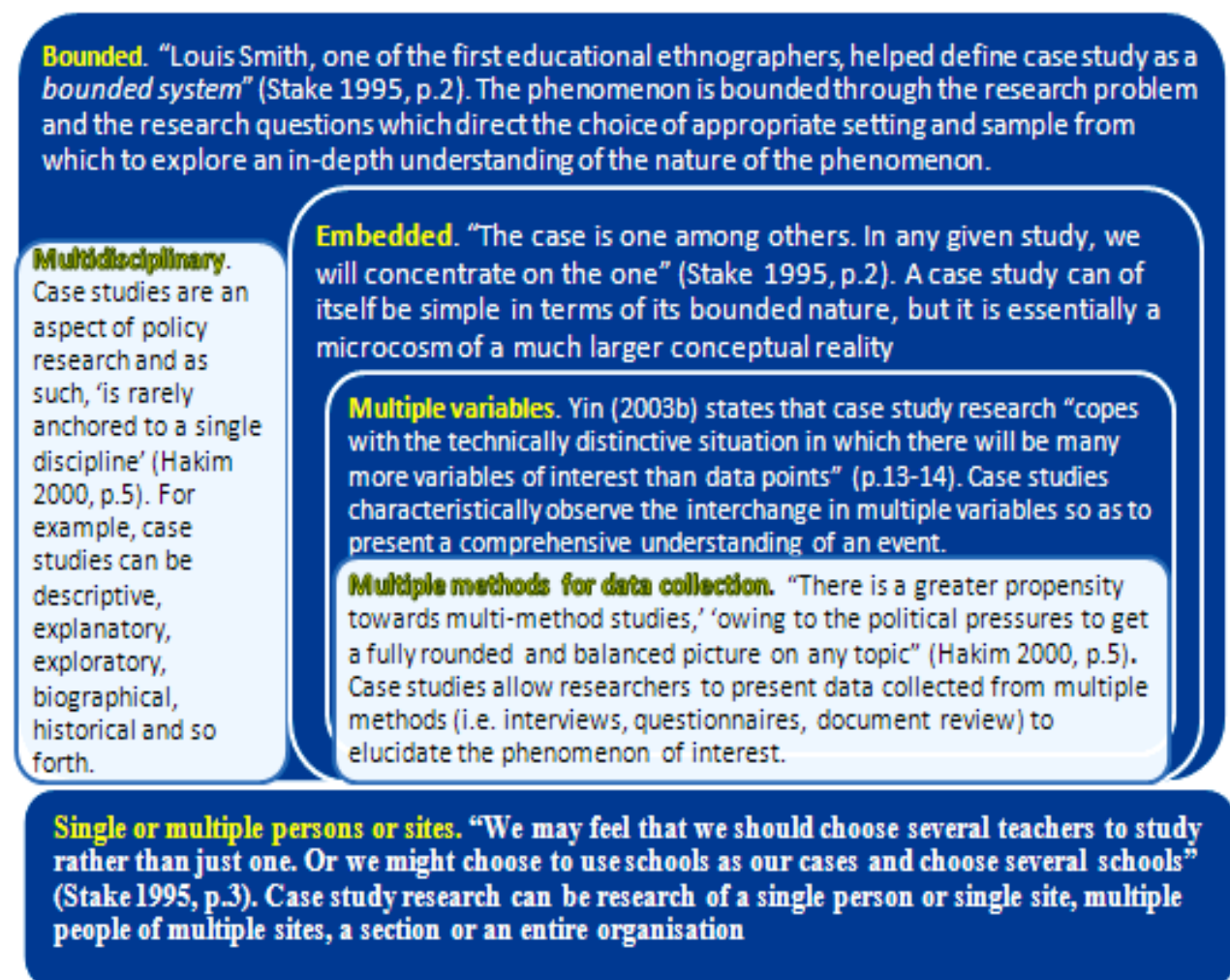


“make explicit the implicit structure and meaning of human experiences” (Sanders 1982, p.354) and also the need to conduct “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (Yin 2003, p.13).

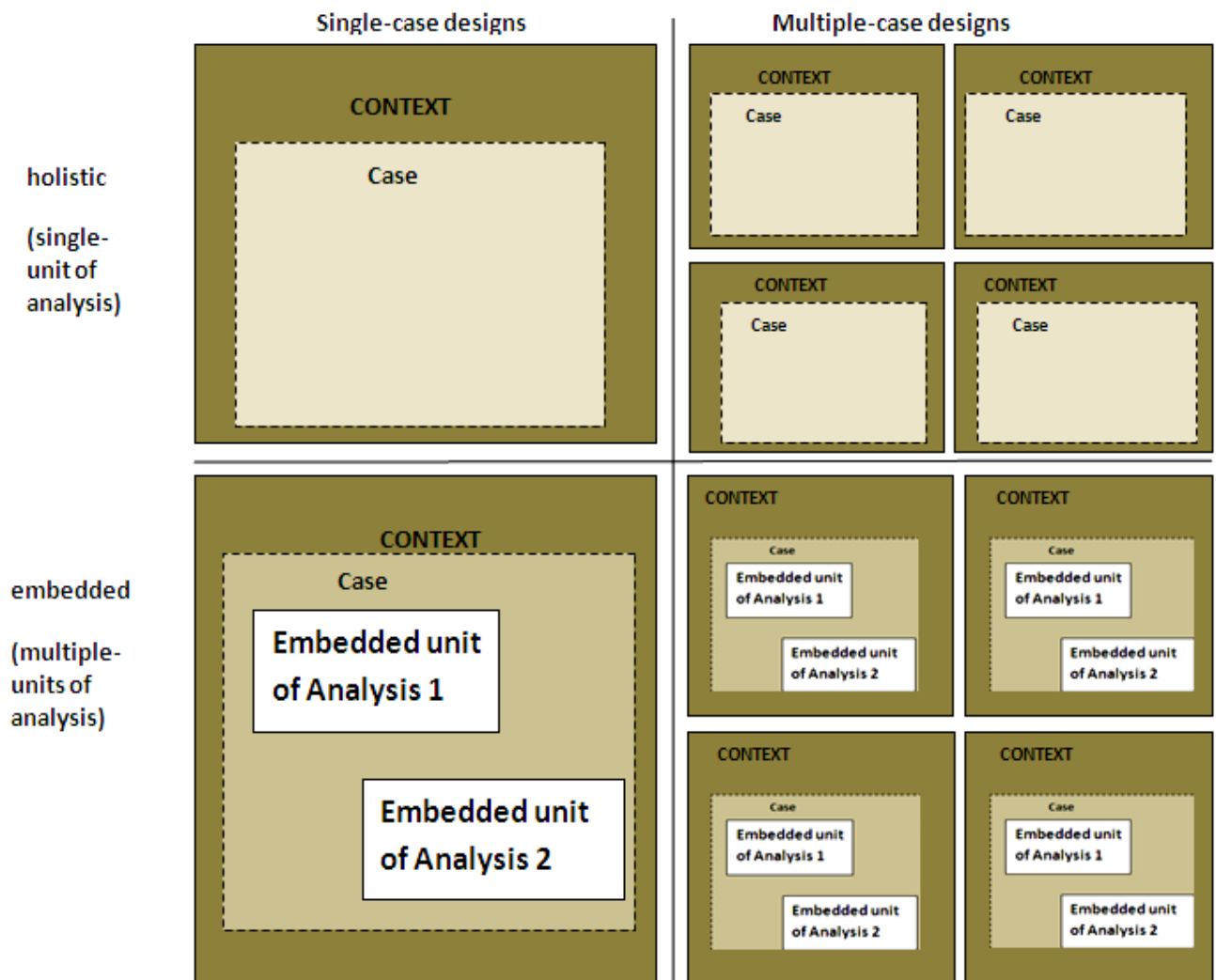
### 3.3 Case Studies Research

Since case studies are essentially hermeneutical; the ontological standpoint is that reality is unique to each individual and that people have free will to create and interpret their own understanding of social phenomena; therefore they are designed to accommodate multiple perspectives on one event (Miles and Huberman 1994, p.4). The characteristics of case study research are depicted in the diagrams below.

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*Diagram 3.1 Characteristics of Case Study Research*



*Diagram 3.1a Four Types of Case Studies Design. Adapted from (Yin 2003, p.40)*

A case study with embedded units was selected to elicit multiple perspectives to help to gain heuristic insight into the unique nature of the proposed phenomenon. The private sector and the maintained sector are the two embedded units ensconced within the EYS which were addressed through sampling individuals in leadership in both these areas, with the objective of aggregation in the analysis. Diagram 3.2 presents a summary of the main characteristics of the research design, and synoptically describes the context of this research project, indicating the appropriateness of a case study as the research methodology.

Identified phenomenon	Research paradigm	Methodology	Participants	Data collection and analysis
Perceptions of a leadership crisis in the EYS	Constructivist – Interpretive perspective	Qualitative	Retired Head teachers Ex-managers of PVI settings	Primary data – Semi-structured interviews
Delineating the Unit of Analysis to define the limits of the data collection and analysis –	Phenomenological Approach	Case studies research – holistic case study with embedded units	PVI sector Managers and Head teachers (Primary and Nursery school)	Questionnaire
Geographic area: Midlands	Social Constructivism Epistemology			Secondary data – Documentary sources – relevant documents, policies on current practice
PVI and maintained sector	Reality is unique to each individual – utilising individual perspectives and the multiple realities of leaders in the EYS	Comprehensive, contextual examination of the identified phenomenon – various levels of analysis and multiple levels of organisational involvement	Middle leaders – Deputy Head teachers, Deputy managers (PVI) Nursery class teachers (Primary and Nursery school) Foundation stage leaders in Primary schools	Transcripts, questionnaires examined for patterns, similarities, and differences and data coded and analysed in conjunction with documentary sources for key points and themes to illustrate the findings
August 2017			Cross-sector participants i.e. Local Authority Advisors, Governors, Business Managers, Participants who have worked across the PVI and Maintained sector in early years	
<b>Bounded</b>	<b>Embedded</b>	<b>Multiple variables</b>	<b>Multiple people</b>	<b>Multiple methods</b>

*Diagram 3.2 Main Characteristics of the Research Design*

It was necessary to demarcate the study so that it remained focused on the views and perceptions of Midlands EYS leaders’, on their interests, ideals, motivations, and how political, socio-economical and organisational factors have influenced their careers. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) point out that we use words to make meaning out of situations, therefore “the task of the qualitative researcher is to find patterns within those words (and actions) and to present those patterns for others to inspect while at the same time staying as close to the construction of the world as the participants originally experienced it” (p.17).

Researchers are tasked with the responsibility of describing and exploring a phenomenon for the edification of the reader; “if you want people to understand better than they otherwise might, provide them information in the form in which they usually experience it” (Lincoln and Guba 1985, p.120). As the reader’s perception is of vital concern for the researcher, this approach may be more meaningful to the reader than research that is conducted using a purely positivistic approach which may proffer a severe and stiff interpretation of reality that is not fully representative of the complexity of human nature and can therefore only partially illuminate social paradigms. Cronbach (1975) alleges that statistical research is not able to fully explain the many interactive relationships that take place in social settings.

### 3.4 Wider framework

Due to the complex nature of a perceived leadership crisis in the EYS it was crucial not to over-simplify the cultural and human traits of the identified phenomenon. The typology of “five knowledge domains” for research, as categorised by Ribbins and Gunter (2002) was particularly constructive for positioning this research in the wider framework (see Diagram 3.3 below).

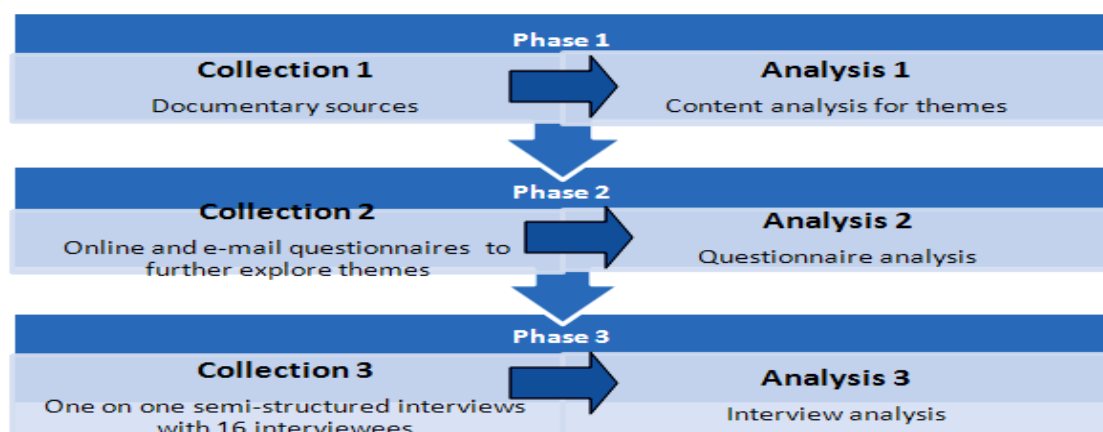
<b>Knowledge domain</b>	<b>Associated meaning</b>
<b>Conceptual domain</b>	<i>concerned with issues of conceptual clarification and ontology and epistemology</i>
<b>Humanistic domain</b>	<i>gathers and theorises from the experiences and biographies of leaders and the ‘led’</i>
<b>Critical domain</b>	<i>concerned to expose social injustice, and emancipate practitioners from unjustifiable structures and processes of power</i>
<b>Evaluative domain</b>	<i>abstracts and measures the impact of leadership effectiveness on social interaction in organisations</i>
<b>Instrumental domain</b>	<i>provide leaders and others with effective strategies to execute organisational objectives</i>

**Diagram 3.3 The Five Knowledge Domains. Adapted from (Ribbins and Gunter 2002, p. 378)**

The aim of this research project is to explore, describe and develop strategies for dealing with the perceived leadership crisis in the EYS and therefore the research is positioned both in the Humanistic domain as it draws on the experiences and narratives of “leaders and those who are led” and investigates “how knowledge is produced”, but also in the Instrumental domain as it seeks to gain “knowledge for understanding” (p.375) and ultimately the aspiration is for facilitating “knowledge for action” (Wallace and Poulson 2003, p.18).

### 3.5 Research Methods

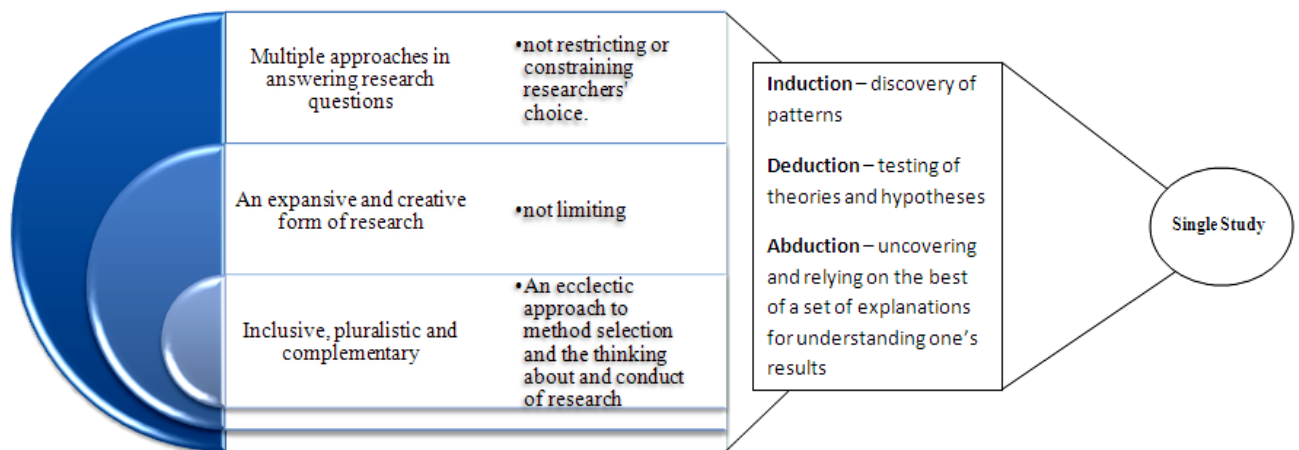
Blaikie (2000) points out that while the techniques of collecting and analysing data are essential to research, “choices from among them have to relate to more fundamental aspects of research, the research questions that are to be answered and the research strategies that will be used to answer them” (p.2). The chosen design for the study of the perceived leadership crisis in the EYS has directed and systematised the research as well as channelled the methodology and methods for conducting it (Thomas 2009, p.4). The data collection and analysis phases are depicted in the diagram below.



**Diagram 3.4 Data collection and analysis phases**

A mixed-methods approach was chosen for the triangulation of any germane viewpoints, making use of previous research and in this instance, using more than one type of investigative perspective to clarify the confusion of a complexly constructed EYS and ensure

that research findings are sound. Creswell (2015) explains that in mixed-methods research, the researcher “gathers both quantitative (close-ended) and qualitative (open-ended) data, integrates the two and then draws interpretations based on the combined strengths of both sets of data to understand research problems” (p.2). This interweaving of disciplinary boundaries “combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study” and effectively “moves past the paradigm wars by offering a logical and practical alternative” (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004, p.17). The diagram below explains the scale of mixed-methods research.



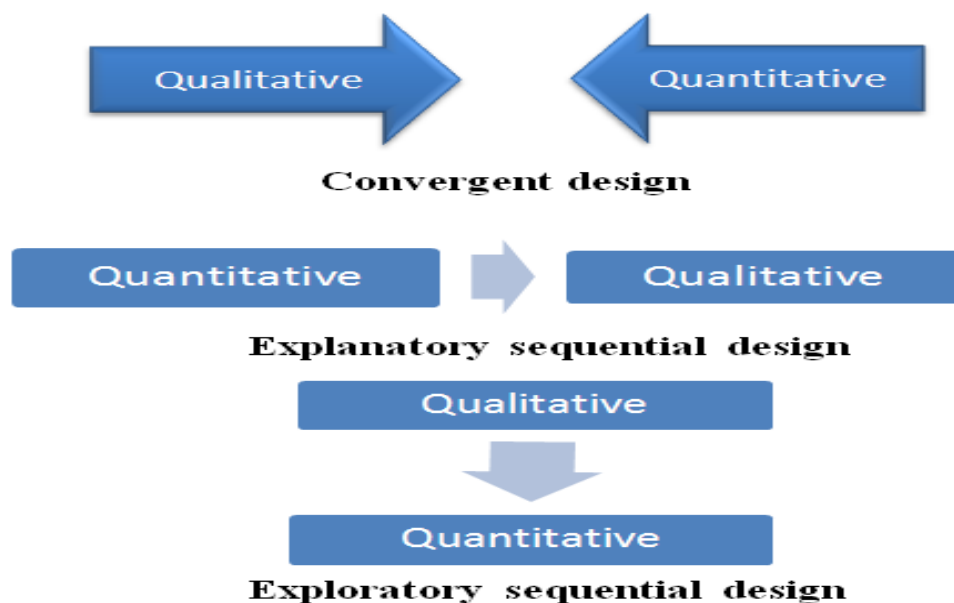
**Diagram 3.5 Mixed-Methods Research. Adapted from (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004, p.17)**

Diagram 3.6 summarises the advantages and disadvantages of mixed-methods research and expands on the intricacies of combining the methods of semi-structured interviews with questionnaires as well as ‘mining data from documents’ (Merriam 2009, p.139).

Advantages	Disadvantages
Multiple means of gathering data	Dependent on the quality of data analysis rather than upon the quality of the data.
A fuller picture	More data analysis skills needed.
Many different aspects of a phenomenon	Specific skill in sufficiently narrowing down the research topic
The ability to map one set of data upon another	Dependent on the chosen analytic framework
	Difficult to appeal to a single phenomenon

**Diagram 3.6 The Advantages and Disadvantages of Mixed-Methods Research. Adapted from (Silverman 2005, p.63)**

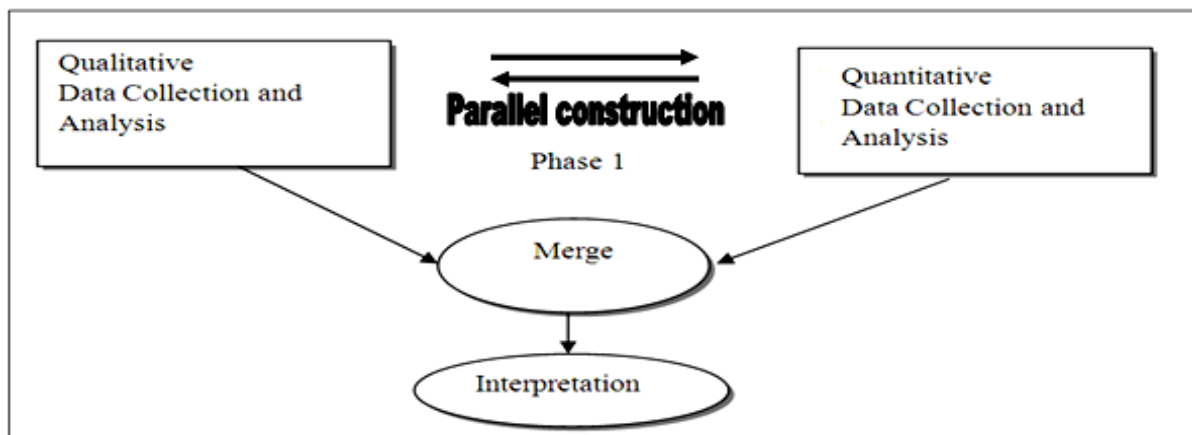
Creswell (2015) cautions about the confusion of integrating datasets, as researchers “typically deal with only one type of data”. He advises being clear about the types of mixed-method designs and explains that there are three basic designs and three advanced designs “that constitute add-ons to the basic designs” (p.6). The mixed-methods design for this research study is situated within the convergent design feature of the three basic mixed-methods designs as explained in Diagram 3.7 below.



*Diagram 3.7 Three Basic Mixed-Methods Designs. Adapted from (Creswell 2015, p.6)*

The convergent design was chosen because “the intent of the research is to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, analyse both datasets, and then merge the results of the two sets of data analyses” (Creswell 2015, p.6). Diagram 3.8 below depicts the processes involved in the convergent design.





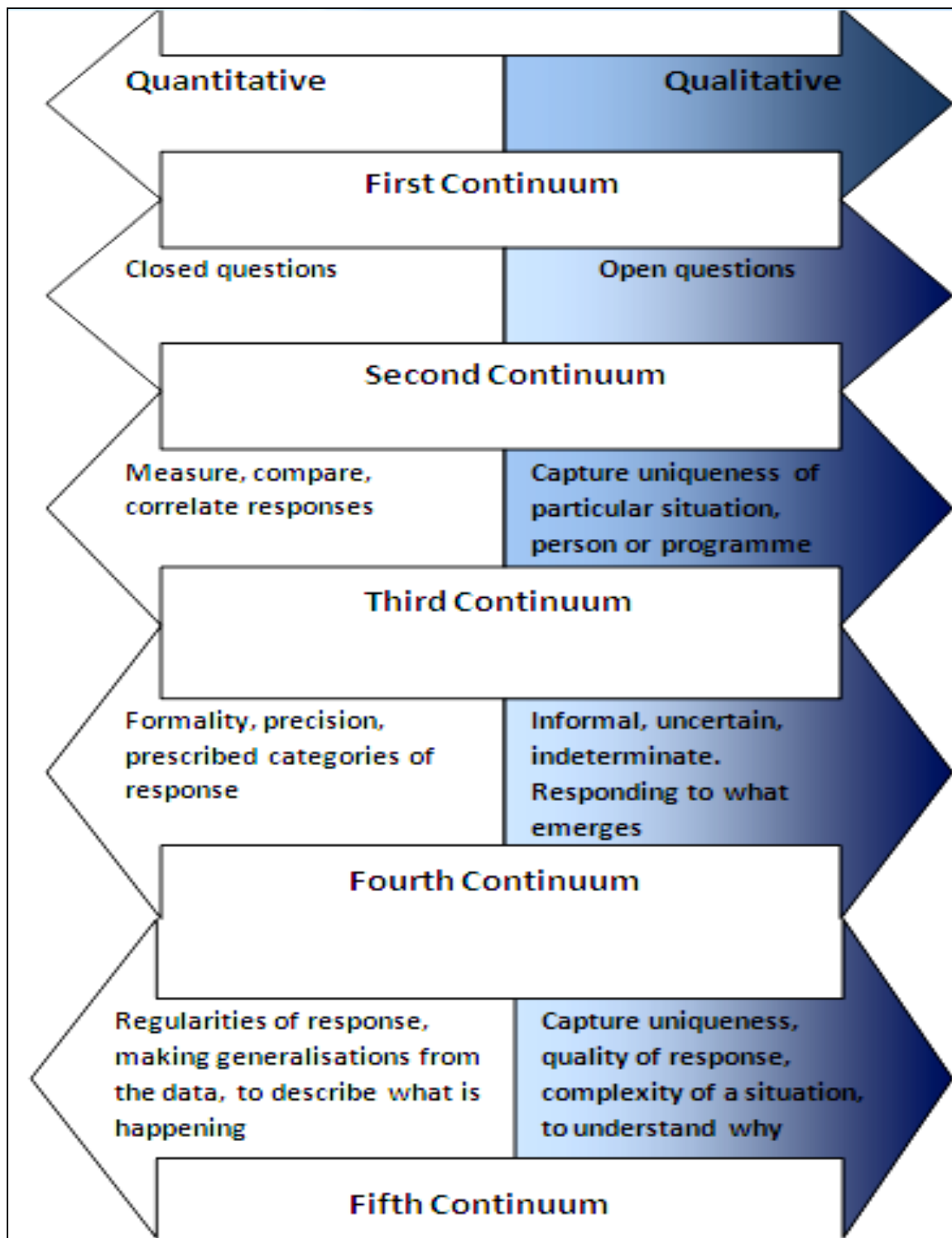
**Diagram 3.8 Convergent Design. Adapted from (Creswell 2015, p.37)**

The chosen convergent design explains how the research was conducted in respect of collecting both quantitative and qualitative data.

### **3.5.1 Research Method One - Interviews**

The research interview instrument fundamentally explores experiences, beliefs, perspectives and incentives of individuals on a specific issue. Cohen *et al* (2007) describe interviews as “not simply concerned with collecting data about life: it is part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable” (p.349). Interviews are not an organic process, they are “a constructed rather than naturally occurring situation, and this renders it different from an everyday conversation” (p.349). There are generally three categories of interviews: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews. My qualitative approach to research is intrinsically linked to the choice of semi-structured interviews, which are designed with key questions that help to specify the phenomenon that is being explored whilst still allowing the interviewer and the participant to digress to clarify, elaborate or probe. Diagram 3.9 depicts my attempt to position semi-structured interviews within the range of interview scenarios.





*Diagram 3.9 Five Continua of Conceptualising Interviews. Adapted from (Morrison 1993, p.34-36)*

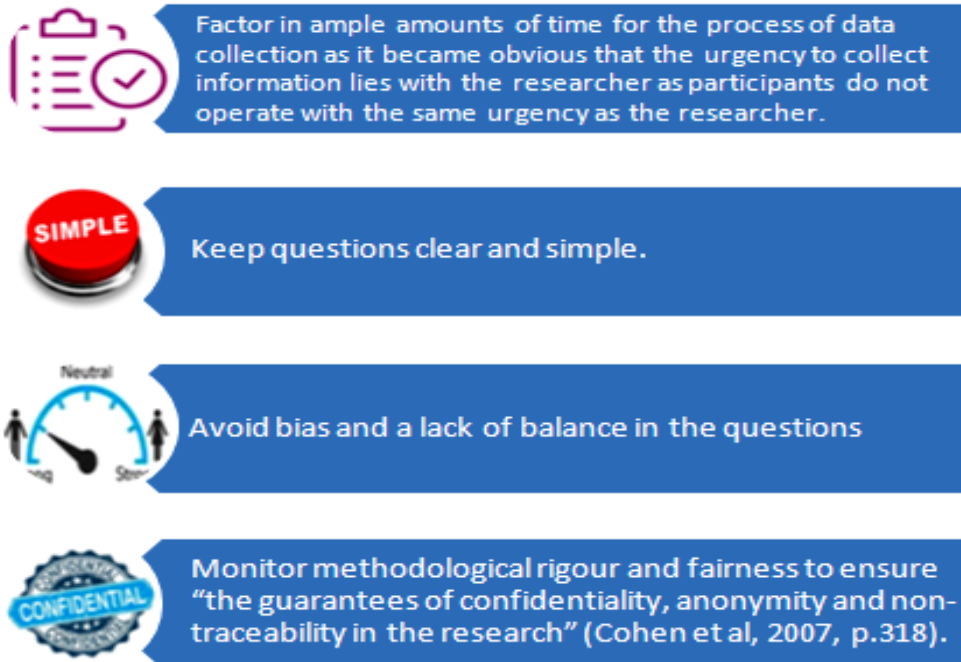
The advantages and disadvantages of interviews are summarised in Diagram 3.10.

<b>Advantages of Interviews</b>	<b>Disadvantages of Interviews</b>
<b>Depth of information</b> – allows for depth and detail in data collection	<b>Time-consuming</b>
<b>Insights</b> – researcher can gain valuable insight based on the depth of information gathered and the wisdom of informants	<b>Data analysis</b> – semi-structured interviews produce data that are not pre-coded and have a relatively open format
<b>Simplicity of equipment</b>	<b>Reliability</b> – consistency and objectivity are hard to achieve
<b>Informants' priorities</b> – opinions and ideas and the opportunity to expand on ideas, explain views and identify what <i>they</i> regard as crucial factors	<b>Interviewer effect</b> – the data from interviews are based on what people say rather than what they do, the two may not tally
<b>Flexibility</b> – allows for adjustments to the lines of enquiry	<b>Inhibitions</b> – the audio recorder can inhibit the informant. The interview is an artificial situation where people are speaking for the record and on the record and this can be daunting
<b>High response rate</b>	<b>Invasion of privacy</b> – tactless interviewing can be an invasion of privacy as the personal element of being interviewed carries its own kinds of dangers
<b>Validity</b> – direct contact at the point of interview means that data can be checked for accuracy and relevance as they are collected	<b>Resources</b> – the cost of interviewers time and travel can be relatively high, particularly if the informants are geographically dispersed
<b>Therapeutic</b> – can be a rewarding experience for informants, a chance to talk about their ideas at length to a person whose purpose is to listen and note the ideas without being critical	

*Diagram 3.10 Advantages and Disadvantages of Interviews. Adapted from (Denscombe 2010, p.192-194)*

### **3.5.1.1 Interview Pilot**

The interview pilot respondents were not totally representative of the target population, but they had a range of experience capable of providing a valid and valuable critique. The most salient lessons learned from the pilot were:



***Diagram 3.11 Lessons learned from the interview pilot***

The interviews were reviewed and amended, but retained a moderately open framework to allow for a fairly constructive two-way conversation to encourage participants to speak openly about their experiences and their perceptions (see Appendix 3). Denscombe (2010) suggests that “we can make efforts to be polite and punctual, receptive and neutral in order to encourage the right climate for an interviewee to feel comfortable and provide honest answers” (p.179). In this way, the interview design allowed for flexibility in the process to probe for clarity and details thus allowing participants to provide answers as well as the reasons behind the answers. Interviews lasted approximately one hour and were conducted with due regard to the guidelines in BERA (2011).

### ***3.5.1.2 Field notes***

Interviews were audio-recorded and further enhanced by field notes (see Appendix 4). Silverman (2005) states that “in making field notes, one is not simply recording data but also analysing it”. He further explains that the researcher should never neglect “what you can see (as well as hear)’ and ‘how you are behaving/being treated” (p.158). As such, notes were

made which specify gestures, physical and facial expressions and cues that underscore and lend additional meaning to the words of the interviewee.

### **3.5.2 Research Method Two – The Questionnaire**

The use of either “quantitative or qualitative research alone” was ‘insufficient for gaining an understanding of the problem” (Creswell 2015, p.15), therefore a questionnaire was considered to be the most useful strategy for gathering mass information regarding the target population at a particular point in time. The information that was needed was mainly “straightforward facts, thoughts, feelings or behaviours” (Denscombe 2010, p.12). The questionnaire enabled a wider reach, and as targeted respondents were EYS leaders, there was an expectation that they would be able to read and comprehend the questions.

Denscombe (2010) explains that the value of the questionnaire in addressing the research problem is dependent on coverage of information that is crucial to the area of research. He also suggests that from the start, consideration should be given to the presentation of the questionnaire and whether it would be advantageous to vary the types of questions to minimise boredom and deter respondents from falling into answering questions in a pattern (2010, p.165). Denscombe also highlights the advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires which have been summarised in the diagram below.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Questionnaires are economical</b> – Can supply a considerable amount of data for a relatively low cost in terms of materials, money and time.	<b>Pre-coded questions can be frustrating for respondents and thus, deter them from answering</b> - the ‘tick box’ routine might encourage people to respond but, on the other hand, this same routine may be experienced as negative. Could affect the response rate.
<b>Questionnaires supply standardised answers</b> – All respondents are posed with exactly the same questions with no scope for variation. Little scope for data to be affected by ‘interpersonal factors’	<b>Pre-coded questions can bias the findings towards the researcher’s, rather than the respondent’s, way of seeing things</b> – Questionnaires, by their very nature, can start to impose a structure on the answers and shape the nature of the responses in a way that reflects the researcher’s thinking rather than the respondent’s.
<b>Relatively easy to arrange</b> – Questionnaires are simply sent to the respondents.	<b>Questionnaires offer little opportunity for the researcher to check the truthfulness of the answers given by the respondents</b> – Answers are given ‘at a distance’ therefore the researcher cannot rely on a number of clues that an interviewer might have about whether answers are genuine or not. The researcher has little option but to accept answers as true. In matters of taste or opinion the researcher has no solid grounds for challenging the answer especially if questionnaires are anonymous.
<b>Pre-coded answers</b> – The value of the data is likely to be greatest where respondents provide answers that fit into a range of options offered by the researcher.	
<b>Data accuracy</b> – Questionnaires done via the internet can be fed directly into a data file, thus automating the process of data entry and eliminating the human error factor.	

**Diagram 3.12 Advantages and Disadvantages of Questionnaires. Adapted from (Denscombe 2010, p.169-170)**

Diagram 3.13 depicts the reasons why researchers have to face the possibility that it may be difficult to procure a good response rate as in most cases there is no incentive to encourage participation and “respondents cannot be coerced into completing a questionnaire” (Cohen *et al* 2007, p.317). Therefore their decision to respond may be dependent on:



**Diagram 3.13 Conditions that Influence Questionnaire Response Rates. Adapted from (Cohen *et al* 2007, p.318)**

Consequently, the questionnaire was designed with due regard to the MRS (2011) which cites four major issues which will “negatively impact on the quality of data and the respondents” attitude towards research. These are:

- “Excessively lengthy questionnaires
- Repetitive questioning.
- Insufficient opportunity for respondents to have their say
- Excessive classification sections” (p.12).

Every effort was made to ensure that the questionnaire encompassed the elements of the diagram below.

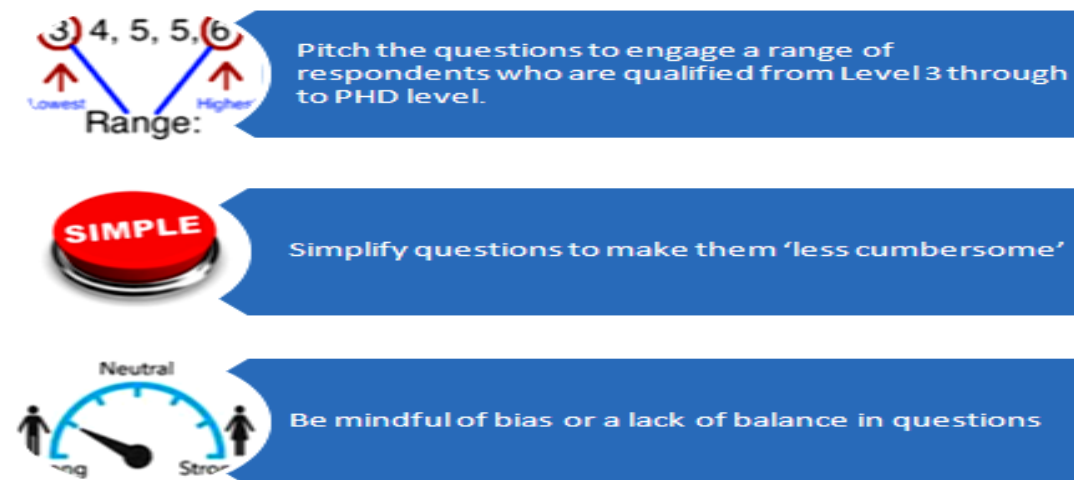
<b>Appropriate</b>	• Respondent is equipped to provide answers to the questions being asked
<b>Intelligible</b>	• Respondent can understand the question being asked
<b>Unambiguous</b>	• Question being asked means the same thing to the respondent and the inquirer
<b>Unbiased</b>	• Researcher responsibility to ensure that they do not trigger one kind of response over the other
<b>Omnicompetent</b>	• Capable of coping with all possible answers
<b>Appropriately coded</b>	• Coding system checked for "ambiguity and overlap". "Categories should be exhaustive but mutually exclusive"
<b>Piloted</b>	• Prepare a first draft and pre-test
<b>Ethical</b>	• <i>Primum non nocere</i> : The first this (is) do no harm

**Diagram 3.14 Properties of an Effective Questionnaire. Adapted from (Stone 1993, p.1264)**

The questionnaire is presented in three sections: – Background information; Attitude and perceptions; Comments and opinions. Section one consists of nineteen closed-ended, multiple choice questions; Section two consists of a Likert rating scale for multiple political and personal statements; Section 3 consists of an open-ended, question and answer section for respondent comments, in order to gain a holistic understanding of the participants’ perspectives (see Appendix 6).

### 3.5.2.1 Questionnaire pilot

A pilot was conducted on the questionnaire and the lessons learned are summarised below:



*Diagram 3.15 Lessons learned from the questionnaire pilot*

The questionnaire was reviewed and amendments made to ensure that it could fulfil the purpose indicated in diagram 3.16.

What should a research questionnaire do?
Collect information which can be used subsequently as data for analysis – The purpose of the research questionnaire is to discover things
Consist of a written list of questions – each respondent should have access to an identical set of questions to allow for consistency and precision and to allow the processing of the answers to be easier
Gather information by asking people directly – questionnaires are primarily concerned with the area of research and work on the premise that if you want to find out something about people and their attitudes, you simply ask them what you want to know and get the information 'straight from the horse's mouth'

*Diagram 3.16 The Purpose of a Research Questionnaire. Adapted from (Denscombe 2010, p.155-156)*

### 3.5.3 Research Method Three - Documentary Sources

Data was collected from documentary sources as part of the research design to balance out the “whims of human beings” (Merriam 2009, p.139). “In judging the value of a data source, a researcher can ask whether it contains information or insights relevant to the research question and whether it can be acquired in a reasonably practical yet systematic manner. If these two questions can be answered in the affirmative, there is no reason not, to use a



particular source of data” (p.153). The main caveat regarding online documents is the potential for the source to be changed, relocated or removed from the internet. The internet is a wide and unpredictable information mechanism which is constantly evolving, and Merriam advises researchers to “recognise that the results of their research are strongly influenced by the characteristics of the data revealed, concealed or altered because of the nature of the medium through which they are presented. Analysing, describing, and discussing the potential effects of these characteristics will be an important aspect of research conducted from online data” (p.160). Documents were sourced from public records which are openly accessible from the internet. Public documents are useful “not only because of what can be learned directly from them but also as stimulus for paths of inquiry that can be pursued only through direct observation and interviewing” (Patton 2002, p.294). The advantages and disadvantages of online documentary source data are summarised below.

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<b>Documents may be the best source of data on a particular subject, better than observations and interviews.</b>	<b>Researchers distrust in their own competency in using documentary materials.</b>
<b>Many documents are easily accessible, free, and contain information that would take an investigator enormous time and effort to gather otherwise.</b>	<b>Most documentary data has not been developed for research purposes.</b>
<b>The data found in documents can be used in the same manner as data from interviews or observations – the data can furnish descriptive information, verify emerging hypotheses, advance new categories and hypotheses, offer historical understanding, track change and development.</b>	<b>Because documents are not produced for research purposes, data may be incongruent with emerging findings based on observational and interview data – this is more of a problem when documents are used as secondary data sources to verify findings based on other data.</b>
<b>Documentary materials are stable, unobtrusive and objective – unlike interviewing and observation, the presence of the investigator does not alter what is being studies</b>	<b>A major problem with documentary materials is determining their authenticity and accuracy – Even public records that purport to be objective and accurate contain built-in biases that a researcher may not be aware of.</b>

**Diagram 3.17 Advantages and Disadvantages of Public Documents as Documentary Source Data, Adapted from (Merriam 2009, p.153-155)**



### 3.6 Data Analysis

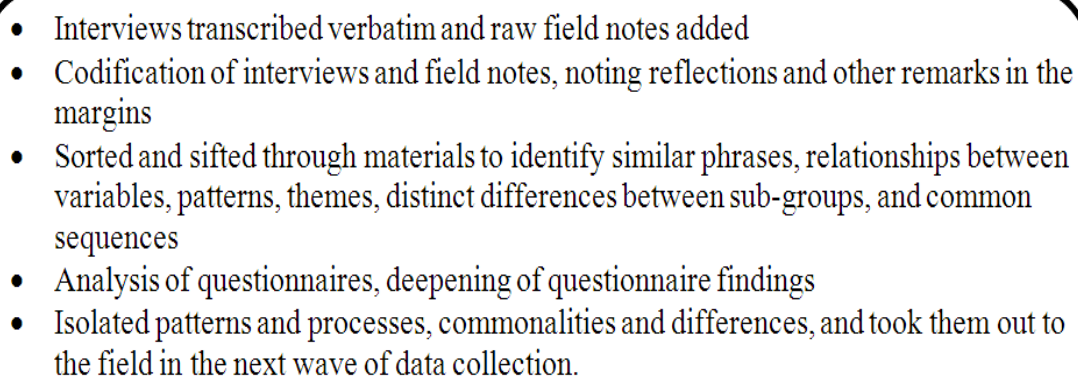
“Data analysis is a complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation. These meanings or understandings or insights constitute the findings of the study” (Merriam 2009, p.176). Miles and Huberman (1994) define data analysis “as consisting of three concurrent flows of activity: (1) Data reduction, (2) Data display, and (3) Conclusion drawing/verification” (p.10). The chosen mixed-methods approach necessitated rigorous data analysis skills, and systematic organisation and codification to successfully integrate datasets and keep the research topic in focus. Thomas (2009) refers to what he calls “corroborative evidence” as follows “because of the potential frailties and weaknesses of one kind or another in evidence, it is useful to gather it in different ways so that one piece of evidence supports another” (p.18). In this study the qualitative data produced by interviews was augmented by numerical data from the questionnaires and interwoven with documentary sources to enable a wider and fuller understanding of the stated phenomenon.

Cohen *et al* (2007) refer to qualitative data analysis as a researcher’s “glory and their headache”. They suggest “abiding by the principles of fitness for purpose” (p.461) and being clear on what the researcher wants the data analysis to do. Determining the purpose of the analysis decided the kind of analysis performed on the generated data, and how it was written up. Data abounds in qualitative research studies with the “strong potential for revealing complexity” (Miles and Huberman 1994, p.10), which was a desirable feature for elucidating the perceived leadership crisis in a complex EYS. Merriam (2009) advises conducting data analysis simultaneously with data collection to avoid being overwhelmed by the “sheer volume of the material that needs to be processed” and also to devise systems early on in the

study to organise and manage data (p.171). Cohen *et al* (2007) suggest a “process that is akin to funnelling from the wide to the narrow” (p.462). A large amount of data was generated and needed to be processed to:

- Explore the stated phenomenon
- Illuminate patterns, processes, similarities and differences.
- Describe the stated phenomenon

The researcher employed a “fairly classic set” of qualitative “analytic moves” (p.9) in processing the data as described in diagram 3.18 below.

- 
- Interviews transcribed verbatim and raw field notes added
  - Codification of interviews and field notes, noting reflections and other remarks in the margins
  - Sorted and sifted through materials to identify similar phrases, relationships between variables, patterns, themes, distinct differences between sub-groups, and common sequences
  - Analysis of questionnaires, deepening of questionnaire findings
  - Isolated patterns and processes, commonalities and differences, and took them out to the field in the next wave of data collection.

**Diagram 3.18, Analytic Method. Adapted from (Miles and Huberman 1994, p.9)**

Data reduction and codification was performed manually, with predetermined themes such as: ‘work/life balance’; ‘recruitment and retention ’; ‘status’; and ‘perceptions’ amongst others that were identified in order to explore the perceived EYS leadership crisis (see Appendix 4 and Appendix 5). Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that data display should “assemble organised information into an immediately accessible, compact form” and therefore be presented as matrices, graphs and charts to avoid the use of “poorly constructed and extremely bulky” extended text which may lead to “hasty, partial, unfounded conclusions” (p11). This strategy proved useful in compressing large amounts of thick data

gleaned through the perspectives of EYS leaders. An online service was used to create a web browser-based questionnaire with the capacity to export the summary data to an Excel spreadsheet, which included response counts, percentages per question and data tables. The data from a second postal trawl of questionnaires was added to the original set. Making good sense of the data as suggested by (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.246), produced a “richness and holism” that is hopefully evocative, grounded in real circumstances and resonates with “a ring of truth” with leaders in the EYS in the Midlands and beyond. Tactics for generating meaning from data are summarised in Diagram 3.19 below.

<b>What goes with what: Achieving integration among diverse pieces of data</b>
1. Noting patterns, themes
2. Seeing plausibility
3. Clustering
4. Making metaphors
<b>Seeing what's there: Sharpening understanding</b>
5. Counting
6. Making contrasts/comparisons
7. Partitioning variables
<b>Seeing things: Abstract relationships</b>
8. Subsuming particulars into the general
9. Factoring
10. Noting relations between variables
11. Finding intervening variables
<b>Systematic assembly: A coherent understanding of data</b>
12. Building a logical chain of evidence
13. Making conceptual/theoretical coherence

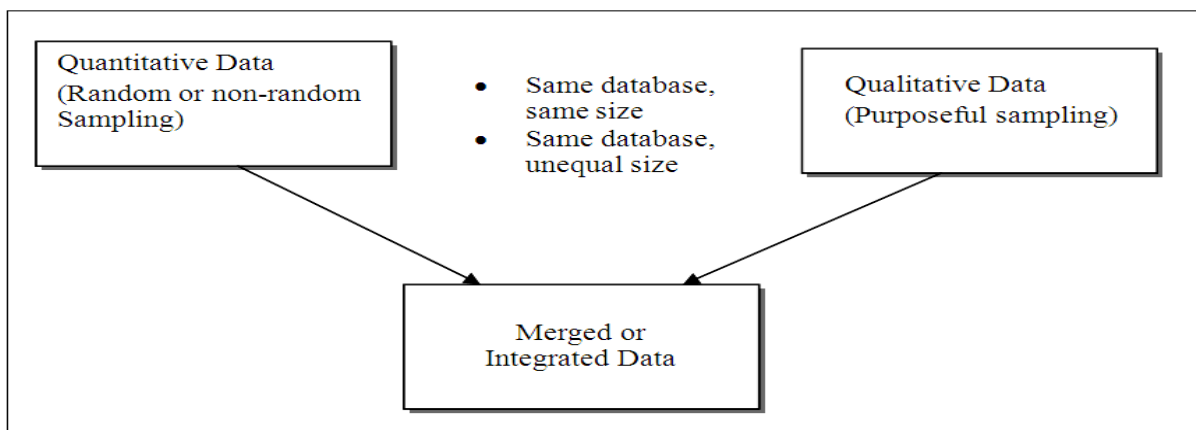
**Diagram 3.19 Tactics for Generating Meaning from Data. Adapted from (Miles and Huberman 1994, p.245-246)**

Miles and Huberman also urge the competent researcher to maintain “openness and a degree of scepticism” especially as the qualitative analyst begins to decide what things mean from the onset of data collection. The process of shuttling “among reduction, display and conclusion drawing/verification for the remainder of the study” (p.246) meant that clarity

grew incrementally during the research process with final conclusions not being totally achieved until data collection was complete.

### 3.7 Research sample

The design for this study consisted of non-random quantitative sampling and purposive qualitative sampling with participants being sourced from the same population. The main purpose of this was to identify and select information-rich cases for the most efficient use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). I accepted the differences in sampling size between the quantitative sample and the qualitative sample with the understanding that “qualitative researchers might well argue that equal size is unnecessary because the data tell different stories (i.e., general trends on the quantitative side and detailed perspectives on the qualitative side)” (Creswell 2015, p.79). The chosen method was a combination of semi-structured interviews, a questionnaire and data sourced from public records on current practice.



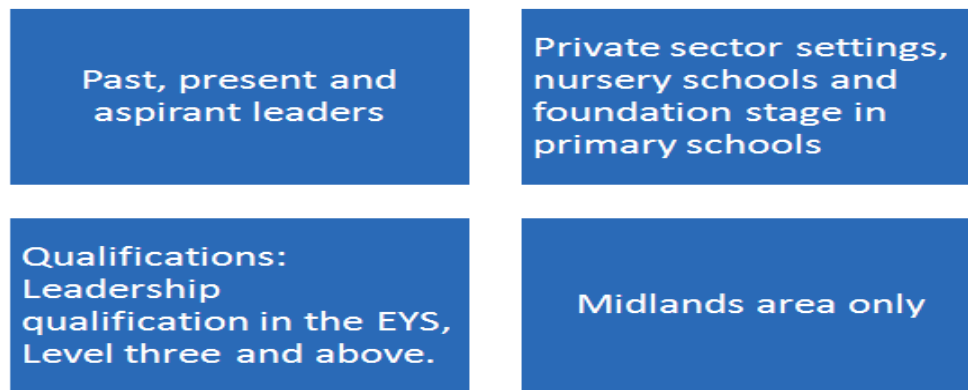
**Diagram 3.20 Sampling in a Convergent Design. Adapted from (Creswell 2015, p.78)**

#### 3.7.1 Interview Sample

This research draws on sixteen individual semi-structured biographical interviews with leaders from maintained and PVI provision as well as leaders who offered a cross-sector perspective. The approach for sampling was not based on ‘pure chance’ and sought instead to involve non-probability sampling “on the basis of things like their expertise, their experience

or the fact that they might be unusual or different from the norm” (Denscombe 2010, p.25).

The sample does not aim to generalise findings to the wider research population, but rather to elicit patterns, anomalies and perspectives from lived experiences. The criteria for purposive sampling are depicted in Diagram 3.21.



**Diagram 3.21 Criteria for purposive sampling**

The rationale behind the approach depicted in Diagram 3.13, is an attempt to capture the complex nature of the perceived crisis in the EYS via the generation of rich information from experienced members of the sector.

Sector focus	Interviews
Nursery school	1 Head teacher (retired/resigned) 1 Incumbent head teacher 1 Deputy head teacher 1 Class teacher (Leadership aspirant)
Nursery classes in primary schools	1 Head teacher (retired/resigned) 1 Incumbent head teacher 1 Deputy head teacher 1 Class teacher (Leadership aspirant)
Private early years sector	1 Manager (retired/resigned) 1 Incumbent Private Manager 1 Deputy Manager 1 Room Leader (Leadership aspirant)
Enrichment focus	
Cross sector	Independent chair Independent adviser Business Manager Cross sector practitioner

**Diagram 3.22 Rationale for Interview Method**

This sample is not representative of the wider research population, but aims instead to be an exploratory one. “The size of the sample within the case is determined by a number of factors relevant to the study’s purpose. In case studies, then, sample selection occurs first at the case level, followed by sample selection within the case” (Merriam 2009, p.82). The research study focuses on the two main aspects of the EYS: The maintained and non-maintained Early Years sector. The sample consists of twelve females and four males. The twelve females are spread across the entire EYS and are representative of past, present and aspirant leadership.

**Nursery School settings:** Leadership interview participants’ were approached and recruited verbally in two headship forums in the Midlands, where time was given to read the preamble explaining the study and participants’ rights. A preamble document with a form requesting preferred contact details and preferred times of contact was sent around to gather expressions of interest (see Appendix 2).

**Nursery classes in Primary schools:** Primary school Head Teachers and deputy heads were far more difficult to recruit and attempts to recruit them through Consortia and Schools’ Forum were futile. The retired and incumbent primary head and the primary deputy head were eventually recruited by recommendation.

**Private settings and nursery classes in primary and nursery schools:** Two Early Years networks that support PVI’s and nursery classes were used to source participants from the PVI sector and aspirant leaders from nursery classes across the Midlands. The preamble document explaining the study was also handed out.

The trawl for interviewees produced twenty-five potential participants, three of whom did not meet the criteria. Of the twenty-two potential participants left, three were selected and approached to pilot the interview schedule, alongside the three primary school recommendations, the participants were shortlisted to fit the sector focus in Table 3.10. The

selection process was refined by frequently referring to the purpose of the study and the research questions. Merriam (2009) explains that purposive sampling is “the method of choice for most qualitative research” to “discover, understand and gain insight” therefore making it necessary to “select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p.77). With this in mind, three participants were approached for their unique contributions to the EYS which allowed for the addition of an enrichment focus sample. The fourth participant from this sample was recommended as a cross-over practitioner from a PVI setting to a nursery school. Ten potential participants from the original list were written to and asked if they would consent to stand in reserve if needed; four accepted this proposal, one declined and five did not respond. The sixteen participants that were finally chosen were then contacted by telephone to confirm interview arrangements. Organisational sites were not applicable to all interview participants; of the sixteen interviewees, thirteen were attached to a school or a specific PVI location and the other three participants, work with the sector but not in the sector. Diagram 3.23 below depicts the participants and the types of settings they work in.

<b>Interview participants</b>	<b>Type and size of setting</b>
<b>Retired Head teacher</b>	Nursery School - Maintained Sector 60 pupils on roll 3-4 years old Mixed gender
<b>Incumbent Head teacher</b>	Nursery School - Maintained Sector 105 pupils on roll 3 – 5 years old Mixed gender
<b>Deputy Head teacher</b>	Nursery School - Maintained Sector 300 pupils on roll 2 – 5 years old Mixed gender
<b>Nursery School class teacher</b>	Nursery School – Maintained Sector 105 pupils on roll 3 – 5 years old Mixed gender
<b>Retired Head teacher</b>	Primary School – Maintained Sector 700 pupils on roll 3 – 11 years old 126 Foundation Stage pupils – 1 part-time

	Nursery class Mixed gender
<b>Incumbent Head teacher</b>	Primary School – Academy 487 pupils on roll 3 – 11 years old 132 Foundation Stage pupils – 2 part-time nursery classes Mixed gender
<b>Deputy Head teacher</b>	Primary School – Maintained Sector 770 pupils on roll 3 – 11 years old 156 Foundation Stage pupils – 1 part-time nursery class Mixed gender
<b>Nursery class teacher</b>	Primary School – Maintained Sector 599 pupils on roll 3 -11 years old 135 Foundation Stage pupils – 1 part-time nursery class Mixed gender
<b>Former Nursery manager</b>	Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector 50 place setting 0 -5 years old Mixed gender
<b>Incumbent Nursery Manager/Owner</b>	Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector 47 place setting 1 -4 years old Mixed gender
<b>Deputy Nursery Manager</b>	Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector – Nursery School Link PVI 52 place setting 0 – 5 years old Mixed gender
<b>Room Leader</b>	Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector 17 place setting 2 – 4 years old Mixed gender
<b>Cross-sector Practitioner</b>	Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector 25 place setting 0 – 5 years old Mixed gender
<b>Independent Chair</b>	Not setting based
<b>Independent Adviser</b>	Not Setting based
<b>Business Manager</b>	Multi-site Maintained sector and PVI sector

*Diagram 3.23 Interview Participants and Types of Settings*



### ***3.7.1.1 Biographical Makeup of Interview Participants' in the Sample***

The participants in this sample were across the age range 25 - 75 years, with the youngest participant being 26 years old and the oldest being 73 years old. All participants barring one retiree were actively working. Participants came from five regions across the Midlands: 11 were from one particular region. The participants had a variety of Early Years experience, ranging from 4 years to 33 years. All participants had experienced movement in their careers, with their current posts identified as a fraction of their time spent working in the EYS: 6 participants were promoted; 3 relocated and 3 were promoted within their current setting. 2 participants had moved laterally representing the same role but in different schools and 5 participants had changed their status within the EYS. Of the 3 participants left, 1 had totally retired, 1 operated within an unpaid 'social responsibility' context and the other had remained static for 23 years operating in a business capacity.

## ***3.8 Questionnaire sample***

The questionnaire sample was mindful of the chosen convergent mixed-methods design, and respondents were targeted from the wider EYS population. Contact details of the target population were sourced via the internet. A Survey Monkey link to the questionnaire was emailed out to 461 settings which yielded 46 responses. A second trawl of questionnaires through Survey Monkey gained a further 10 responses.

### ***3.8.1 Biographical Make-up of Questionnaire Respondents in the Sample***

There were 56 questionnaire respondents, 51 of whom responded to the question on age. The sample spanned the age range 25 - 75 years, with the youngest respondent being 28 years old and the oldest being 65 years old. 94.3% of the 51 respondents who answered the question on gender were female. Respondents occupied a variety of roles within the EYS. 50 respondents answered the question on work roles, and 59% of these were Nursery Managers in the PVI sector; of the 49 respondents who answered the question, 77.5% were from the PVI sector. 42 respondents

answered the question on qualifications: 11 were Level 3 qualified, 24 held a Bachelor's Degree, 6 held a Master's Degree and 1 held a First Line Management qualification. 40 of the 54 respondents who answered the question had been working in their roles between 1 and 10 years, 10 were in their roles between 11 and 20 years and the remaining 4 had been in their roles for over 21 years.

### **3.9 Limitations of the Research Design**

Blaikie (2000) suggests that “it is a good idea for the researcher to make an explicit assessment of the particular strengths and weaknesses of the research design” so that, “those parts of the design that require further development as the research proceeds can be identified” (p.21). It should be noted that while this research applies only to the Midlands, the data collected should not be regarded as immaterial to the wider population of EYS leaders. The findings represent the biographies of a small but significant group of EYS leaders and teachers whose stories tell a familiar tale and bear resemblance to the accounts reported in the literature. It is possible that focus group discussions might have produced additional data that could have further complemented the research design but the mixed-methods approach, of interviews, questionnaire and documentary sources combined is tried and proven in the research community, and solidly supports the trustworthiness of the findings. This research takes account of the shifting agendas surrounding the EYS; some significant policy changes and government initiatives are not the subject of this research study although these aspects will continue to have influence and may contribute to the perceived crisis in the EYS. As such, it is important to consider that the complexity of the EYS and the rapid policy changes within the sector could be viewed as a limitation of the research as workforce perceptions at any given time could be ‘fuzzy’ in respect of constantly changing government initiatives.

### 3.10 Ethical Considerations

BERA (2011) acknowledges the probability of a number of problematic conditions, due to the multi-disciplinary nature of educational research, the paradigms and methodologies that are ensconced in these disciplines and their subsequent sub-disciplines. Ethical concerns are therefore an inherent aspect of educational research, as a result of the varied “philosophies, theories and methodologies that exist” and the mandate for research principles that demand an “ethic of respect for:

- The Person
- Knowledge
- Democratic Values
- The Quality of Educational Research
- Academic Freedom” (BERA 2011, p.5).

Ethical considerations thread throughout the fabric of the research study, and are present from the onset in the expectations of adherence to the University of Birmingham’s Code of Practice for Research (2011-2012), which includes undertaking a rigorous application for an Ethical Review. The process explicates researcher responsibility in managing the research study with underpinning ethical guidelines, including the storage, access and disposal of generated data. “The major ethical issue in most social research is related to the treatment of human respondents or participants. Procedures need to be in place to provide them with adequate information about the nature of the project, what is expected of them, how research procedures might affect them and how their anonymity will be assured, as well as assuring them that the information they provide will be treated in confidence, and that they have the right to withdraw from the process at any stage” (Blaikie 2000, p.20). An outline of the purpose of the research and a set of research principles were devised and sent to all participants, and written and informed consent was sought and acquired via a letter outlining

the participant's rights, as well as transparent disclosure regarding the data produced and the outcomes. Participants were assured of confidentiality which also allowed for better data quality. The principle of "*primum non nocere* (first of all, do no harm)" is enshrined in research, "however, what constitutes 'harm' is unclear" (Cohen *et al* 2007, p.59). The concept of harm is subjective to individual participants and was top of the list of my priorities when faced with ethical dilemmas. The chosen research study is complex, sensitive and highly political, and therefore carries the potential for high personal cost to research participants. Participant welfare was therefore paramount and the researcher was 'alert to alternative techniques' to avoid controversy and the possibility of breaching research ethics (p.59 – 60). Transcripts were anonymised and kept in password-protected files, and paper versions kept in a secure filing cabinet.

### **3.11 Trustworthiness**

There are tensions with validity and reliability for interpretivist researchers who view this approach as "expert-centred and exclusionary, not responsive to the contingent, contextual, personally interpretive nature of any qualitative study" however, issues "of quality, of trustworthiness, of authenticity of findings will not go away" (Miles and Huberman 1994, p.277). "Just as there is a need to look at the accuracy and trustworthiness of various kinds of quantitative data in different ways, there is also a need to look at qualitative methods for the different ways in which to ensure the quality of the findings" (Krefting 1991, p.215). Krefting explains that despite the difference in nature and purpose between quantitative and qualitative research traditions, qualitative research is often measured against criteria designed for quantitative research (Krefting 1991, p.214). In quantitative research validity relies on as many variations in places, people, and procedures that the research study can endure and still produce the same findings. However it should be noted that, "the real business of case study

is particularization, not generalisation. We take a particular case and come to know it well, not primarily as to how it's different from others but what it is, what it does. There is emphasis on uniqueness, and that implies knowledge of others that the case is different from, but the first emphasis is on understanding the case itself" (Stake 1995, p.8).

Case study research in 'the naturalistic paradigm' (Guba, 1981) is replete with the heterogeneous nature of research participants and their multi-perspectives and uniquely detailed narratives which render quantitative research concepts like 'validity' and 'reliability' difficult to address in relation to the diversity of settings and the subjectivity of participants. This research study makes use of a phenomenological approach with the aim of describing as accurately as possible the perceived leadership crisis in the EYS, whilst not attempting, 'generalisability', 'replicability' or 'controllability' (Cohen *et al* 2007, p.133). Cohen *et al* also suggest that qualitative research at best should "strive to minimise invalidity and maximise validity" (p.133). Research is "affected by the personal identity of the researcher" (Denscombe 2010, p.179), therefore, in an effort to maximise validity, I gave due regard to objectivity and receptiveness to new knowledge generated during the research process by working painstakingly to manage personal bias, so that the data was not tainted by my own values and beliefs. I acknowledge that it is impossible to be entirely objective when conducting qualitative research due to the fact that researchers are innately a part of the world they are researching (Cohen *et al* 2007, p.134). This fact is acknowledged as part of the process and every effort has been made to maximise validity through careful reflection, quality assurance through piloting, verbatim transcripts, honest reporting of participant's responses, and triangulation of data, as well as dealing transparently with issues as they arose. In achieving trustworthiness, I agree with Guba (1981) who replaces the term 'reliability' with words like; "credibility", "transferability", "dependability" and "confirmability". Cohen

*et al* (2007) suggest that reliability in qualitative research should be viewed as working towards a “degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness of coverage”, rather than attempting to “strive for uniformity” (p.149). The concept of truth as explained by Popper (2002) is that “truth is often hard to come by and once found it may easily be lost again” he further states that “erroneous beliefs may have an astonishing power to survive, for thousands of years, in defiance of experience” (p.10). This firmly places the responsibility for authenticity of findings on the shoulders of the researcher. Popper also believes that the truth can never be totally established as it is based on “conjectures” and “refutations” which allow for a growing understanding of the problem at hand thus acquiring a step “nearer to the truth” but only because knowledge grows and science progresses as we learn from our mistakes. It would appear then that a quest for ‘the truth’ should factor in the human element, as humans may unconsciously be influenced and motivated by their personal hopes and beliefs. A “naturalistic paradigm asserts that the inquirer and the respondent are interrelated, with each influencing the other. Naturalistic inquirers make every effort to maintain an optimal distance between themselves and the phenomenon, but never for a moment do they consider that the ‘optimal’ distance is impervious to inquirer-respondent interchanges” (Guba 1981, p.77). Popper (2002) deduces that as human beings we are fallible and often make mistakes but that the idea of human fallibility promotes and protects the concept of “objective truth” with the implications being that “if we respect truth, we must search for it by persistently searching for our errors: by indefatigable rational criticism and self-criticism” (p.21). Thus, my degree of understanding of ‘self’ and commitment to being unafraid to criticise personal beliefs and value systems is key to the trustworthiness of this research study. Diagram 3.22 below condenses the whole process of the treatment of trustworthiness as generally practised by the researcher.

Inquiry can be affected by:	Which produce effects of:	To take account of which we:		In the hope these actions will lead to:	And produce findings that are:
		During:	After:		
Factor patternings	Noninterpretability	Use prolonged engagement Use persistent observation Use peer debriefing Do triangulation Collect referential adequacy materials Do member checks	Establish structural corroboration (coherence)  Establish referential adequacy  Do member checks	Credibility	Plausible
Situational uniquenesses	Noncomparability	Collect thick descriptive data Do theoretical/purposive sampling	Develop thick description	Transferability	Context-relevant
Instrumental changes	Instability	Use overlap methods Use stepwise replication Leave audit trail	Do dependability audit (process)	Dependability	Stable
Investigator predilections	Bias	Do triangulation Practice reflexivity (audit trail)	Do confirmability audit (product)	Confirmability	Investigator-free

*Diagram 3.24 The Naturalistic Treatment of Trustworthiness (Guba 1981, p.83)*

### 3.12 Summary of chapter

The philosophical and methodological approach in exploring the perceived leadership crisis in the EYS is predominantly biographical in nature. The theoretical background to the study and the methodology are chosen in the hope they sit well together, in order to enable analysis of ‘multiple realities’ and provide a more valid understanding of this phenomenon. The process of data analysis is interwoven with discovery, critical analysis, interpretation and on-going reference to literature and experts in related fields of study.

## Chapter 4

### Data Presentation

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from three identified empirical data collection phases, and is essentially structured in deference to the convergent design within the mixed-methods methodology. The presentation of the findings has been achieved by highlighting themes that are connected to interview questions and questionnaire responses, with corroboration from documentary sources. Merriam (2009) stipulates the importance of considering your audience in respect of making research findings coherent and applicable. As this research is positioned primarily in the humanistic domain, in reference to Ribbins and Gunter's (2002) work on knowledge domains, it aims to convey essential knowledge for policymakers and practitioners as well as the research community. The research is presented as a case study with embedded units, with views from a range of perspectives which are grouped as follows: The case of nursery schools, the case of the Foundation stage in primary schools and the case of PVI settings. This case study has an added enrichment focus provided by participants who influence or have worked across the EYS.

The findings in this chapter are reflective of the three core research questions:

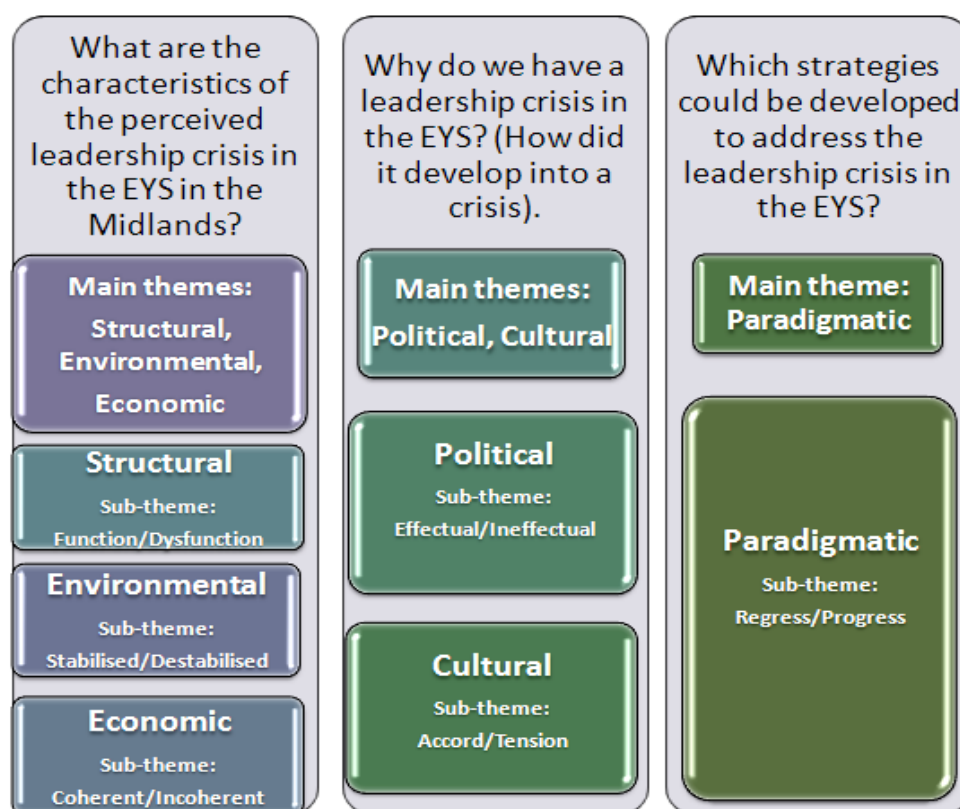
- What are the characteristics of the perceived leadership crisis in the EYS?
- Why do we have a perceived leadership crisis in the EYS? (How did it develop into a crisis?)
- Which strategies could be developed to address the perceived leadership crisis in the EYS?



Findings are briefly summarised at the end of each section and the chapter concludes with an overview of all the findings.

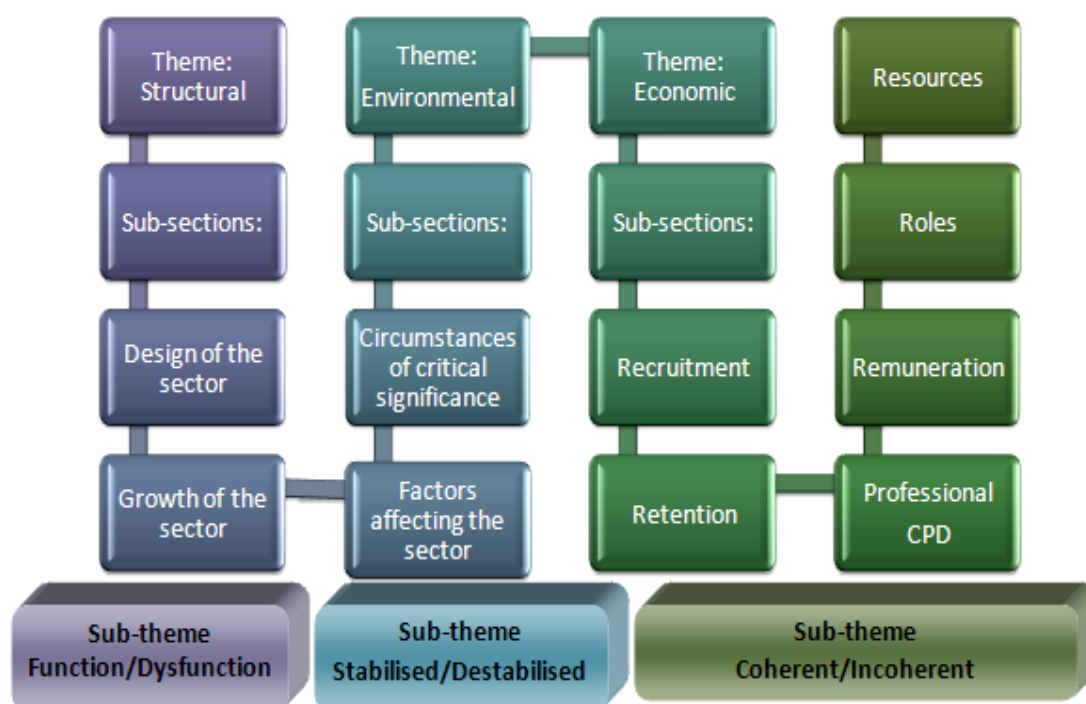
## 4.2 Development of Categories

Thomas (2009) suggests constant comparison as the basic analytic method to describe and make meaning of human experiences, and the best way to present contextual findings from the focus of inquiry (p.198). Consequently, the characteristics, reasons and recommendations for the perceived crisis originated from themes during the data reduction phase plus the derivative sub-themes (see Appendix 5). These act diagnostically as a scale for gauging the level of ‘crisis’. Diagram 4.1 depicts the main and sub-themes as they relate to research questions. Sub-themes are presented in a ‘continuum’ format to indicate a range of adjacent elements that all possess a particular quality to different degrees, but where the extremes are distinctly different.

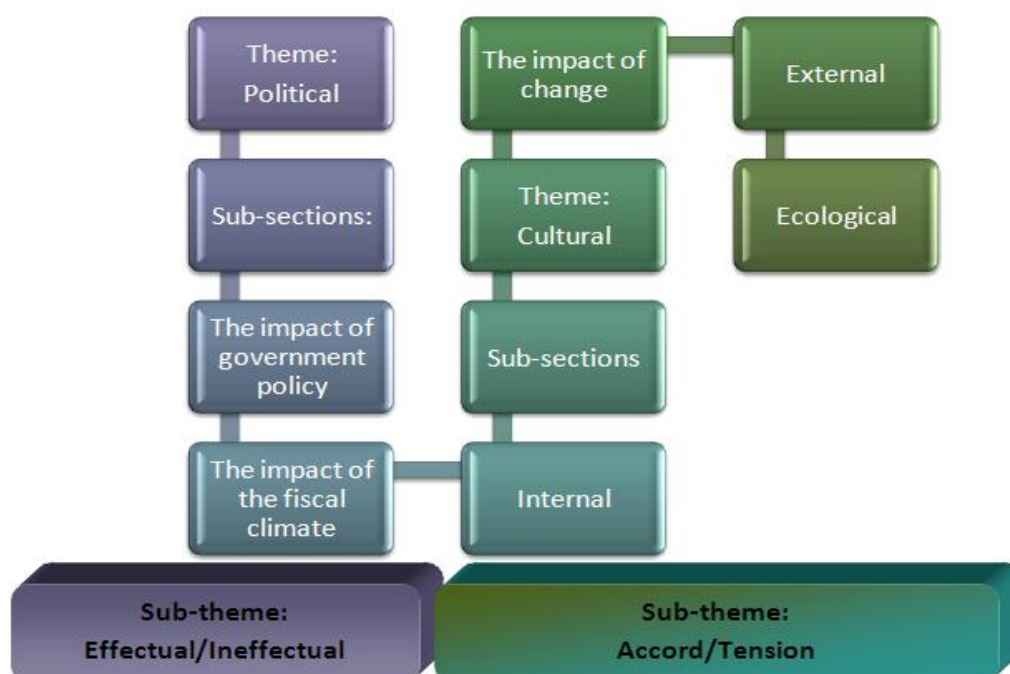


*Diagram 4.1 Overview of main themes and sub-themes related to research questions*

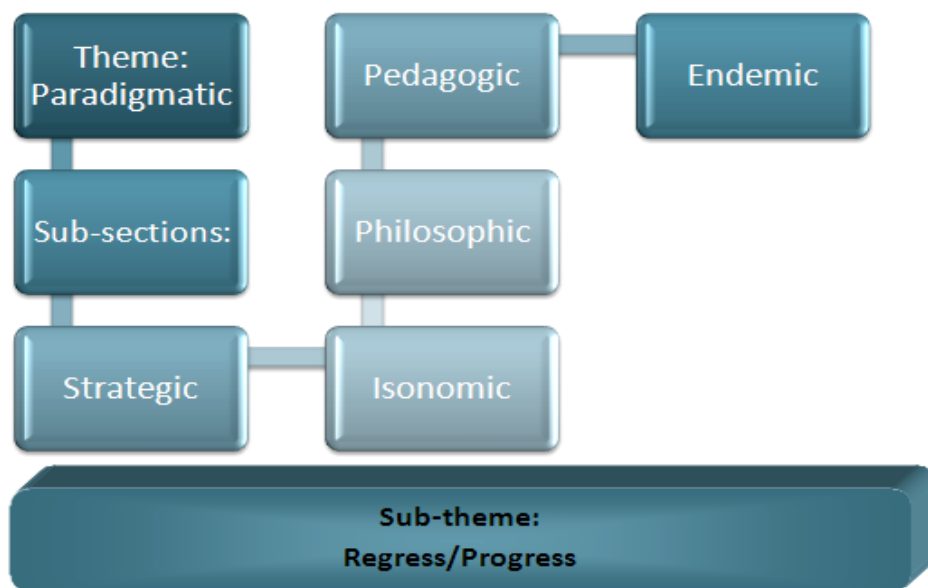
Diagrams 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 demonstrate the relationships of the main themes and the sub-themes in respect of each individual research question.



*Diagram 4.2 Themes and Sub-themes for Research Question 1 (RQ1)*



*Diagram 4.3 Themes and Sub-themes for Research Question 2 (RQ2)*

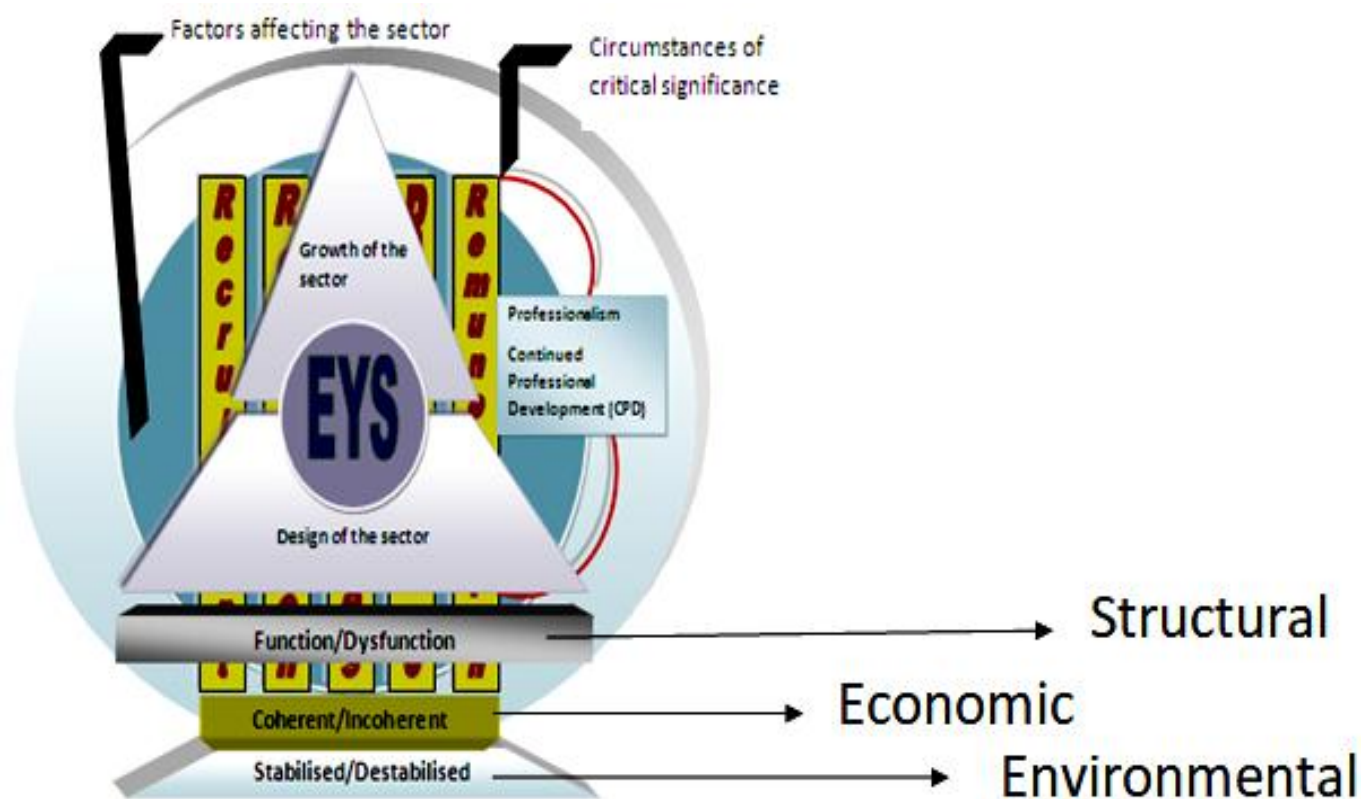


*Diagram 4.4 Themes and Sub-themes for Research Question 3 (RQ3)*

### 4.3 The Findings

The challenge in presenting the findings of this research was to avoid either over-simplifying or over-complicating the perceived leadership crisis in the EYS. Quotes that were particularly evocative or most representative of research participants' viewpoints have been selected in order to highlight findings. Diagram 4.6 below, depicts the themes 'structural', 'environmental' and 'economic' which have been attributed to RQ1. The diagram is essentially complex to fully represent the intricate and overlapping characteristics of the perceived leadership crisis. This structure is unpacked in sections with the relevant findings for each section displayed to explain the impact of individual themes on the sector as a whole.

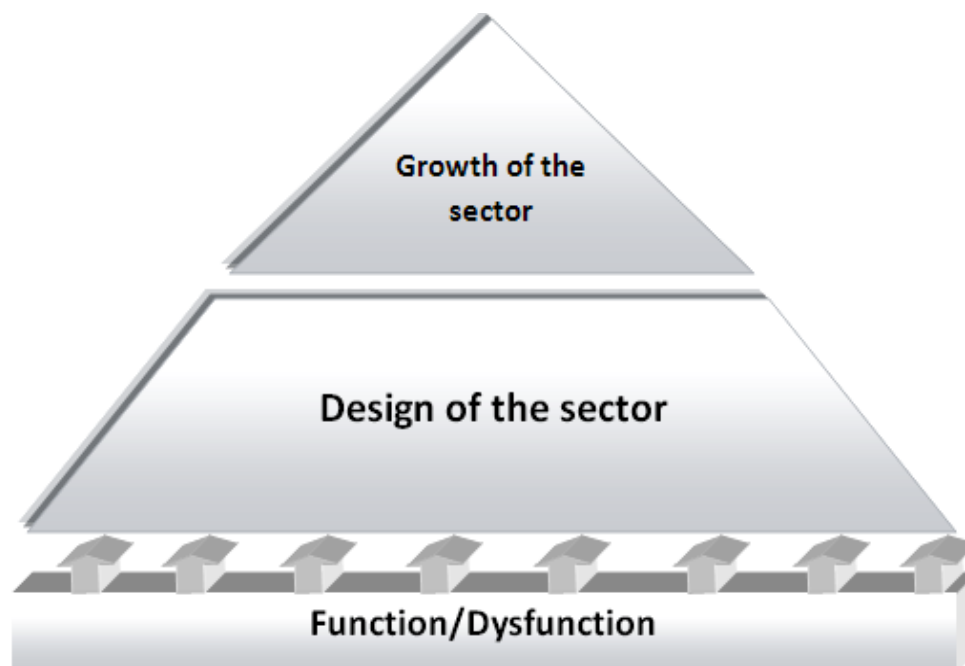
#### 4.4. RQ1: What are the characteristics of the perceived leadership crisis in the EYS?



*Diagram 4.5 Configuration of Structural, Economic and Environmental themes for RQ1*

##### 4.4.1 Theme 1: Structural – Sub-theme: Function/Dysfunction

The structural theme is presented under; 'Design of the sector' and 'Growth of the sector' as depicted in diagram 4.6. The sub-theme is on the continuum 'Function/Dysfunction'.



*Diagram 4.6 Structural dynamics of the EYS*

#### 4.4.1.1 Design of the sector

Frustration with the high levels of complexity in the structure of the EYS is clearly expressed in this response:

*“So they want me one minute to be an integrated PVI, if you’ve got day care on site and it’s self-funding, you run it as a business. Suddenly then you’re part of the government strategy and you’ve got to think this way. Then suddenly you’re part of an integrated partnership working - and oh it’s another way! There are too many paradigms trying to be the main one.”* **(Retired Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

Confusion surrounding a seemingly incoherent mass of provision in the EYS is echoed by this interviewee:

*“Well, my impression is it seems a bit of a mish-mash to be honest. There seems to be an awful lot of provision provided by an awful lot of different providers.”* **(School business manager, Cross-sector)**

Interviewees frequently demonstrated a lack of understanding of the full scope of the sector:

*“I didn’t know Nurseries as actual maintained schools, existed. I knew there were Nurseries per se, PVI, but I didn’t know there were maintained Nursery Schools.”* **(Head Teacher, Nursery school)**

There were perceived uncertainties regarding how some integrated settings operate:

*“I know some nursery schools are children’s centres, but I don’t fully understand how a nursery school and a children’s centre operates and what the management structure may be.” (Owner/manager, PVI setting)*

PVI interviewees perceived that the maintained sector does not have an understanding of how PVI’s operate:

*“We had a very tiny board for a long, long time and then when we managed to get people on, they came from primary schools. So they didn’t understand PVI’s, they were saying ‘but your policy needs to reflect this’. Actually, no! - because we’re not that kind of an establishment. Or, ‘you haven’t got a HR department?’ Actually! I am the HR department.” (Ex-manager, PVI setting)*

The nebulous design of the business sector seemed to create tension in the delivery model:

*“I think you have some owners of nurseries who aren’t necessarily Early Years experts or knowledgeable in any way, and then they will employ a manager to do the day-to-day management of the setting, and I know a lot of settings where that can be a bit of a tension because you’ve got the responsibility as a manager without necessarily the autonomy or authority.” (Owner/Manager, PVI setting)*

Questionnaire respondents indicated a similar trend in their perceptions about provision and roles across the EYS being different.

	<i>Strongly agree</i> %	<i>Agree</i> %	<i>Disagree</i> %	<i>Strongly disagree</i> %	<i>Don’t know</i> %	<i>No response</i> %
<i>Leaders in the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sector perform the exact same role as leaders in the maintained school sector</i>	7.50	25	32.50	30	5	6
<i>All EYS workers are teachers</i>	10	25	35	27.50	2.50	6

**Table 4.1** *Questionnaire respondents’ perceptions about provision and roles across the EYS*

#### 4.4.1.2 Growth of the sector

There are perceptions that growth in the sector is questionable and impaired in some aspects:

*“There are some ‘dumping grounds’ for our failed students where we’re pushing them into, and Early Years is one of them.”* **(Retired Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

One of the key issues surrounds work conditions:

*“I do recall certain days that I would open up the day care centre and be there to close at the end of the day, bearing in mind we used to be open seven o’clock till six.”* **(Deputy Manager, PVI setting)**

Interview participants’ perceive growth in the sector as having developed through various social constructs designed by policy makers:

*“Up until this point heads have only had to be accountable for the education within Early Years, and possibly extended schools, and different ways of schooling. Heads have never been accountable before for the number of smokers in the society, or for children’s obesity rates.”* **(Retired Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

There is a sense that normative growth in the sector has been ‘hijacked’ by successive governmental foci:

*“It’s about understanding child development and how it relates to individual children, not viewing all children through the lens of safeguarding because it’s the current governmental focus.”* **(Independent Advisor, Cross-sector)**

A justification culture for low qualifications was evident from the PVI sector:

*“I think degrees are great but there’s an awful lot of people out there with Level 3’s - and probably even unqualified - who have got great skills with children, so it’s about identifying people.”* **(Ex-manager, PVI setting)**

The trend of underestimating skills and knowledge in Early Years is also evidenced in primary schools:

*“The gentleman that I worked with was a Year Six teacher the year before he became my manager as a Nursery manager. He had no experience of Early Years. He didn’t even know what EYFS was!”* **(Class teacher, Nursery school)**

Growth in the sector has evolved through divided standards:

*“Schools will not touch an EYPS but suddenly for PVI’s its fantastic because they’re getting a slightly more qualified person who they can pay less and give more responsibility to.”* **(Retired Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

Despite 72.50% of questionnaire respondents being in agreement that strong teacher leadership is essential for the EYS, 57.50% also felt that EYTS will be sufficient for the sector and 52.50% of respondents did not feel that Head Teachers were needed.

	<i>Strongly agree %</i>	<i>Agree %</i>	<i>Disagree %</i>	<i>Strongly disagree %</i>	<i>Don't know %</i>	<i>No response</i>
<i>The proposed Early Years Teacher's role will be more than sufficient for the EYS</i>	20	37.50	17.50	7.50	17.50	6
<i>Strong teacher leadership is essential to the EYS</i>	20	52.50	20	5	2.50	6
<i>There is a need for nursery school Head teachers in the EYS</i>	12.50	20	47.50	5	15	6

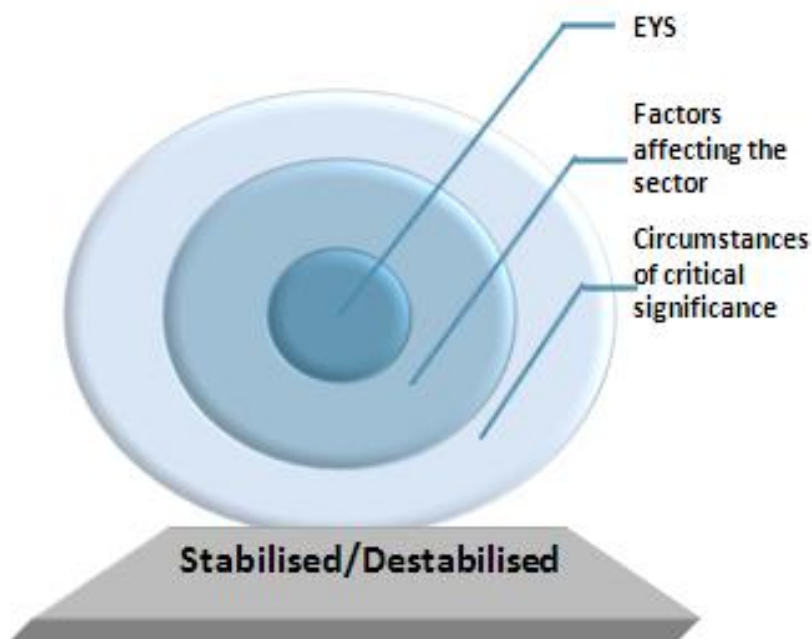
**Table 4.2 Questionnaire respondents' perceptions on teaching in the EYS**

In summing up, the general perceptions of research participants' indicate the sector is dysfunctional, and currently serves divergent functions and purposes, resulting in a structural design flaw which is at the core of the characteristics of the perceived EYS leadership crisis.

#### **4.4.2 Theme 2: Environmental - Sub-theme: Stabilised/Destabilised**

Environmental circumstances are discussed under; 'Circumstances of critical significance' and 'Factors affecting the sector'. The sub-theme is on the continuum 'Stabilised/Destabilised'.





**Diagram 4.7 Environmental conditions of the EYS**

#### **4.4.2.1 Circumstances of critical significance**

Interviewees attest to a failure to integrate policy developments into a conceptually coherent strategy that translates logically at the point of implementation:

*“This debate between childcare versus education placed in the early education system, is it statutory, is it guideline? What’s the purpose of the setting that’s delivering? We have no idea about what it’s about anymore.” (Retired Head Teacher, Nursery School)*

A number of interview participants’ frequently separated the concepts of ‘care’ and ‘education’:

*“I think the Early Years agenda has been taken over by a childcare agenda.” (Retired Head Teacher, Nursery school)*

Participants’ from the maintained sector defended care as an aspect of their Early Years practice:

*“The care in some settings is the major concern and the welfare of the children as equally it is in education.” (Deputy Head Teacher, Primary school)*

Participants' from the PVI sector also defended education as an aspect of their Early Years practice:

*"The PVI sector and the maintained sector both aim to provide the same curriculum and the same learning experiences."* **(Deputy Manager, PVI setting)**

Research findings indicate that an imprecise remit invites a judgement, whether fairly or unfairly, on perceived deficits within the sector:

*"My overall impression of PVI's is they achieve the tasks set within their caring role, and in general they do that really well. However their practice appears to me to be a limited, compressed, tightly contained version when it comes to early education."* **(Independent Adviser, Cross-sector)**

Maintained Nursery Schools (MNS) interviewees' spoke about challenging demographic conditions:

*"Most nursery schools will be located in inner city areas which obviously face a lot of challenges."* **(School Business Manager, Cross-sector)**

Deep concerns about the closure of nursery schools were expressed:

*"I have heard of Nursery schools closing or being merged into conglomerates, and with the new federations and Academy chains, they are being eaten up or closed."* **(Deputy Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

The EYNSFF was frequently highlighted as a circumstance of critical significance in MNS:

*"We've lost a third of our budget - which is a huge amount of finance to lose. And in some cases, some settings have been forced to be part time. To lose a third of your finance and remain sustainable is a real issue."* **(Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

Additional cost pressures alongside budget cuts were a common thread among participants who worked in and with MNS:

*"We are facing general increases across the board, from pay awards, increments, increases in other services - so we are facing increasing costs although the government have protected the school budget; but what they've not done, they've not increased it, so in real terms we've probably seen a cut of between 7% and 12% in terms of our real budget."* **(School Business Manager, Cross-sector)**

The imposition of the Living Wage was frequently highlighted as a circumstance of critical significance for the PVI's:

*“The big thing for me as an Early Years leader at the moment is the perception that the Council have of the PVI sector and the Living Wage issue, and that the Council have given the impression that they feel that they can ‘do onto’ the sector and not necessarily work with them.” (Owner/Manager, PVI setting)*

Market economics and the impact on parents were repeatedly expressed by participants’ across the EYS:

*“A private sector nursery with an outstanding or good Ofsted will charge £50 and over for a day. We paid more for sending (my child) to where I worked than we did on our mortgage a month.” (Early Years practitioner, Cross-sector)*

There was a perception that Ofsted inspections are different. The EYFS was also cited as an aspect of the design flaw of the EYS:

*“That needs to be looked at, whether we all have the same Ofsted - but then it's whether there's the same expectation, because we all work from the same EYFS.” (Head Teacher, Nursery School)*

The confusion of roles that are promoted as similar but are not, was seen as confusing by this interviewee:

*“I can't quite see the need of a status that is like QTS but is not quite QTS. This just adds confusion to a sector that is already underrated, undervalued, and suffers from a low professional status.” (Independent Adviser, Cross-sector)*

The majority of questionnaire respondents (80%) were in agreement that there is still a distinction between childcare and Early Years education at policy level and 87.18% disagreed that Ofsted inspections were the same in both maintained schools and the PVI sector (see Table 4.3).

	<i>Strongly agree</i> %	<i>Agree</i> %	<i>Disagree</i> %	<i>Strongly disagree</i> %	<i>Don't know</i> %	<i>No response</i>
<i>At policy level there is still a distinction between childcare and early years education</i>	20	60	12.50	2.50	5	6
<i>Ofsted inspections are exactly the same between the maintained school sector and the PVI sector</i>	0	2.56	38.46	48.72	10.26	7

**Table 4.3 Questionnaire respondents' perceptions on a distinction between childcare and Early Years education**

#### 4.4.2.2 Factors affecting the sector

Interviewees' indicate that higher-level professionals choose to eschew a career path in Early Years due to poor salaries:

*"We had one student come through and she was fantastic; I'd have hired her on the spot. But because childcare didn't pay enough, she went and became a dentist."* **(Ex-manager, PVI setting)**

Displacement of professional status was seen as a source of contention within the sector:

*"If you go into Early Years education then it shouldn't be like robbing teachers of their professional status, should it?"* **(Retired Head Teacher, Primary School)**

Interviewees' descriptions of treatment of matters pertaining to Early Years border on derision as explained by this interviewee:

*"I sit on Schools Forum with primary heads and secondary heads and we have just about got to the point where people don't leave when they get to the Early Years agenda item."* **(Owner/Manager, PVI setting)**

Head Teacher interviewees report general disinterest or being patronised by Head Teacher colleagues from other phases:

*"I've been to courses and met Heads and we've been talking about Ofsted and things and then I've been asked 'What Phase am I in?' and I said 'Nursery School' and the other Head Teacher has gone, 'Aawww.'"* **(Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

Conversely, potential maintained sector senior leadership aspirants view a MNS headship role as challenging:

*“Nursery Heads have a lot to juggle. And it’s probably one of the more challenging headships.” (Class teacher, Nursery School)*

Poor work/life balance was cited as a deterrent to working as a MNS Head Teacher:

*“I think Deputy Heads coming through schools are seeing the Heads and the difficulty with the work/ life balance. It has got to that point where it is untenable, and many deputies are not going for headships.” (Head Teacher, Nursery School)*

Poor work/life balance was also cited as an aspect of working as a manager in the PVI sector:

*“When I think about everything I used to have to do in my deputy role compared to now and from a financial point of view, the money is actually better now, it's like, Wow! I was expected to do so much.” (Early Years practitioner, Cross-sector)*

A perception of a lack of effective early education in the PVI sector was frequently

mentioned by maintained sector interviewees’:

*“They are more focused on the tasks involved in care rather than the ethos, philosophy and the educational aspect. In fact teaching in most PVI’s I have been into is quite scary!! It’s taken quite literally, especially where you have inexperienced, really young girls who have no real concept of Child Development and they believe they are teaching when they are trying to force 2 year olds to write their names or do adding up.” (Retired Head Teacher, Nursery School)*

Perceptions of the worth of the maintained sector surfaced among PVI interview

participants’:

*“But I don’t know whether there is a need for a maintained sector, I don’t think there is a need for that if it is being done well by the PVI sector.” (Ex-Manager, PVI setting)*

Turbulence within the sector was succinctly but powerfully expressed by this cross-sector interviewee when asked to describe the EYS:

*“Instant flux amidst political angling, in transition, political hot potato, transforming.” (Independent Adviser, Cross-sector)*

Underfunding nursery classes in primary schools was a strong recurring theme:

*“This last year I got £140 to deliver! Last week I spent almost a hundred pounds from my own money. Yeah, I do that and I continue to do it!”* **(Nursery class teacher, Primary School)**

Concerns were expressed about undercutting the quality of the MNS workforce to survive in the current fiscal climate:

*“Where you’ve got highly qualified staff, the funds won’t allow you to pay those wages, so it might be having to look at a restructure, having more streamlined staffing, in terms of maybe one or two people highly-qualified, to then maintain and monitor the quality aspect and having a younger or less-qualified workforce who won’t cost as much.”* **(School Business Manager, Cross-sector)**

Falling rolls are suggested as a key factor affecting the maintained sector:

*“I’ve got three new children starting, as we have not yet reached full capacity, and obviously with the new system from the government in terms of schools that are not up to capacity we’ll be losing funds.”* **(Nursery class teacher, Primary School)**

The challenge of filling places to ensure income is a key factor affecting the PVI sector:

*“In the maintained sector I know there are budgetary constraints and all that, but you know that if you’ve got children in your school, you’re going to have an income, whereas we have to work to get the children through the door in the first place”.* **(Owner/Manager, PVI setting)**

Low starting qualifications within the PVI sector were evident:

*“I started when I was nineteen; I worked my way up from unqualified.”* **(Early Years practitioner, Cross-sector)**

The perception of a generic knowledge base is expressed by this interviewee:

*“My qualification is the same as everybody else’s, pretty much. It gave me the understanding and knowledge of Early Years you know like the EYFS and observation.”* **(Room leader, PVI setting)**

Anger in regard to what is referred to as the ‘dumbing down’ of qualifications was a strong recurring theme for maintained sector interviewees’:

*“I’m an Early Years Teacher and I have done a four-year degree to become a teacher. I haven’t had a ‘dumbed down’ qualification handed to me!”* **(Class teacher, Nursery School)**

A general lack of awareness of the nature of EYS headship was frequently alluded to by

MNS interviewees:

*“I felt sad at this, a young girl who was NVQ Level 3, so she’s a good practitioner, room leader, deputy manager and she said to me, ‘I love meeting you, I want to be doing your job in two or three years’ time.’ That to me summed up a lot of stuff, and it made me very sad because I thought, ‘I would love you to be doing what I’m doing at some time, but you’re not going to make that leap in the next four years.’”* **(Retired Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

Skills and experience are wide-ranging and indicative of different levels of competency

across the EYS, with MNS participants consistently demonstrating high pedagogical practice:

*“We are always questioning practice. You know, ‘Why are you doing what you’re doing? How is that impacting on the child’s learning? How is that moving them forward? How can we improve what we are doing?’ I think it’s a level of, it’s reflection, it’s creating that enquiry approach to learning. I think it’s about having the knowledge about Early Years education and putting it into practice.”* **(Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

A rigid timetable in primary school nursery classes was a recurring theme:

*“For the children we get off the carpet at around nine o’clock. They start choosing. We have a choice session from nine o’clock to 10 am and during that period the children have access to the indoor and outdoor environments and activities that we have got that’s been set up for them.”* **(Nursery class teacher, Primary School)**

This interviewee, who works with both the maintained and PVI sectors, perceived PVI

practitioners’ as being passive and somewhat insulated from the wider influences that impact on their practice:

*“I’m going to talk about whatever I’ve heard in the news that week from the Early Years sector, things like living wage, things like that. Most people haven’t had any other training; most people have never picked up a newspaper. So it’s about trying to get very inexperienced workers to engage politically in their own roles and to learn, to debate around Early Years from a present perspective rather than being passive.”* **(Independent Adviser, Cross-sector)**

The flexibility of the PVI offer was a predominant *leitmotif* among PVI participants:

*“They bring a large element of choice into it, because the PVI sector is diverse in itself - it offers parents the option of home based care with childminders, which may suit some families and children. It offers care at hours outside of the norm of school.”*  
**(Owner/Manager, PVI setting)**

Transitional skills were a common theme among PVI and Cross-sector participants who held qualifications and skills from other fields of study:

*“Well my Law Degree, I know that’s about understanding detail as well as advocacy and great communication skills.”***(Owner/Manager, PVI setting)**

Skills and experience in Early Years practice was a recurring theme in respect of primary school Head Teachers:

*“I think there’s a disproportionate number of primary school leaders who have probably spent more time in Upper Key Stage Two than they have in the Early Years.”* **(Head Teacher, Primary School)**

Interview participants’ demonstrated a lack of consensus on the approach for working with young children. A formulaic teaching and learning approach in primary schools was frequently described:

*“We had to do phonics in Nursery, but it was delivered like the children were in a Year One class! Blends and phonemes! No Early Years strategy, no Early Years approach! The Literacy Hour, the Numeracy Hour!”* **(Class teacher, Nursery School)**

The lack of depth and richness of learning experiences in PVI settings was a common theme with maintained sector participants’:

*“The PVI setting is there and it provides some of the same experiences, a lot of the same experiences but I think the depth of the learning and the richness of the learning is what is missing.”***(Head Teacher, Nursery School)**



MNS interview participants' regularly referred to their 'ethos' and 'pedagogy' as driving forces behind the domain knowledge for working in the Early Years:

*"It's about a shared ethos; about sharing what good pedagogy is. So part of the role is about sharing good practice, it's about looking at organisation of the curriculum."*

**(Retired Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

PVI sector interviewees' did not refer to an ethos or pedagogy, and when asked, this interviewee demonstrated a vague understanding of 'ethos':

*"There is an ethos but I always forget it. That's really embarrassing. But I personally, my ethos is - .... no I don't even know. I just am who I am and I want to do it because I want to be in this job because I want to."* **(Room leader, PVI setting)**

Cost and resources management were a strong recurring theme among PVI interviewees:

*"Looking at finances, budgeting, resources, what was affordable, advertising to ensure that we could continue to be viable."* **(Deputy Manager, PVI setting)**

The challenges of specific day to day routines were seen as endemic for PVI group based leadership:

*"I have babies from a few weeks as being our youngest, up until pre-school and open for ten hours a day, fifty one weeks of the year. So there are elements of shift patterns that you've got to staff and things like that."* **(Owner/Manager, PVI setting)**

Weak people management was also a recurring theme for PVI managers:

*"I think my biggest issue was people management, because I'm probably, if I'm hand on heart, I'm too soft so it's kind of very much a lot of empathy but without ... sometimes I didn't have maybe the heart to just turn round and just tell them to pull their flipping socks up, you know, I think I found that bit very difficult."* **(Ex-manager, PVI setting)**

Leadership styles, vision and investment in staff were frequently mentioned by MNS leaders:

*"One of the big things is supporting teams to develop their own expertise and to be confident enough to share that expertise with others as well. Having the vision to recognise that actually investing in something like whole school INSET training or sending staff to Reggio for instance is going to reap tremendous gains for the school."* **(Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

Discernment in ensuring statutory responsibility was seen as a necessary employability skill by this primary school Head Teacher:

*“I want to protect staff from every little change that comes along and make sure we’re clear about the fundamentals, and we’re delivering on those really, whilst making sure we do the statutory things - and we have to do the different things that we have to do, but we don’t want to be flip-flopping in the wind.”* **(Head Teacher, Primary School)**

Questionnaire respondents did not indicate the vast range of skills and knowledge which was projected by interview participants’. Respondents illustrated higher-level skills and the ability to interpret, understand and apply the full context of the Early Years curriculum as seen in the table below.

	<i>Strongly agree</i> %	<i>Agree</i> %	<i>Disagree</i> %	<i>Strongly disagree</i> %	<i>Don’t know</i> %	<i>No response</i>
<i>EYS leadership is an easy career choice</i>	0	2.44	26.83	65.85	4.88	5
<i>As a leader I can confidently deliver good quality early education opportunities for young children</i>	46.34	53.66	0	0	0	5
<i>As a leader I ensure that our setting is clear on our Early Years philosophy</i>	41.46	58.54	0	0	0	5
<i>As a leader I ensure that staff have time to dialogue about children’s learning</i>	36.59	60.98	0	0	2.44	5
<i>As a leader I am knowledgeable about Early Years education and care</i>	43.90	56.10	0	0	0	5
<i>As a leader I ensure staff have good quality training</i>	46.34	53.66	0	0	0	5

**Table 4.4** *Questionnaire respondents’ perceptions on EYS leadership workforce skills and abilities*

Some variation was evident in terms of employability skills, and respondents also supported a range of time spent using employability skills as evidenced in table 4.5.

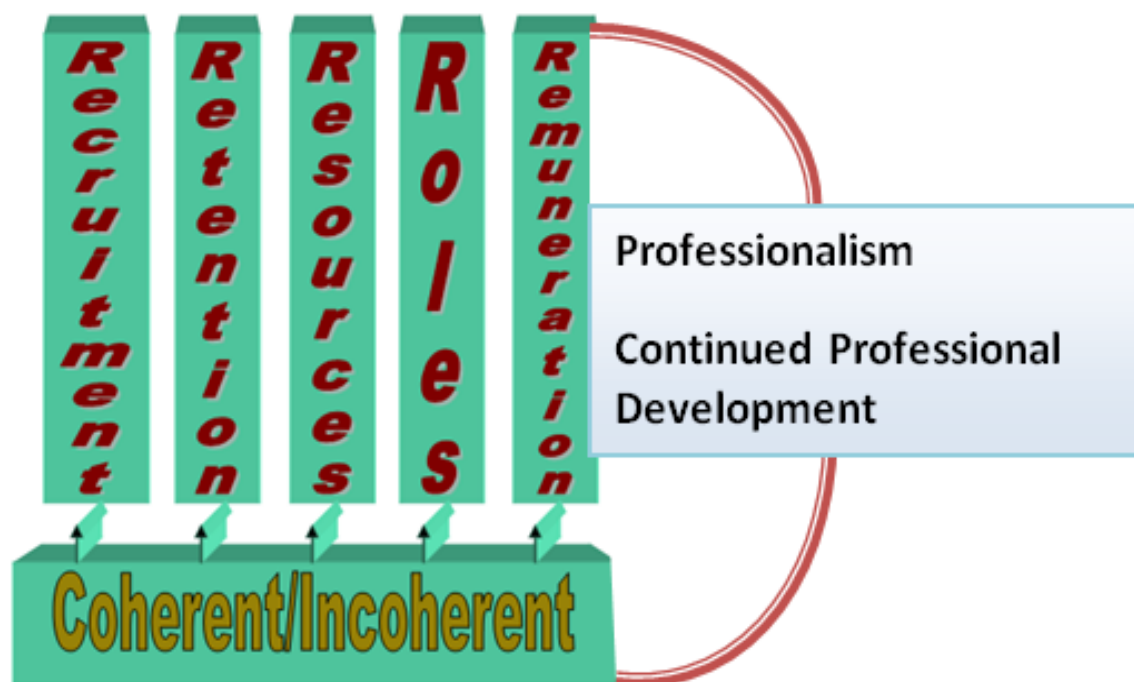
	<i>0 hours</i> %	<i>1 – 10</i> <i>hours</i> %	<i>11 – 20</i> <i>hours</i> %	<i>21 hours</i> <i>and over</i> %	<i>No</i> <i>response</i>
<i>How much time on average do you spend on management tasks during the work week? E.g. budgeting, staffing, planning, meetings, performance management, paper work, emails</i>	0	33.33	12.96	53.70	2
<i>How much time on average do you spend on leadership tasks during the work week? E.g. development of shared vision for the setting, governors/board meetings, supervision, pedagogical leadership, staff meetings, meeting parents</i>	1.9	64.8	24.1	7.41	3
<i>How much time on average do you spend working with children during the work week? E.g. leading a session, learning walks, monitoring</i>	5.5	57	22	16.6	1

**Table 4.5 Questionnaire respondents' perspectives on employability skills in the EYS**

In summing up, there is no clarity over the concepts of 'education' and 'care', and very little consensus on whether the two concepts are interchangeable, or if there is a perceptible difference between the two. Some inconsistencies were pointed out in the maintained sector Early Years, with Nursery classes operating with some deficiencies, Reception classes perceived to be 'regimented' and nursery schools perceived to be too inflexible in their offer. Research participants' indicate that there are too many policy initiatives. Participants are divided in favour of their own specific context, whether that is 'childcare' or 'education'. Their views signify that a lack of clarity of purpose, combined with continually arbitrary strategic direction will result in keeping the sector destabilised.

#### **4.4.3 Theme 3: Economic – Sub-theme: Coherent/Incoherent**

Issues of economics are discussed under the following headings: 'Recruitment', 'Retention', 'Resources', 'Roles' and 'Remuneration'. 'Professionalism' and 'Continued Professional Development' (CPD) are also discussed in this section; the sub-theme is on the continuum 'Coherent/Incoherent'.



**Diagram 4.8 Economic factors of the EYS**

#### 4.4.3.1 Recruitment

The perception of a role in childcare as ‘easy’ was highlighted:

*“I feel like sometimes it’s ‘yeah, go into childcare because that’s quite easy’ and actually we don’t want rubbish staff.” (Room leader, PVI setting)*

This comment really stood out for its implication of the adventitious manner in which recruitment to PVI management was undertaken:

*“I was working with families and whatnot and this position became available so I applied for it, on the ‘Oh whatever – let’s try it’ and I got the job, so it was very much a learn-on-the-job position.” (Ex-manager, PVI setting)*

Difficulties in recruiting to educational leadership were frequently brought up, with issues regarding work pressure being the common thread:

*“I think generally speaking the level of pressure on people, the paperwork etc., is not conducive at all to recruiting people. I mean, when I was interviewed for the Head Teacher role in 1981, I was one of forty-one applicants for the job. Now you’re getting half a dozen if you’re lucky!” (Retired Head Teacher, Primary School)*

The fact that ‘natural progression’ into headship was not an organic occurrence was attributed

to the political sphere that headship roles now operate within:

*“Many deputies are not going for headships. And that would be the natural progression. I think they are seeing the role has changed soooo much, and it is soooo political it is really being used as a political pawn, so high profile that many people are shying away from it.”* **(Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

Nursery school participants’ also mentioned ‘constant change’ in the EYS:

*“People are aware of the pressures and strains and constant change within Early Years so it’s pushing them away from applying for Nursery Headships.”* **(Deputy Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

#### 4.4.3.2 Retention

Retention of staff was mentioned as an issue for PVI settings:

*“I found in the private sector staff turnover was very high, so there was lots of new people all the time, partly probably because of the pay, the hours.”* **(Early Years practitioner, Cross-sector)**

Other issues of retention of staff in the PVI sector centred on the difference in pay scales across the sector:

*“The other issues are about the status of the workforce, and then if you do up-skill your workforce, retaining the workforce ... because wouldn’t you would rather go and work term time in the maintained sector for more money than work fifty one weeks of the year in the private sector for less money?”* **(Owner/Manager, PVI setting)**

This MNS interviewee spoke about an ‘unstable’ workforce:

*“The tensions of an unstable working environment; I think the local budget cuts have made a big difference, and I think because of that, we’re not giving standard contracts, we’re not giving secure positions for a lot of our workforce.”* **(Retired Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

#### 4.4.3.3 Resources

The lack of resources in the PVI sector was alluded to frequently by PVI interviewees’:

*“We did have a lot of constraints, whether that was with the resources, with staffing, with providing funding for courses as well.”* **(Deputy Manager, PVI setting)**

Frustration over a lack of value for Foundation classes within a primary school was a strong recurring theme:

*“The nursery class had no budget for resources or anything. If you wanted to cook you had to seek approval first to buy the ingredients. If you wanted maths resources you had to go to the Maths Co-ordinator. If you wanted literacy resources you had to go to the Literacy Co-ordinator.”* **(Class teacher, Nursery School)**

#### 4.4.3.4 Role

Lack of clarity in roles across the sector was frequently mentioned by MNS participants:

*“If everyone can think ‘You’re like my foundation stage leader’ or ‘you’re like my NVQ Level 3 nursery manager’, it’s like, ‘Well, where has the world placed us?’”* **(Retired Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

A sense of defensiveness was also noted among MNS Head Teachers who seemed to feel the need to justify their roles:

*“A Head Teacher’s job is a Head Teacher’s job. It doesn’t depend where you are working – it’s still a full remit of a job. The demands are still the same in terms of budgetary controls, curriculum controls, working with governing bodies, working with staff and undertaking performance management.”* **(Deputy Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

A MNS Head Teacher relayed a story where offence was taken to clarifying roles within a team:

*“I introduced the visitors to the various people in the room and of course I said what role people played in the rooms. So I said: ‘This is the Class Teacher, this is the Teaching Assistant, this is the Special Needs Teacher...’ When the visitors had gone one of the team members said to me, she didn’t like the way I introduced them; she also told me ‘We work as a team.’”* **(Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

Role parity was a strong *leitmotif* across the EYS:

*“As an Early Years Professional, in terms of qualification, totals the equivalent of being a teacher and yet there is not that recognition in terms of status”* **(Owner/Manager, PVI setting)**

The demands of the role were also a strong recurring theme for the PVI sector:

*“The actual reality of it is that you are chief cook, bottle washer with a posh title and maybe a few extra pennies, in my situation anyway. You know, if the cook was off we were cooking dinner - yeah if staff were off we were in the rooms, because it was PVI and there wasn’t the capacity to bring in agency staff.”* **(Ex-manager, PVI setting)**

#### 4.4.3.5 Remuneration

Remuneration is variable and a source of contention as stated by this interviewee:

*“PVI’s are running a business, and working for profit, and are not salaried in the same way as someone working in the public sector.”* **(Deputy Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

It was noted that Nursery Head Teachers are well paid which appears to also be a source of disputation:

*“Nursery Head Teachers are paid well enough and this is controversial because people do not understand the role for the salary they receive.”* **(Deputy Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

The cost-effectiveness of less-qualified and lower-paid staff in the PVI’s was a strong recurring theme for maintained sector participants:

*“I was much more aware of their need to make a profit, you know, because they employed inexperienced lower-paid staff basically, and so that became obvious to me that obviously the profit imperative meant that it was cost-effective for them to have less qualified staff.”* **(Head Teacher, Primary School)**

The impact of imposing the Living Wage on PVI’s was explained by this interviewee:

*“I think maybe this living wage is a little too high - you can’t say to somebody who is running the room, supervising staff, that ‘This person here has just come in, just got their Level 2, is going to be on £7.52 - or is it £7.56? An hour, and you’ve got to have the same. It is obviously not right because it’s not reflected in responsibility and skills.”* **(Ex-manager, PVI setting)**

There is a far more optimistic viewpoint from questionnaire respondents’ expectations of their leadership roles. 66.7% of respondents felt that the role was as they expected and fewer than 20% of respondents felt the role was worse than expected as depicted in Table 4.6 below.

	<b>As expected %</b>	<b>Better than expected %</b>	<b>Worse than expected %</b>	<b>No expectations %</b>	<b>Don't know %</b>	<b>No response</b>
<b><i>Has the role of leadership in the Early Years Sector lived up to your expectations</i></b>	<b>66.70</b>	<b>11.80</b>	<b>19.60</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>

***Table 4.6 Questionnaire respondents' perspectives on the reality of a leadership role in the EYS against their expectations***

Questionnaire respondents presented a far more variable response to remuneration overall.

	<b>Strongly agree %</b>	<b>Agree %</b>	<b>Disagree %</b>	<b>Strongly disagree %</b>	<b>Don't know %</b>	<b>No response %</b>
<b><i>My salary is commensurate with my responsibilities as a nursery school head teacher</i></b>	<b>2.70</b>	<b>18.92</b>	<b>21.62</b>	<b>37.84</b>	<b>18.92</b>	<b>9</b>
<b><i>My salary is commensurate with my responsibilities as a leader in the EYS</i></b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25.64</b>	<b>20.51</b>	<b>46.15</b>	<b>6.69</b>	<b>7</b>

***Table 4.7 Questionnaire respondents' perceptions on remuneration***

However 29.27% of respondents felt they did not have enough administrative support and 43.90% stated that they did not have enough Local Authority support. 40% of respondents did not feel that they had time available for activities that put balance in their lives.

	<b>Strongly agree %</b>	<b>Agree %</b>	<b>Disagree %</b>	<b>Strongly disagree %</b>	<b>Don't know %</b>	<b>No response %</b>
<b><i>I have adequate administrative support</i></b>	<b>9.76</b>	<b>60.98</b>	<b>9.76</b>	<b>19.51</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>
<b><i>I have adequate Local Authority support services</i></b>	<b>2.44</b>	<b>51.22</b>	<b>19.51</b>	<b>24.39</b>	<b>2.44</b>	<b>11</b>
<b><i>I have time available for activities that put balance in my life</i></b>	<b>2.50</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>2.50</b>	<b>12</b>

***Table 4.8 Questionnaire respondents' perceptions on support***

82% of questionnaire respondents were hoping to continue in their role for the next 5 years with 68.3% of them stating that they were likely to continue in their role until retirement age.



	<i>I will definitely continue</i> %	<i>I will probably continue</i> %	<i>I will probably not continue</i> %	<i>I will not continue</i> %	<i>Don't know</i> %	<i>No response</i>
<i>Are you hoping to continue in your role for the next 5 years?</i>	42	40	14	2	2	6
<i>How likely are you to continue in your role until retirement age?</i>	34.15	34.15	24.39	7.32	0	5

**Table 4.9 Questionnaire respondents' perspectives on staying in their current roles**

#### 4.4.3.6 Professionalism

Research findings indicate that professionalism within the EYS is a fluid concept:

*"It's the perceptions of the practitioners within the Early Years workforce as well, they don't believe themselves that they should have that recognition."* (**Owner/Manager, PVI setting**)

Interview participants' perceptions on professionalism indicate entrenched professional division within the EYS:

*"I do feel that they think 'Oh they've done that because they couldn't be a teacher', and actually I would never have wanted to be a teacher."* (**Room Leader, PVI setting**)

There was a sense of superiority from maintained sector interviewees in respect of PVI's:

*"We felt like you get a better quality of provision with us but also felt that was how it was supposed to be! Basically!"* (**Head Teacher, Primary School**)

Being professional enough to extricate the personal from the professional was perceived to be essential in EYS leadership:

*"I had a member of staff who told me that before I got there she used to enjoy her job but that had changed ... – Interesting - ... how so? 'I used to go home every night feeling good about what I had done for these children and families' - ... THIS IS NOT ABOUT YOU!! You don't get to wear a halo for doing the job you are paid to do!"* (**Retired Head Teacher, Nursery School**)

A primary school nursery class teacher reports the assumption that she does far less work than other teacher colleagues:

*“My colleagues think that I do far less work than they do, because I am quote, unquote, ‘playing’ all day.” (Nursery class teacher, Primary School)*

The gaps in Early Years leadership in primary schools were highlighted by this interviewee:

*“I do visits with my Head Teacher to primary schools, as we are bought in to assess their Nursery and Reception classes, and it was shocking to see that in some cases there was a complete lack of awareness that the EYFS had been reviewed, and no understanding of changes to the welfare requirements, and no evidence of impact on practice despite legislative duty. It was like they were living in a bubble!!” (Deputy Head Teacher, Nursery School)*

This cross-sector interviewee encapsulates both the perceptions of people who work outside the sector as well as those working within the sector:

*“There is no real understanding of the challenges, or of how complex Early Years settings are - of which obviously the leadership of those settings is paramount and crucial.” (School business manager, Cross-sector)*

Being a good teacher was perceived to be wasted on the Early Years with the resultant offer of promotion away from teaching in nursery:

*“They were going to move me to Reception because they didn’t value what I did in Nursery. She saw that shift as a promotion and an indication that I was valued as being better than just a nursery class teacher!” (Class teacher, Nursery School)*

The concept of quasi-professionalism appears to be rife and generally acceptable practice for primary school Head Teachers:

*“What I’m finding is, having met Heads – a lot of Primary Heads - is their understanding of what good Early Years practice is, is very, very, shallow. They will be led by the Early Years Foundation Lead, and if **their** understanding is really poor, they’re in real trouble.” (Head Teacher, Nursery School)*

This perspective is confirmed by a primary school Head who admits not feeling as confident in the Foundation stage:

*“I've got a decent handle on things, but I'm certain that I haven't got the expertise of lots of you know...I feel like... I don't feel as confident in the Foundation stage as I would in another phase in the school.” (Head Teacher, Primary School)*

The thread of the Foundation stage being ‘absent’ from the real business of the school is further explained by this interviewee:

*“The nursery data very rarely leads into the school's baseline data. I'd like to find out how many Head Teachers actually sit in nursery classes, how many Foundation stage leaders are on the senior management team. How many times do they take that in account of what they're doing to develop their whole school? How many primary Head Teachers have Early Years experience, and if you don't, how do you manage the performance of your Nursery and Reception teachers?” (Retired Head Teacher, Nursery School)*

This Cross-sector interviewee sums up the views of teacher interviewee participants’ regarding poor Early Years practice:

*“The problem in the Early Years is where people don't know what they don't know, so they think everything is fine. They absolutely don't understand why teachers are horrified about some practice in Early Years.” (Independent Consultant, Cross-sector)*

However there was a recurring theme of teachers in primary schools who remained unaware of different Early Years approaches:

*“When I spoke to my school about things like the Scandinavian approach where they don't even do formal teaching till age seven, the Deputy Head, who was the Early Years Co-ordinator looked at me as though I was mental, because she just couldn't grasp it. When I said about Reggio, I was actually asked what book that was!” (Class teacher, Nursery School)*

Strong Early Years philosophy was seen as lacking in PVI settings by maintained sector Interviewees’:

*“They don't engage the child, they occupy the child for a while but do not allow them to really use their imagination and explore and do problem solving, so there's limited opportunity. I would say there tends to be those sort of activities going round in PVI's; kind of low level.” (Deputy Head Teacher, Primary School)*

Questionnaire respondents mirrored the fluidity, and inferred division in regard to professionalism in the EYS, as evidenced in Table 4.10 below.

	<i>Strongly agree</i> %	<i>Agree</i> %	<i>Disagree</i> %	<i>Strongly disagree</i> %	<i>Don't know</i> %	<i>No response</i>
<i>Other professionals value Early Years education, care and expertise</i>	2.56	25.64	53.85	12.82	5.13	7
<i>The standard of provision is similar across the Early Years Sector</i>	5	22.50	50	22.50	0	6

**Table 4.10** *Questionnaire respondents' perceptions on professionalism in the EYS*

#### **4.4.3.7 Continued Professional Development (CPD)**

Wide variances in CPD seemed to be attributed to staffing ratios, leadership and management priorities and the dynamics of profit-making versus non-profit making agendas across the sector:

*“At present training can be quite sketchy in the private sector, due to ratios and not having a support mechanism to draw on in terms of cover and all of this adds up in cost ... This would impact on how viable it is for staff to go out.”* **(Deputy Manager, PVI setting)**

In the PVI sector Welfare Requirements training was seen as ‘necessary’ but early education training appeared to be optional if and when the practitioner had an interest:

*“We do safeguarding and data protection, all the food hygiene and things like that, but I asked to be put on Behaviour training and Early Language Acquisition training, which has really helped me because I find that interesting”* **(Room leader, PVI setting)**

Training for Early Years in primary schools was also perceived as being selective:

*“One of the Ofsted reports, not this last one, was to raise standards in phonics so all the training we had was on Letters and Sounds, so all the TAs got training in that. They didn't get any training in anything else.”* **(Nursery class teacher, Primary School)**

Conversely, training in nursery schools was reported as being ‘wide’, and focused on research-based philosophies as explained by this MNS class teacher:

*“The training opportunities are varied and wide, and you don't just concentrate on*

*education. You get to know about the Children's Centre side of it as well and Family Support. I've been on a Speech and Language four-day course, which looked at how we can support Speech and Language Therapists and develop children who have a speech and language difficulty. I've been on an Early Ed course which looked at brain development and Neurolinguistic Programming. I've been to Penn Green and looked at Schemas and schematic play in children, and I've been on some ECOS training about the environment."* (Class teacher, Nursery School)

Questionnaire respondents were given a question relating to additional professional status to reflect CPD. Responses appeared to reflect an ongoing anomaly in CPD within the sector.

Only 24 respondents answered the question on additional professional status; 44% of whom held EYPS.

Any additional professional status? Answered – 24 (42.9%) No responses – 32 (57.1%)	Responses %
NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headship)	28
NPQICL (National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre leadership)	28
NLE (National Leader of Education)	0
LLE (Local Leader of Education)	0
EYPS (Early Years Professional Status)	44
Systems Leader	0
Other	4.2

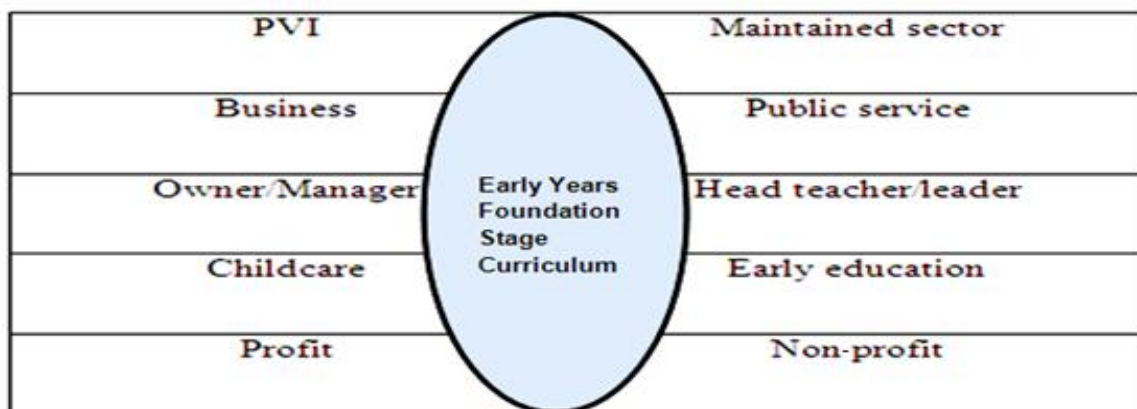
**Table 4.11 Questionnaire respondents' perspectives on CPD in the EYS**

In summing up, research participants perceived the sector to be incoherent due to varying economic terms and conditions that have rendered it incapable of fostering a healthy, congruent, fit for purpose and economical EYS.

#### **4.5 Summary of Findings for RQ1**

The perceived crisis in the EYS was attributed to a continuing series of circumstances which have produced a cumulative effect of disequilibrium. The perspectives and opinions of participants' fell broadly under the 'Structural', 'Environmental' and 'Economic' themes with the EYS being largely perceived to be 'Dysfunctional', 'Destabilised', and 'Incoherent'. Interviewees' spoke passionately about their own aspect of the EYS however; there were deep concerns about almost every aspect of the operational EYS, which appeared to be the

result of the two-tiered system which coalesces around the EYFS curriculum. Interviewees' perceived a lack of structural coherence which has allowed the sector to grow in divisive ways (see Diagram 4.9 below).



*Diagram 4.9 Dualism in the EYS*

They describe a number of variables that impact on the sector including the unchecked outgrowth of the PVI sector. Some of these variables are perceived as abstruse, both strategically and operationally. There are numerous references to a lack of agreement both strategically and internally, on role requirements for the workforce (see Diagram 4.10 below).

<b>Qualifications</b>	Unqualified /low qualified Low level usage of literacy, numeracy and IT skills <b>Non professional</b>	Higher but not degree level qualifications HND, BTEC, Foundation stage degrees – Early Years Mid level qualifications Varying levels of usage of literacy, numeracy and IT skills <b>Semi-professional</b>	Degree level qualifications Early years – non early years Teachers – head teachers Qualified to teach from early years to Secondary school High level usage of literacy, numeracy and IT skills <b>Professional</b>
<b>Skills</b>	Job specific skills <b>Practical skills</b>	Job specific skills Practical skills Technical skills <b>Core skills</b>	Knowledge underpinning skills, Transferrable skills Flexible skills Technical skills Core skills Work place innovation <b>High level skills</b>

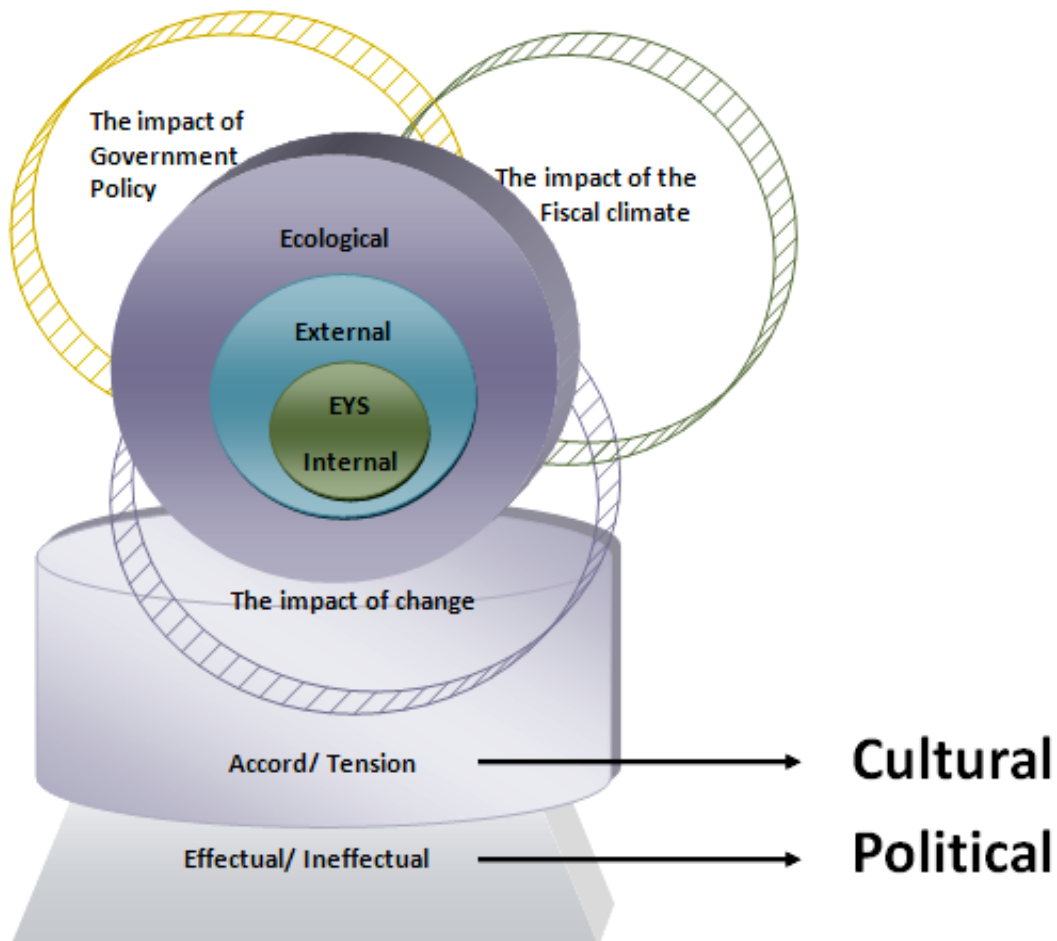
<b>Domain knowledge necessary for early years role</b>	Unspecified knowledge of early years <b>Basic care</b>	Subject specific knowledge of the EYFS Varying interpretations of Early years theory Care <b>Practice</b>	Subject specific knowledge beyond the EYFS Care Specialist knowledge Early years theory Early years pedagogy Early years philosophy Different educational approaches Theory into practice <b>Praxis</b>
<b>Employability skills</b>	Task oriented worker <b>Early Years worker</b>	Problem solving as interpreted by provision context Varying degrees of Entrepreneurial skills/commercial awareness Varying degrees of critical analysis skills as interpreted by provision context Varying degrees of management skills as interpreted by provision context Management of people and resources <b>Early Years Practitioner/Manager</b>	Problem solving Entrepreneurial skills as interpreted by provision context Organizational effectiveness Critical analysis as interpreted by provision context Leadership as interpreted by provision context Management of resources Leadership at every level in the organisation (leader of leaders) <b>Early years Praxeologist/Leader</b>
<b>Salary</b>	<b>Poor - Minimum wage /living wage</b>	<b>Varying levels of low to moderate salaries subject to provisional context</b>	<b>Graduate level to high level salaries subject to provisional context</b>

*Diagram 4.10 General workforce context across the EYS*

Diagram 4.10 presents the general workforce context as garnered from research participants', depicting variances in the operational aspects of the workforce which have resulted in entrenched divisions in the sector. It should be noted that interviewees' as a whole generally agree that the EYS is viewed externally as having low status and low professionalism.

#### 4.6 RQ2: Why do we have a perceived leadership crisis in the EYS? (How did it develop into a crisis?)

This section explores the ‘*whys and hows*’ of the leadership crisis in the EYS. Diagram 4.11 depicts the themes ‘Political’ and ‘Cultural’, which have been attributed to RQ2.



*Diagram 4.11 Configuration of Cultural and Political themes for RQ2*

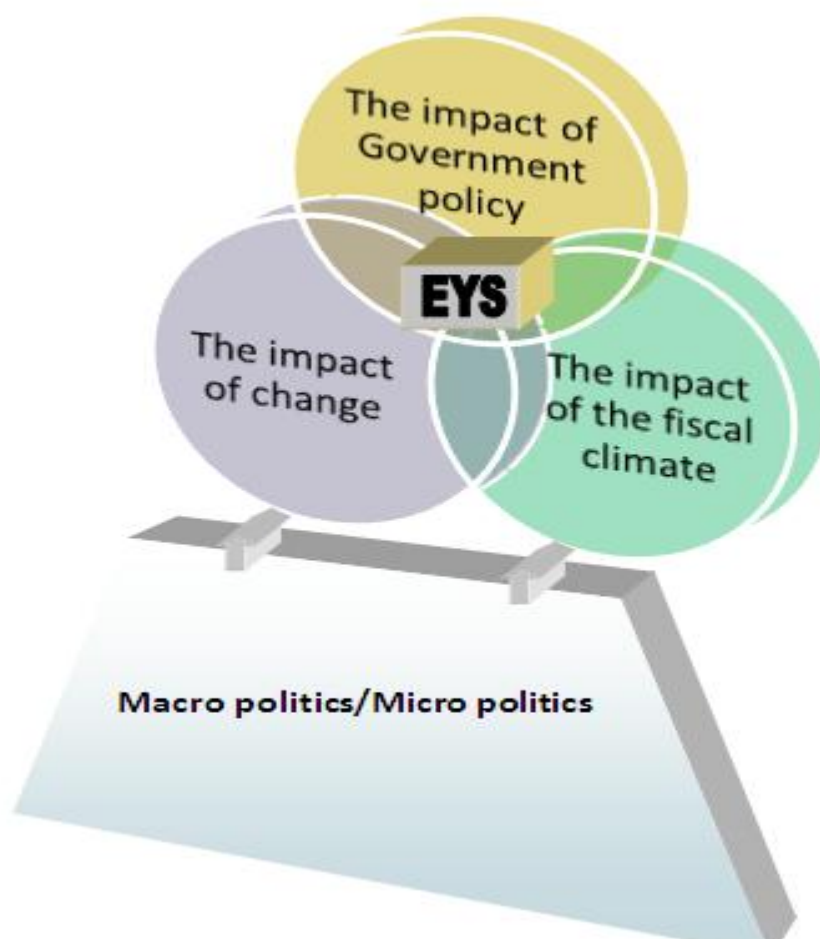
The diagram reflects the complexity and intricacy of the composite reasons for the perceived leadership crisis. This structure is also unpacked in sections, with the relevant findings for each section, in order to explain the impact of individual themes on the sector as a whole.



#### 4.6.1 Theme 4: Political – Sub-theme: Effectual/Ineffectual

Interviewees' comments have been categorised under 'Political' and presented under, 'The impact of Government policy', 'The impact of the fiscal climate' and 'The impact of change'.

The sub-theme is on the continuum 'Effectual/Ineffectual'.



*Diagram 4.12 Political systems that shape the EYS*

##### 4.6.1.1 The impact of government policy

Political motivation is brought into sharp focus by this interviewee:

*"The focus moves away from the child as an individual and the child is perceived as a product of the system and that demands a percentage incentive to policy makers."*

**(Independent Adviser, Cross-sector)**

Research findings show a recurring theme in interview participants' perceptions that the government does not understand Early Years:

*“Research says that Nursery Schools within an integrated setting like a Children’s Centre, is best. It all goes back to the fact that the Government does not understand Early Years.”* **Nursery class teacher, Primary School)**

Interviewees called attention to the turbulence created by loss of coherence in the differing policy initiatives of successive governments:

*“But with government change so quick, and different parties being in power you can’t have consistency, so you can’t link it back to a particular initiative or an idea.”* **(Deputy Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

This interviewee deduced that the concept of ‘statutory’ responsibility and of focusing on ‘what is measurable’ has contributed to the poor relationship between primary Head Teachers and the Early Years:

*“With Ofsted and Early Years education becoming statutory at a certain age, I think Head Teachers started focusing on what is measurable rather than educating the child, so you see, in many respects I suppose, you could say that it was Ofsted’s impact that helped to create this poor relationship with primary Head Teachers and the Early Years.”* **(Retired Head Teacher, Primary School)**

The EYS workforce has varying statutory remits:

*“We have two staff training days, so we close for the day, which is quite unusual for a private day nursery.”* **(Owner/Manager, PVI setting)**

The phenomenon of non-educators making decisions about education was raised as a recurring theme:

*“Let’s take an elected member who is in charge of a work structure, a government portfolio. Now, are they in charge of that portfolio because they are experts in the field, or is it political manoeuvring? Is it a values-based thing that they want to advocate? Leading and making decisions about this, and they could make decisions about early education, but they aren’t really educators.”* **(Independent Adviser, Cross-sector)**

#### **4.6.1.2 The impact of the fiscal climate**

Public sector pay policies are a recurring theme among MNS interviewees:

*“We’ve really, really struggled to balance budgets, because of contributions for National Insurance, and evaluations for teachers and support staff, a living wage, just the pressure from service increasing, so we are struggling at the moment on the budget.”*  
**(School Business Manager, Cross-sector)**

The perception of the EYS being dependent on the Local Authority’s subjective agenda and how this affects financial decision-making was suggested by this interviewee:

*“Leadership of the Local Authority is very important in how Early Years is promoted, but still decisions have to be made from a broader budget context that will have impact on the Early Years sector.”* **(Independent Consultant, Cross-sector)**

This interviewee perceives a superficial understanding of the benefits of what a nursery school contributes to the EYS:

*“There needs to be a greater understanding of what they - Nursery Schools- contribute. I’m sure some people see it only within a financial remit, as well in terms of ... ‘Well this can be done cheaper in the PVI sector.’”* **(Deputy Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

The impact of a lack of funding on children with Special Educational Needs and the possibility of vulnerable children being refused help due to prevailing austerity measures was a concern for this MNS Head Teacher:

*“We are always chasing up funding for Special Educational Needs. Children are signposted to our setting because of the curriculum that is offered which meets the needs of children with SEN, but we’re at saturation point now actually, where we may have to say **No** to some children.”* **(Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

The negative impact of budget cuts was a common theme across all aspects of the EYS, with the PVI sector noting the Local Authority’s lack of capacity to offer support:

*“We used to have a support teacher and we used to have a Welfare Requirements Officer as well.”* **(Deputy Manager, PVI setting)**

The decline in Local Authority support was also noted by MNS interviewees resulting in additional financial pressures on dwindling school budgets:

*“The Local Authority has been stripped completely, and the support that used to be there has gone. So in terms of Early Years Advisors, you know you rarely, rarely ever see and staff for HR and the quality of the advice we’re getting is significantly decreased, in fact we’ve had to go and employ consultants now to get quality advice.”* **(Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

#### 4.6.1.3 The impact of change

This interviewee perceives that constant change in education has destabilised the system and negatively impacted on recruitment for leadership roles:

*“I think the way change is happening without any due process and accountability, I think it’s absolutely destabilising the whole of the system.”* **(Retired Head Teacher, Primary School)**

The pace of change is seen as having a knock-on effect on the EYS leadership’s capacity to keep abreast of change, and stay reliably informed to plan strategically for even a year in advance:

*“The pace of change is so fast that you feel as if you miss a meeting a decision is going to be made in your absence, or that you are not going to be aware of another change that has occurred. The pace of change is so fast that also you can’t make a strategic decision about planning for even a year in the future.”* **(Deputy Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

The question of school governors’ capacity to govern effectively was raised in regard to relentless change in the educational landscape:

*“In the role of the governor, it’s very important that you keep up to date with the changing world of education, and education is continuously changing, so if you’re going to be a governor, in my opinion you have a responsibility to keep up to date, and in terms of some of the things that I’ve seen take place along the way, I would say, ‘Are people up to date with it?’”* **(Independent Consultant, Cross-sector)**

63.2% of questionnaire respondents report struggling with the constant educational reform in recent years although this was not a strong theme with PVI interviewees.

	<i>I struggle with the frequency of change %</i>	<i>I sometimes struggle with the frequency of change %</i>	<i>I rarely struggle with the frequency of change %</i>	<i>I never struggle with the frequency of change %</i>	<i>Don't know %</i>	<i>No response</i>
<i>How has the constant nature of educational reform in recent years affected you?</i>	6.10	57.10	28.60	10.20	0	7

**Table 4.12** *Questionnaire respondents' perceptions on the constant nature of educational reform*

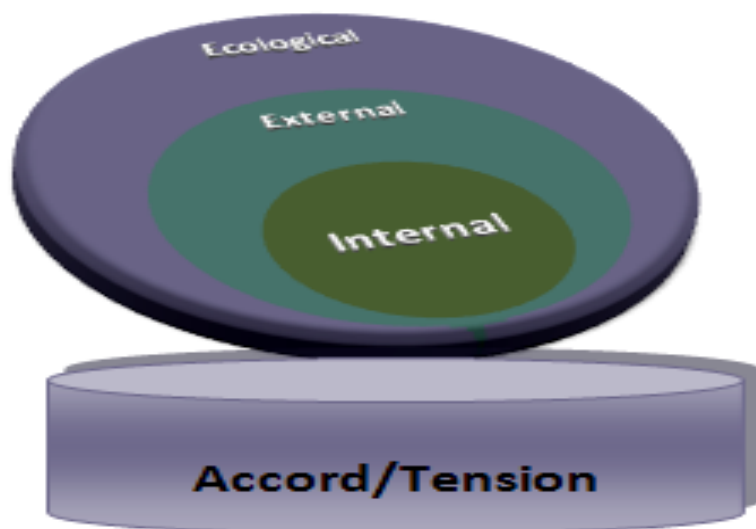
Despite this, 95% of respondents felt that they had change-management strategies that adequately dealt with the pace of change in the EYS, and 67.50% of respondents reported that they were coping with budget constraints.

	<i>Strongly agree %</i>	<i>Agree %</i>	<i>Disagree %</i>	<i>Strongly disagree %</i>	<i>Don't know %</i>	<i>No response</i>
<i>My change-management strategies as a leader are adequately dealing with the pace of change in the EYS</i>	15	80	0	2.50	2.50	6
<i>I am coping with budget constraints</i>	7.50	60	5	17.50	10	6

**Table 4.13** *Questionnaire respondents' perspectives on dealing with change and budget constraints*

#### **4.6.2 Theme 5: Cultural – Sub-theme: Accord/Tension**

Interviewees' comments which have been categorised under 'Cultural' are presented under, 'Internal', 'External' and 'Ecological' influences. The sub-theme is on the continuum 'Accord/Tension'.



**Diagram 4.13** *The impact of cultural influences on the EYS*

#### 4.6.2.1 Internal influences

Interview participants' frequently referred to various conflicts that have created an imbalance in the EYS:

*"I think for certain aspects of the role there should be standardised funding, and for additionality in terms of the education there should be more. That would make sense, yes, but then don't call them the same thing! They can't be the same thing!"* **(Retired Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

The perceived difference in financial accountability between profit-making businesses and the educational sector is a recurring contentious theme with maintained sector and Cross-sector interviewees:

*"PVI's? Yes I have, a few challenges, in the sense that they are really about making the profits, whereas the educational sector have far greater challenges in terms of their accountabilities, in terms of finances and their educational provision, so Ofsted is far more rigorous in the financial case procedures and accountability."* **(School Business Manager, Cross-sector)**

PVI interviewees' frequently noted that they perceived the PVI sector as being stigmatised as having less value than the maintained sector:

*“I think because I work within the private sector, there is still a certain ... I don’t know if stigma is the right word, but a perception that it doesn’t have as much value as perhaps the maintained sector.” (Owner/Manager, PVI setting)*

A general perception among PVI participants’ is also that ‘the wheel is being re-invented’ by the maintained sector:

*“I think if there is already something that’s working, if you’ve got PVI sector that’s working and it’s fulfilling all its little tick boxes according to statistics and Ofsted and things or whatever, it’s the old: ‘Do you need to re-invent the wheel?’ you know.” (Ex-Manager, PVI setting)*

PVI participants’ also had concerns about an early education agenda for the sector:

*“I get concerned when Early Years is framed in terms of Early Years education, being as it is so much more than that.” (Owner/Manager, PVI setting)*

There was a recurring theme among maintained sector interviewees of PVI provision being more for the benefit of parents than for children:

*“I think private sector are more kind of prone towards parents, they’re excluding children, you know - they don’t take all children like nursery schools and nursery classes, but they serve a good purpose for working parents, and so-called good settings cater to the parents that can afford.” (Nursery Class teacher, Primary School)*

The health impact of a target driven early education agenda was of deep concern for this interviewee:

*“‘Go, go, go, drive, drive, drive, target, target, target! And I do really think it’s important that we start to tackle this within our profession because we’re building up heart disease, strokes, stress.” (Retired Head Teacher, Nursery School)*

Ongoing concerns about gruelling work hours and poor wages in the PVI sector were a strong recurring theme:

*“The hours and stuff are hard. If you’ve got a family and you’re working through the holidays - because nurseries quite often don’t close – it’s difficult. And it’s such a rewarding job, but sometimes you have to think about what’s best for your family, and go*

*to a school if you need to, or go and work in Lidl because it pays more.” (Room Leader, PVI setting)*

The language of leadership has different inflections depending on where it is positioned within the sector. Maintained sector leaders speak very much from an educational perspective, with business as a contextual aspect:

*“It’s that, education is progressing; we are reviewing our policies and procedures; we’re self-critical and looking at how we operate; we’re planning for the future in terms of looking at school improvement plans and financial projections.” (Deputy Head Teacher, Nursery School)*

The language of leadership in the PVI sector is overtly one of business:

*“In the PVI sector, generally people are running businesses. Whether it is as a childminder or a one-man sole-trader business, or as a private nursery or as perhaps an independent school, you cannot divorce the care-giving educational element from the fact that if you’re not a successful business, you won’t be sustainable, and therefore can’t continue.” (Owner/Manager, PVI setting)*

Views around political correctness and the tendency to equalise roles in early education was a common theme:

*“I used to hate it when I went into PVI’s as head and a leader, and I’d see bad practice and I’m being told, ‘We’re just like you’ and I used to cringe, because you can’t even say, ‘You’re having a laugh’ because that would be seen as rude even if you said it politely. You’re not allowed to say that to PVI’s. We have to keep our mouths shut and pretend we’re like them. In your dreams, sunshine!” (Retired Head Teacher, Nursery School)*

#### **4.6.2.2 External influences**

Interview participants’ frequently referred to external influences that have created a pressurised environment in the EYS. Head Teacher interviewees frequently spoke about the level of bureaucracy that is attached to an education leadership role:

*“I think the level of bureaucracy needs to be seriously addressed.” (Head Teacher, Nursery School)*



This interviewee's perception, which is overwhelmingly mirrored in the maintained sector, is that the arbitrary remit is responsible for the adversarial nature of the EYS:

*"For me Early Years leadership has been thrown in the arena without any referee, without any agreed rules of engagement, and it's becoming dirty and people who are not in the same things are being set up against each other to fight for the same thing and it's just damaging."* **(Retired Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

The imposition of 'external directives' was a strong *leitmotif* for the PVI sector:

*"Just having an external directive put on you with very little notice and without any strategy on how it could be achieved in terms of the funding, the external funding factors, has just been a huge pressure for the sector."* **(Owner/Manager, PVI setting)**

#### 4.6.2.3 Ecological influences

Interview participants' perceive the consequences of certain constructed conditions within and beyond the EYS as having a cataclysmic impact on the wider EYS environment:

*"People make decisions about the Early Years from a particular social care model - when actually it's a constructivist model, and if you were to deconstruct all of that and look at it from the view of a child, you would have a different way of organising your work-stream. So I think people don't have a clue about Early Years, even those that are in it, because they are dependent on their professional heritage."* **(Independent Adviser, Cross-sector)**

This interviewee alludes to the challenges that Nursery schools who run PVI's have in trying to stay competitive:

*"We have to remain competitive with our fees but still pay out top dollar for highly qualified staff."* **(School Business Manager, Cross-sector)**

The complexity of Integrated Centre Leadership surfaced frequently among MNS interviewees:

*"I'm an Integrated Centre leader rather than just a school leader. I have a different perspective of it, and I know from developing an integrated Early Years setting, you're not just a school, you're operating in the real world, through summer holidays, with people who've got different jobs."* **(Retired Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

Equalities and human rights in the EYS were a huge discussion area for cross-sector interviewees', who referred to a number of demographic and socio-economic circumstances which may influence the quality of the Early Years experience for a child:

*"PVI's in poorer areas do not give as good provision as PVI's in a wealthier or more affluent areas and most inner cities have huge pockets of deprivation."* **(Independent Consultant, Cross-sector)**

This participant perceives deficits when the 'social infrastructure' is not linked to Early Years:

*"Interpreting the needs of young children, for example why young children need to be established within the neighbourhood and that impacts on housing, decision-making and so on - because traditionally - homeless applications made by families never took into account where a child might go to school or what the social infrastructure might be for that family in that area."* **(Independent Advisor, Cross-sector)**

Balancing a safeguarding remit against running a business was highlighted by this PVI interviewee:

*"Staff would want the manager to deal with the issue, if as a child's key worker they had built close relationships with families. But the manager has to worry also about losing that child and their fees, which could impact on paying staff. You have to understand that people are trying to build a sustainable business; you can chase away fee-paying clientele if you follow up everything."* **(Deputy Manager, PVI setting)**

This retired primary school head participant perceives current Safeguarding procedures to be a 'kneejerk' reaction and asks whether children are any safer now than in the past:

*"I know that in times past it was possible to ignore things that might be happening and people had the mindset to just do their best for the children while they were in school - but are children any safer in this time when it appears that everything is a kneejerk? ... The context now is you've just got to think it. If you think it's not right you're duty bound to call Social Services, even if you're wrong."* **(Retired Head Teacher, Primary School)**

This primary nursery class teacher refers to Safeguarding training as a 'sermon on the mountain', with no specific relevance to children in the Early Years:

*“We’ve not really had that – safeguarding – nor anything tailored to young children. However, as a whole school, that is actually mentioned. So they look at, because I think the Head Teacher has got this in her that the Nursery is part of the Primary so whatever, you know, is like, how can I say ...? Like a sermon from a mountain, kind of.”* (Nursery Class teacher, Primary School)

The majority of respondents felt they were clear on their roles, enjoyed the challenges of the role, and also felt they could recommend the role to aspiring leaders.

	<i>Strongly agree %</i>	<i>Agree %</i>	<i>Disagree %</i>	<i>Strongly disagree %</i>	<i>Don’t know %</i>	<i>No response</i>
<i>I enjoy the challenges of my role as an EYS leader</i>	19.57	73.17	2.44	2.44	2.44	5
<i>I am confused about what my role is</i>	0	2.44	36.59	56.10	4.88	5
<i>I can recommend the EYS leadership role to aspiring leaders</i>	19.57	73.17	2.44	2.44	2.44	5

**Table 4.14** *Questionnaire respondents’ perspectives on an EYS leadership role*

Despite respondents feeling they were clear about their roles within the EYS, there was a far more variable response regarding the purpose of Early Years education, which does cast some doubt on whether the remit of the role is as clear they claimed.

	<i>Definitely %</i>	<i>Partially %</i>	<i>Maybe %</i>	<i>Possibly %</i>	<i>Not at all %</i>	<i>No response</i>
<i>Should Early Years education seek only to make children ready for primary school</i>	7.80	23.50	2	11.80	54.90	5

**Table 4.15** *Questionnaire respondents’ perspectives on Early Education*

There is a majority consensus that the PVI sector is *not* only for high-income families.

However there is a far more variable response on whether nursery schools are only for low-income families with 22.50% stating that they did not know.

	<i>Strongly agree</i> %	<i>Agree</i> %	<i>Disagree</i> %	<i>Strongly disagree</i> %	<i>Don't know</i> %	<i>No response</i>
<i>The PVI sector is only for high-income families</i>	0	2.50	47.50	45	5	6
<i>Nursery schools are only for low-income families</i>	2.50	15	42.50	17.50	22.50	6

**Table 4.16** *Questionnaire respondents' perceptions on families' use of the sector*

95% of respondents felt that the PVI sector would remain a viable aspect of the EYS while

80% of respondents felt that maintained schools would remain a viable aspect of the EYS.

17.50% of respondents did not know if maintained schools would continue to be viable.

	<i>Strongly agree</i> %	<i>Agree</i> %	<i>Disagree</i> %	<i>Strongly disagree</i> %	<i>Don't know</i> %	<i>No response</i>
<i>I am happy that the PVI sector will remain a viable aspect of the EYS</i>	20	75	2.50	2.50	0	6
<i>I am happy that maintained schools will remain a viable aspect of the EYS</i>	17.50	62.50	2.50	0	17.50	6

**Table 4.17** *Questionnaire respondents' perceptions on the viability of sector*

#### **4.7 Summary Findings for RQ2**

Interviewees' perceive the complexity and variability in the EYS as being the result of incompatible government policy rationales, which have left the sector in a constant state of flux. Interviewees' also perceived a need for greater collaboration between the theoretical and the practical and they generally spoke about how government policy affected their particular circumstances expressing serious concerns about the impact of budget cuts, and funding regimes. The impact of change was predominantly the concern of the maintained sector interviewees' who expressed concerns about shifting dynamics, the widening role remit and the relentless pace of change. Internal conflicts were wide and varied, and comments confirmed that the turbulence within the sector is further complicated by external influences

which, as expressed by the nursery school teacher and the Independent Advisor, appear to be taking Early Years education and care back to the 1950's. Diagram 4.14 below extends over four pages and depicts the internal and external influences and the existing ecological condition as a result of these influences. The EYS is generally perceived to be ineffectual by research participants, and as suffering from turbulence and tension.

External		Ecological (EYS)			Internal		
<i>Policy</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>PVI</i>	<i>Maintained Sector</i>		<i>PVI</i>	<i>Maintained Sector</i>	
2 yr olds in the maintained sector	Training  Staffing ratios	Long work hours	Bureaucracy		Marketing	vs	Admissions
Staggered intakes	Loss of funding	Low wages	Nursery Schools	Primary Schools	Is it necessary to have an Early Years Maintained sector?	Does the PVI sector cater more for parents?	
			Closure and federations of nursery schools				
Loss of full time places	Safeguarding concerns	No additional funds for policy directives	Nursery Schools	Primary Schools	PVI capacity to meet sufficiency needs	Nursery Schools	Primary Schools
Loss or reduction in Children's Centre services	Concerns for children with Special Education Needs (SEN)		Nursery School operated PVI			Loss of budget	
	Sustainability		Competition with PVI's				
			Need to remain competitive with fees while still paying out Council rates for staff wages		Lack of full support for children with safeguarding needs	Lack of full support for children with safeguarding needs	Lack of full support for children with safeguarding needs

EYFS	Same curriculum but different expectations	Profit-making (sustainability)	Non-profit making		Selection	Inclusion	
						VS	
Early Years Teachers role without QTS	Less pay  Can't work in Primary school beyond Reception	Discontent in regard to lack of parity with QTS despite inferred parity with QTS	Two-tiered system in the EYS  Resentment in regard to parity with QTS		Varying domain knowledge basis for the EYS role	QTS teachers seen as expensive	
Early years Professional status	Arbitrary concept of professionalism in the EYS.  Fragmentation				Varying and generally insufficient skills for an early education remit  Varying salaries for what is promoted as the same role	Resentment regarding 'dumbing down' Early Years qualifications	
Ofsted	Different Ofsted regimes	Varying quality in the PVI	Nursery School	Primary School	Heavy focus on tasks and routines	Nursery School	Primary School
			Consistent good and outstanding quality in Nursery Schools	Unclear and inconsistent quality in Nursery classes in Primary schools	Early education taken quite literally	Focus on Early Years ethos, philosophy and pedagogy	Nursery classes in primary schools not deemed as important as the rest of the school

Budget allocations for the Early Years	Complicated demand-led with supply-side subsidies  Sustainability of the EYS	Lack of definition, purpose and target audiences resulting in simple solutions for complex issues	Nursery School  Attempts to fund equitably despite unequal workforce pay and conditions	Primary School	Not enough funding for the PVI sector for new Government initiatives	Nursery School  The need for restructures and debilitating cost saving measures to remain sustainable  Loss of staff and the threat of impaired quality	Primary School  Not enough funding from the schools budget share for nursery classes in primary schools
Local Authority Budget cuts	Loss of services  Loss of school budgets  Loss of staff/  Restructures  Struggling to balance budgets	<b>Turbulence</b>			Loss of support in training and quality assurance for the PVI sector	Loss of Local Authority support to the maintained sector.  Loss of quality HR and ER advice resulting in added expense to buy in expert advice  Threats to the viability of MNS	
Early years single formula funding	Loss of budget to the EY maintained sector	<b>Tension</b>			Budget gains for the PVI sector	Resentment and internal conflicts in the EYS. Concerns about political correctness which favours the PVI sector	

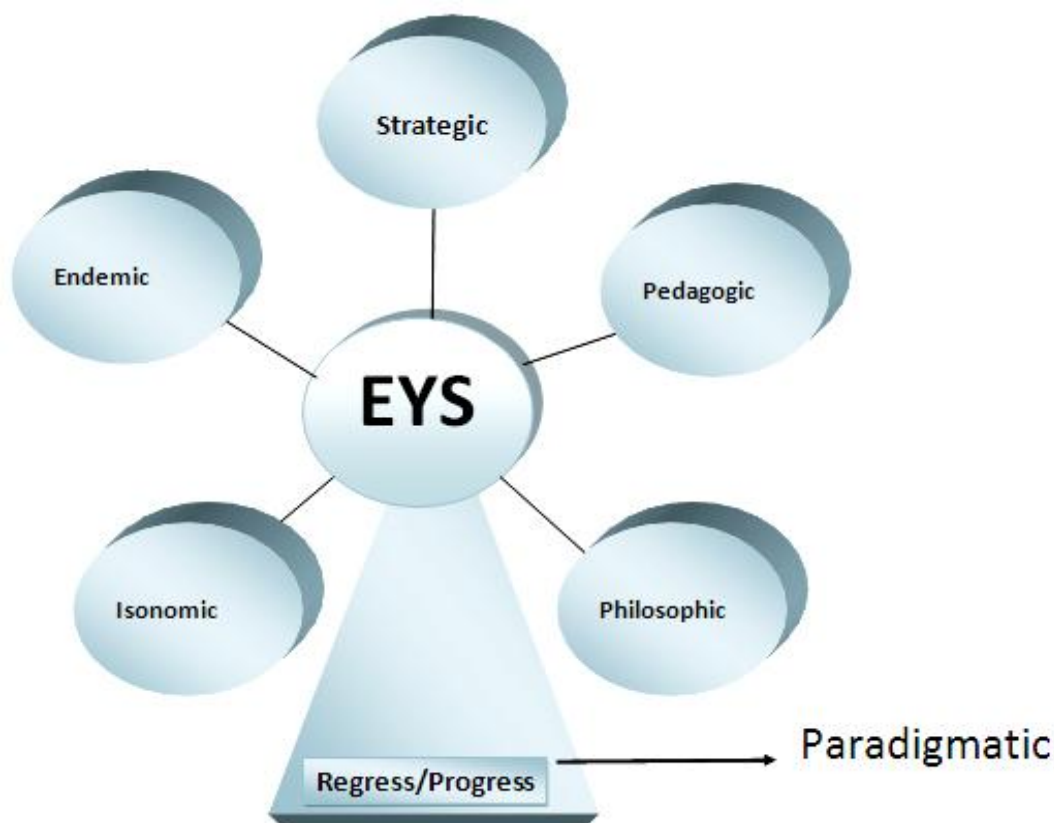
Living Wage	Negative impact on PVI's budget	For working parents	Heavy social responsibility remit – getting mothers back to work	Tensions regarding more wages for staff and the impact of offsetting increased expenditure on to parents in regard to increased fees	Nursery School Concerns about the differences between educational leadership and business management and the impact on children	Primary school Concerns about the profit imperative in the PVI sector resulting in hiring younger and less experienced staff
Anti-poverty Strategy	Widening remit Integrated working		Loss of funding for Children's Centre services	Safeguarding remit vs. Retention of clientele	Loss of funding for safeguarding remit but increased expectations for safeguarding and child protection from the maintained sector	
Non-expert elective members leading Early Years policy change	Regression of Early Years practice back to the 1950's	<div>Cross Sector</div> <div>Social care model instead of constructivist model</div>		Arbitrary and unfocussed remit which is heavily in support of a business model for the EYS	Nursery School Ongoing loss of MNS Competition with PVI and primary schools for recruiting and retaining children	Primary School Increased capacity for flexibility resulting in competition for recruiting and retaining children
Political rhetoric regarding a highly qualified workforce in the EYS	Culture of 'good enough' quality in the EYS.	Focus on Business management skills to sustain business	Highly qualified workforce Consistent high quality led by experts in Early Years education	Focus on the profit margin Tensions about doing the same at the maintained sector but not being valued in the same way.	Nursery School Strong curriculum development in MNS Concerns about curricular adherence in the PVI sector Concerns about quasi-professionalism being rife in the PVI sector and in primary school Early Years	Primary School Primary school head teachers lack of skills, knowledge and expertise in Early Years and the impact on performance management

**Diagram 4.14 Current conditions impacting on the ecology of the EYS**

#### **4.8 RQ3: Which strategies could be developed to address the perceived leadership crisis in the EYS?**

Diagram 4.15 below depicts the theme 'Paradigmatic' which has been attributed to RQ3. The sub-theme is on the continuum 'Regress/Progress'.





**Diagram 4.15 Paradigmatic shift in the EYS**

#### **4.8.1 Theme 5: Paradigmatic – Sub theme: Regress/Progress**

Interview participants' had various ideas about how the current situation in the EYS could be improved. Interviewees' suggestions are grouped under; 'Strategic', 'Pedagogic', 'Philosophic', 'Isonomic' and 'Endemic'.

##### **4.8.1.1 Strategic**

Interviewees frequently referred to valuing Early Years education as a 'stage in its own right':

*“Valuing Early Years education as a stage in its own right: in terms of turning school-readiness on its head; in terms of valuing children as individuals; and the legal rights that they're suppose to have under conventions.” (Deputy Head, Nursery School)*

This PVI interview participant would ideally like to see the implementation of a seamless strategy from birth to eighteen years old:

*“A part of a seamless strategy from ideally birth, but probably, or actually if I could keep that school a bit longer, six until eighteen, yea. That would be my overarching strategy in that it wasn’t an Early Years strategy, it was part of the overall education and learning strategy.” (Owner/Manager, PVI Setting)*

This concept of a social model which would be ‘driven by systems not people’:

*“A social economic model of early education which brings children’s outcomes way into adulthood; it’s the value of the predictors of the model from the age of two, like the end of child poverty. So for me the model is driven by systems and not by people.” (Independent Advisor, Cross-sector)*

This MNS interviewee speaks of a model which values cohesive working with elements of competitiveness:

*“There needs to be an element of working together while maintaining competition. I feel people need to share, be open and share their philosophies so that a group consensus can become in terms of what (Local Authorities) believe Nursery Schools should look like, how they should be publicised, how they work together with nursery classes and PVT’s.” (Deputy Head, Nursery School)*

#### **4.8.1.2 Pedagogic**

A Cross-sector interviewee highlighted the importance of pedagogic leadership in the EYS:

*“So it was a big part of the main conference manifesto and there was a huge focus on development and professional strategies in perceptions of leadership in Early Years and moving away from the perception by everyone else that in the Early Years you just count and sing songs.” (Independent Adviser, Cross-sector)*

The importance of expertise which instils a love of learning in children without putting limits on them was passionately advocated for by this interviewee:

*“Real expertise that doesn’t put a limit on children, it opens up learning, if you look at the outcomes of education we’ve got a lot of people leaving university with a lot of skills but without a love for learning.” (Head Teacher, Primary School)*

Passion for Early Years education was a strong recurring theme especially in the maintained sector. This interviewee advocates for opportunities to develop and stretch staff as well as speaking out for what is right for young children:

*“Giving people opportunities to develop their skills, their practice, to question, to stretch people and sometimes to stand on my soapbox and say, “I believe this is right. This is right for our children.”* **(Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

This interviewee advocates for QTS for leadership and leading learning within the sector:

*“I see the need for QTS right across the sector, one for everywhere. I see QTS in early years for leading learning. Actually not just in leading learning, but in leadership. It's what to do with the standards required of you, so there's something to be gained from that leadership and experience.”* **(Independent Advisor, Cross-sector)**

#### 4.8.1.3 Philosophic

Interviewees advocated for a philosophical approach for the EYS:

*“I would define it better based on need; parents and children, and I would look at some of the models that are working better in other countries and adapt the best bits for the UK context.”* **(Retired Head Teacher, Primary School)**

Preference for a later start for formal schooling was cited as ideal:

*“My ideal model would be more European and starting formal school later and giving them more time in the Early Years, maybe until age seven or eight.”* **(Early Years practitioner, Cross-sector)**

This primary school interviewee was a staunch advocate for nursery schools and better funding for primary school foundation stage classes:

*“I would build more nursery schools or else try to embed the nursery school approach in Primary nursery classes and make it mandatory for increased funding in the foundation stage in primary schools.”* **(Nursery class teacher, Primary School)**

#### 4.8.1.4 Isonomic

A strategy involving standardised levels of funding but the best funding to achieve the best outcomes was suggested by these interviewees’:

*“It has to have an appropriate level of funding to make it fair and that’s not the cheapest funding, that’s the best funding, the most funding we can get for the best outcomes of our families and children. I think for certain aspects of the role there should be standardised funding and for additionality in terms of the education there should be more.”* **(Retired Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

#### 4.8.1.5 Endemic

This interviewee suggested rigour in staff recruitment:

*“I think that maybe recruitment of staff should be a bit more stringent.”* **(Room Leader, PVI Setting)**

Increasing the status of Early Years was important to this interviewee:

*“I would increase the status of Early Years teaching and leadership.”* **(Deputy Head, Primary School)**

Also Early Years training modules for teacher leadership:

*“Recognising the value of Early Years within training modules such as NPQH, NPQICL.”* **(Deputy Head, Nursery School)**

The concept of better marketing for MNS was seen as important by this nursery head interviewee:

*“I think we need to market ourselves on what we do much, much better and the impact of what we do, I think we need to make that more visible to other audiences as well.”* **(Head Teacher, Nursery School)**

Questionnaire respondents were asked how the EYS should be defined.

How should the EYS be defined? No response - 6	Responses %
As providing child care for parents (An aspect of the diverse early years provision for the purpose of getting parents back to work)	10
As a pre-reception facility for the purposes of school readiness	0
As a sector in its own right encompassing the expert care and education of young children	72.50
Please add any other suggestions or definitions	17.50

**Table 4.18** *Questionnaire respondents' definitions of the EYS*

The majority of respondents agreed that the EYS should be defined as a sector in its own right encompassing the expert care and education of young children. Additional responses by respondents lend weight to strategic issues regarding too much change, conflict within the sector and issues regarding value of the EYS.

#### **4.9 Summary of Findings for RQ3**

The diagram below summarises expressed suggestions from interviewees' and questionnaire respondents across the sector indicating a healthy balance of recommendations for the sector as a whole that should tip the scales towards progress if implemented.

Strategic	Pedagogic	Philosophic	Isonomic	Endemic
Seamless strategy from 0 -6 years in the early years right through to 18 years old in the school system	Real expertise that opens up learning and imbues a love of learning	Build more nursery schools	Fair and equitable funding	More stringent recruitment of staff
Social model of early education driven by systems not people	Empowering early years experts to speak up about their expertise	Make sure a nursery school was attached to every primary school with full time places and an extended school day	Standardised rigour	Talent identification based on skills and not qualifications
Early education as a stage in its own right and an important stage of a child's education	Cultivate professional discussions and use of research for staff learning and development	Safeguard but don't smother	Standardised fees for fee paying parents and for wrap around provision	Being valued by other professionals
Make it mandatory for increased funding in the foundation stage in primary schools	Local Authority consensus on how Nursery schools could work with PVI's and nursery classes in primary schools	European model with later starting age	Consistent and above board implementation of change	Increased status of teaching and leadership in the EYS  Recognition of early years within professional training modules like NPQH and NPQICL
Define the EYS better based on the needs of children and parents		Open sharing of philosophies		Nursery schools to develop better marketing strategies  Inform and raise parental concept of early years care and education  Schools to appreciate PVI's work with pre-school children especially transition

*Diagram 4.16 Strategies to address the leadership crisis in the EYS as suggested by interviewees and questionnaire respondents*

#### 4.10 Summary of Chapter

This chapter sought to report the findings of perceptions of a leadership crisis in the EYS.

The research highlighted an air of rising discontent within the EYS despite reported improving standards and high levels of investment by respective Governments. Statistical data from documentary sources indicate that the current context of the EYS is far less clear cut than interview participants' and questionnaire respondents accept as true. Common

themes have been highlighted throughout but with varying inflections depending on the working context of the research participant. External pressures and internal rivalry were strong themes as well as the ongoing issues of status and professionalism. Issues surrounding the differences in funding, costs and working conditions are a 'sore point' alongside strong feelings about where quality and expertise lies within the sector. It was suggested that the EYFS is a contributor to these ongoing issues as everyone in the sector works with the Early Years curriculum with varying depths of knowledge, understanding and legislative remits. The research also highlighted wildly different educational approaches and leadership styles and internal context-specific conditions which impact on the quality and opportunities for CPD. Policy objectives, policy reforms and the pace and rate of change were common themes with varying perspectives on how these were dealt with and how they impacted on research participants. The stage is now set to develop further meaning from the evidence generated from the mixed-method research by reconnecting with the research questions and the reviewed literature. This will enable the development of an analytical framework and suggestions for addressing the perceived crisis in the EYS. These suggestions will benefit internal stakeholders, those responsible for policy development within the sector but more importantly, the childcare and early education experiences of the Early Years child.

## Chapter 5

### Discussion of the Findings

#### 5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 presents the discussion of the findings identified in Chapter 4. In order to ensure connectivity and consistency for this complex and multi-faceted phenomenon, the research questions and the themes generated will serve as the central structure of the discussion of the findings. The underpinning principle of this chapter is to interpret and illustrate the significance of the identified findings in light of what is already known about the perceived crisis in the EYS, and to further explicate any new insights into the problem. The intention is to add to the body of research that is currently available, as well as to acquire a deeper level of knowledge and understanding of the research problem under investigation. An evaluative model with considered alternatives to the current EYS will also be provided, as a basis for aiding professional dialogue within the sector, and deliberating sustainable change with elected government members, strategic leaders and stakeholders in the EYS. Themes and sub-themes derived from research participants' views, reviewed literature and documentary sources are depicted in Diagram 5.1 as an overview of how they link to the research questions. Each column as it links to the relevant research question will be extracted from this diagram to serve as a visual depiction of the themes being analysed. The columns will be further deconstructed into themed cells with relevant sub-themes to delve into the stated phenomenon. The research findings which have been substantiated by reviewed literature and documentary sources are depicted in a diagram at the beginning of each relevant discussion area.



What are the characteristics of the perceived leadership crisis in the EYS in the Midlands?	Why do we have a leadership crisis in the EYS? (How did it develop into a crisis?)	Which strategies could be developed to address the leadership crisis in the EYS?
<b>Theme: Structural</b>	<b>Theme: Political</b>	<b>Theme: Paradigmatic</b>
<b>Characteristics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor design of the sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Complex</li> </ul> </li> <li>Exponential growth of the sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Privatisation</li> <li>➢ Lack of vision</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Reasons:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deficit thinking</li> <li>Path dependency</li> </ul>	<b>Recommendations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A clear strategy for the EYS</li> <li>The management of a strong pedagogic approach within the sector</li> <li>Using philosophy to help define the sector</li> <li>Isonomic rigour based on a defined EYS offer</li> <li>Conditions that should be endemic within the sector</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-theme: Function/Dysfunction</b>	<b>Sub-theme: Effectual/Ineffectual</b>	
<b>Theme: Environmental</b>	<b>Theme: Cultural</b>	
<b>Characteristics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fragmentation</li> <li>Destabilisation of the current EYS</li> </ul>	<b>Reasons:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal conflicts</li> <li>The tenuous position of leadership in the EYS</li> </ul>	<b>Sub-theme: Regress/Progress</b>
<b>Sub-theme: Stabilised/Destabilised</b>	<b>Sub-theme: Accord/Tension</b>	
<b>Theme: Economic</b>		
<b>Characteristics:</b> Dualism within the sector in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment and Retention</li> <li>Resources and CPD</li> <li>Roles and Remuneration</li> <li>Professionalism</li> </ul>		
<b>Sub-theme: Coherent/Incoherent</b>		

**Diagram 5.1 Overview of Characteristics, Reasons and Recommendations for research questions 1, 2 and 3**

## **5.2 RQ1: What are the characteristics of the perceived leadership crisis in the EYS?**

The characteristics of the perceived leadership crisis in the Midlands as gleaned from research participants' are depicted below in Diagram 5.2.

What are the characteristics of the perceived leadership crisis in the EYS in the Midlands?
<b>Theme: Structural</b>
<b>Characteristics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Poor design of the sector</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ <i>Complex</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Exponential growth of the sector</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ <i>Privatisation</i></li> <li>➢ <i>Lack of vision</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Sub-theme: Function/Dysfunction</b>
<b>Theme: Environmental</b>
<b>Characteristics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Fragmentation</i></li> <li>• <i>Destabilisation of the current EYS</i></li> </ul>
<b>Sub-theme: Stabilised/Destabilised</b>
<b>Theme: Economic</b>
<b>Characteristics:</b> <i>Dualism within the sector in:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Recruitment and Retention</i></li> <li>• <i>Resources and CPD</i></li> <li>• <i>Roles and Remuneration</i></li> <li>• <i>Professionalism</i></li> </ul>
<b>Sub-theme: Coherent/Incoherent</b>

*Diagram 5.2 Column linked to RQ1*

RQ1 has three themed cells which explore the characteristics of the leadership crisis.

Diagram 5.3 below depicts the ‘Structural’ themed cell for RQ1, which discusses the characteristics ‘Poor design of the sector’ and ‘Exponential growth of the sector’.

### 5.2.1 Theme: Characteristics of a Structural Nature

<b>Theme: Structural</b>
<b>Characteristics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Poor design of the sector</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ <i>Complex</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Exponential growth of the sector</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ <i>Privatisation</i></li> <li>➢ <i>Lack of vision</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Sub-theme: Function/Dysfunction</b>

*Diagram 5.3 Structural themed cell*

### 5.2.1.1 Poor design of the sector

Characteristics	Research from Literature Review and Documentary sources			
<b>Poor design</b>	<p><b>West (2006, p.2):</b> "Patchy and diverse without little overall planning"</p> <p><b>Fuller <i>et al</i> (2007, p2):</b> "... the image of the Russian doll to capture the multi-layered nature of contemporary organisations and sectors"</p>	<p><b>Osgood (2006, p.6-7):</b> "... heterogeneous composition of the sector characterised by a tapestry of private, voluntary and maintained provision"</p> <p><b>Early Education (2015, p.2):</b> "Nursery schools are caught between a rock and a hard place: they are required to employ a head and qualified teachers, and meet the costs of being a school without the economies of scale of a primary school; but they are only required to be funded on the same level a private and voluntary providers who can employ much lower qualified, cheaper staff"</p>	<p><b>Pugh and Duffy (2010, p.12):</b> "Currently one-third of childcare and early years places are in maintained schools and two-thirds in the private and voluntary sector"</p> <p><b>Lloyd (2010, guardian.co.uk):</b> "... a childcare market of private businesses delivering a significant portion of nursery education"</p>	<p><b>Hillman and Williams (2015, p.9):</b> "So much provision is not necessarily designed to fit working patterns, and the design of work incentives could be improved to reduce the very high marginal deduction rates (where for example, a high proportion of additional earnings is lost in reduced tax credits or benefits) faced by some sub-groups"</p>

*Diagram 5.4 Characteristic 1.1 from themed cell 'Structural' and linked to Literature Review and Documentary Sources*

The literature review reveals that the design of the sector is based on vague, confusing and sometimes arbitrary policies regarding the purpose and function of the EYS. It is virtually impossible to debate the structural incongruence of the current EYS without making reference to policy-makers' value bases regarding Early Years. Whilst it is apparent that the EYS is seen as an important vehicle to keep the economy ticking over, the value base of policy-makers appears to remain quite low or at least turbulently in transition, with inevitable hiatuses during changes in government. This has allowed the sector to be built on a tenuous foundation, to operate in a constantly shifting landscape, and be subject to convoluted layering of policy initiatives. The sector of itself is a contradiction. It does not sit comfortably in either the business or public services camp. It is essentially a predominant market model, reflecting supply and demand, consumer choice, competition and profit maximisation - but

also a strong universal model promoting access for all children irrespective of socio-economic backgrounds (Moss and Penn, 2003, Naumann, 2011, Rutter, 2015, Butler and Rutter, 2016). The market model is designed to respond to diversity, and the universal model is designed for uniformity, therefore the very basis of the sector design is built on opposing concepts. This, essentially, constitutes a weak foundation. Continuing to add weight to an EYS that is built on a weak foundation and is without the benefit of a planning strategy, is actually tantamount to ignoring the inevitability of the collapse of the structure and continuously ‘hoping against hope’ that it continues to tick over for just a little while longer. EYS reform is subsequently complex and multi-directional allowing successive governments to maintain the facade of public interest, while disavowing themselves of the responsibility of the investment, content and aims of a public service (Naumann, 2011).

Research participants’ perspectives on the EYS in its current context tell a story that is quite stark. The best way to sum up the EYS through their eyes is through the descriptive analogy of a largely untended and overgrown garden where certain features of the garden episodically receive some attention depending on the periodic foci of the existing gardener. This garden has a few strong mature trees, a good number of smaller shrubs in varying conditions and an overwhelming number of flowers and weeds. The garden is either lacking a landscape design or has lost it along the way; and as a result, the few strong mature trees are being cut down and placed on the log pile, as there is no real understanding of their purpose within the garden. Very little meaningful work is being done to improve the overall condition of the shrubs and a lot of beautiful flowers are being choked by ever-present weeds. The sections of the garden that have received attention in fairly recent times are also in varying stages of their landscape architecture, due to frequent changes in gardeners and a mass of half-finished work, in which there is a lack of consensus on what plants are going in the ground and why.

This garden presents as an overgrown maze, with plants that require differing conditions to thrive, which are now instead, becoming mangled and intertwined in their fight for survival. This analogy is descriptively encapsulated from research participants' perspectives and facts from the reviewed literature, and may appear to be quite proverbial to those who are unfamiliar with the EYS, so for the sake of clarity:

- Nursery schools = few strong, mature but disappearing trees
- Nursery classes in primary schools = Shrubs of varying conditions
- PVI sector = flowers and weeds

This analogy also holds when the very real impact of a suboptimal design of the EYS is considered alongside the issues surrounding purpose, function and alignment of the sector. The sector presents as distorted, unbalanced, uncoordinated and struggling to survive whilst adapting to a constantly changing set of circumstances. The critical condition of the current EYS can only be attributed to the “action or inaction of successive governments” (Moss and Penn 2003, p.vii), and the current imbalance of the different types of providers is not working effectively to produce consistent high-quality early education and care (Hillman and Williams, 2015).

### 5.2.1.2 Complexity of the sector

Characteristic	Research from Literature Review and Documentary sources			
<b>Complex</b>	<p><b>Hayes (2007, p.6):</b> "...diversity is welcome and reflects the different realities of childhood for children across time and context. It is also challenging as it requires a continuous interrogation of policy and practice against the dynamic and changing reality of everyday life"</p> <p><b>Penn and Lloyd (2013, p.14):</b> "There is also a complex interface with early education, which is free to parents at the point of use, but is increasingly provided within childcare rather than within education services until children start school"</p>	<p><b>Upton (2016, p.1):</b> "The childcare market is complex with a wide variety in the type of provision on offer and the different business models being deployed"</p> <p><b>Hillman and Williams (2015, p.11):</b> "Impact on children's outcomes. Tackling social disadvantage. The parental and family context. Wider societal impacts, Public policy mechanisms "</p> <p><b>DfE (2016, p.3):</b> "The current system is driven by historical precedent and not be the costs of providing childcare that meets the needs of children in different areas. Only with significant change can we establish a system that supports the delivery of the Government's ambitious agenda for the early years and enable the successful delivery of our Manifesto commitment"</p>	<p><b>Dahlberg and Moss (2005, p.132-133):</b> "Despite a strong emphasis on private provision and markets" the UK " operates a strong centralised system" which means that "the state remains strong despite appearing to devolve"</p> <p><b>Campbell-Barr (2010,p.6):</b> "The focus on the market was enshrined in legislation when the 2006 Childcare Act was introduced (National Archives, 2006) Under the act, local authorities are required to manage the market in order to ensure sufficient provision for parents that want it. However, under this market management, maintained (state) provision is to be a last resort."</p>	<p><b>Beveridge (1942, p.7):</b> "social insurance and the allied services, as they exist today, are conducted by a complex of disconnected administrative organs, proceeding on different principles, doing invaluable service but at a cost in money and trouble and anomalous treatment of identical problems."</p> <p><b>Bertram and Pascal (2002, p.32):</b> " Early childhood services have many competing agendas"</p> <p><b>Moss and Penn (2003, p.52):</b> "explains that there is not one 'immutable concept' for early childhood services."</p>

*Diagram 5.5 Characteristic 1.2 from themed cell 'Structural' and linked to Literature Review and Documentary Sources*

The current EYS is heavily linked to the provision of state assistance, which is conducted through various complex and disconnected administrative systems all operating on different principles. Even though these services are useful and valuable, the lack of a joined-up approach invariably entails great cost and effort, and is not the most efficient use of public

resources (Beveridge, 1942). Despite its 75 year-old outlook, this is an apt description of the current EYS, where the systems that feed into the EYS have created a complexity that is difficult to navigate in a divided, tiered and intricate landscape, with varying and sometimes conflicting legislative, cultural and professional biases. The real issue as suggested by the research findings is the lack of a coherent strategy in a political ping-pong game between successive governments.

A counter-argument to this context would be in the promotion of integrated services (Laming 2003, Laming, 2009, Marmot, 2009, Field, 2010, Allen, 2011, Munro, 2011), which catapulted on to the EYS landscape in 2003 in the wake of the Laming Report, which made a justifiable argument for Safeguarding and Child Protection as a key element of Early Years services. One would argue that Child Protection and Safeguarding are unavoidably indelible in the fabric of Early Years provision; yet it was wholly appropriate to raise awareness of deficiencies within the systems that were in play at the time. Nevertheless, this research indicates that the focus on the need for different agencies to communicate effectively has become overshadowed by an oppressive regime of Safeguarding policies and practices which have effectively unpicked this element from the fabric of Early Years and instead, superimposed it as a heavy mantle. The mantra of Integrated Services is devoid of the rigour of sustainable, unidirectional reform, and as a result, varying government departments and the consequent systems still do not communicate effectively enough with each other to produce a coherent and co-ordinated approach.

Early Years services is not an 'immutable concept', therefore intentionally flexible and changeable (Moss and Penn, 2003). It is necessary not to over-simplify the needs of children and families, and to enable a labour force that is poised to respond to diversity. However, Hayes (2007) presents a caveat for accommodating a diverse EYS; the need to continuously

interrogate policy and practice to ensure relevance, congruence and effectiveness. The lack of a national childcare strategy has rendered childcare policy-making ‘disjointed’, and results in silo and *ad hoc* decision making (Butler and Rutter 2016). Policy-makers will often promote a policy for a specific agenda “while also having other considerations in mind”. A policy designed to give families access to more affordable childcare may also be designed for more freedom in parental choice or for a reduction in dependence on benefits but as the policy is not described consistently in any of these objectives there is little regard paid to the fact that the objectives conflict with each other in real terms (Baldock et al 2013, p.3).

Complexity is inevitable in a system where increased state involvement encouraged the growth of a PVI market, which then led to attempts to moderate negative market dynamics through increased targeted measures. These measures, which are delivered through demand-led subsidies to parents, are complicated to navigate and do not fully cover the costs of childcare. This has created the added complication of state regulation for a market that should be self-regulatory based on “demand, consumer choice and competition” (Naumann, 2011). This is not a system that is working consistently for the benefit of children, parents or providers. Instead it operates in support of the businesses that are favourably located and astutely managed in order to ‘sweat’ income from parents in a variety of ways.

Marginalisation of the publicly-funded EYS maintained sector has reconfigured schools into supporting and sustaining a market ideology for survival. The maintained sector is now a complex mix of an imposed public/private system. The wisdom of this sector design is brought into question as education is widely proclaimed to be universal, yet in a sovereign state like the UK it is left to the arbitrary nature of consumerism. It is evident that those with influence over the EYS have been instrumental in creating the extreme complexity within the



sector, which is described as ‘too many paradigms trying to be the main one’ by a retired MNS Head Teacher interviewee.

### 5.2.1.3 Exponential growth of the sector

Growth and developments in the current EYS are rife with issues concerning privatisation and lack of vision. This comprises the characteristics for this section. The EYS has seen increased public investment over the last 20 years but the increase in demand for childcare has also fostered “unparalleled growth” and significant “private investment” (Capacity 2005, p.1).

### 5.2.1.4 Privatisation

Characteristic	Research from Literature Review and Documentary sources			
<b>Privatisation</b>	<p><b>Ball (1994, p.34):</b> “...slow growth of publicly funded services and rapid expansion of the private sector”</p> <p><b>Dahlberg and Moss (2005, p.132):</b> “The liberal welfare state places more reliance on the individual paying fees for services and less on financing through taxation”</p>	<p><b>Lloyd (2010, Guardian online):</b> “Childcare market of private businesses delivering a significant proportion of nursery education”</p> <p><b>Faulkner and Coates (2013, p.9):</b> “As the central ideology of the Conservative Government under John Major was free-market enterprise, at the time it was envisaged that any expansion of nursery education would be via the voluntary and private sectors in competition with the state maintained sector”</p>	<p><b>Start strong (2014, p.5):</b> “Service-providers are expected to run an educational service, while also being entrepreneurs and running a financially viable business. Many services aren’t financially viable, and have no prospect of being. Some providers make little or no profit. Some, however, are big businesses and make significant profits, often supported by public funding. Some community services are in a precarious financial situation. Working with families living in poverty, they are still expected to operate within a business model of service provision and have to worry about financial sustainability”</p>	<p><b>Start strong (2014, p.18):</b> “In those countries which have had historically low levels of ECEC provision, such as the UK and Australia, rapid expansion in childcare and nursery education in the last 20 years or so has been achieved through the encouragement of private for profit sector provision”</p> <p><b>Butler and Hardy (2016, p.35):</b> “One local authority highlighted that the cumulative financial impact of the 30 hour offer, the new national living wage, rent increases as property prices rise, new pension requirements and pressure to employ qualified staff could exacerbate these challenges (for PVI’s)”</p>

*Diagram 5.6 Characteristic 2.1 from themed cell ‘Structural’ and linked to Literature Review and Documentary Sources*

The overwhelming majority of the childcare market is composed of private, for-profit businesses (Lloyd, 2010, Faulkner and Coates, 2013, Blackburn, 2014). No attempt has been made by the state to increase publicly-funded provision, with the issue appearing to be conflict in whether the state is responsible for providing childcare, or if that responsibility should lie with parents. The UK is reliant on a fee-paying constitution and disinclined to finance early education through taxation, therefore there is still a low level of total state spending and a low degree of income redistribution to accommodate the strategic embodiment of the EYS as both a staple of a buoyant labour market and a secure public system as in other parts of Europe (see Diagram 2.6). Despite the seeming predilection towards a privatised childcare market, policy makers have also created a meandering pathway to entrepreneurialism within the sector as a result of attempting to reap returns on their early “pump-priming investment” (Campbell-Barr 2014, p.6). However this has not stemmed the continued unchecked growth of the PVI sector on a structurally unstable foundation. Regardless, privatisation comes with its own sets of problems. PVI interviewees concur with Butler and Hardy (2016) that external influences have created a ‘cumulative financial impact’ that impacts negatively on sustainability of small single site PVI settings (which are overwhelmingly representative of the PVI sector) in the current climate of austerity i.e.:



*Diagram 5.7 The perfect storm for the PVI sector*

### 5.2.1.5 Lack of vision

Characteristic	Research from Literature Review and Documentary sources			
<b>Lack of vision</b>	<p><b>Moss and Penn (2003, p.2):</b> "Lack of vision is harmful. Britain has never had a national policy on early childhood services based on a considered, informed, sustained and broad public vision."</p> <p><b>Woodhead (2006, p.26):</b> "...continuing ambivalence towards making the rights of the child the explicit, foundational principles underpinning reform of children's services"</p> <p><b>Upton (2016, p.1):</b> "The cost of childcare has continued to increase, with prices to parents outstripping inflation over the past decade"</p> <p><b>Andrews et al (2017, p.20):</b> "The authors conclude that increasing the quantity or flexibility of support targeted at those in need would be more cost-effective than providing universal entitlements"</p>	<p><b>DfE (2016, p.5):</b> "To implement 30 hours of free childcare, we need early years providers to deliver enough free childcare places to meet the needs of the nearly 400,000 families who will be eligible from September 2017. They cannot be compelled to do so and funding is our principal means of incentivising them"</p> <p><b>Butler and Rutter (2016, p.6):</b> "The state cannot, in the near future, afford to subsidise both generous free entitlements for all families and meet pressing anti-poverty investment priorities. An excessive focus on free childcare risks locking the UK into a low quality funding model distracts policy-makers from investment in early intervention services and will not address fundamental access and flexibility challenges. Whilst targeted increases in free provision can be justified, large extensions to universal free childcare are likely to undermine rather than support anti-poverty policy goals"</p>	<p><b>Early Education (2015, p.2)</b> "...a third of maintained nursery schools in England have closed since 1980: only just over 400 remain, and many face continual uncertainty as to their future"</p> <p><b>Early Education (2014, p.3):</b> "Because of their small numbers and not being a universal service, public awareness of the distinctive role and nature of maintained nursery schools is low. Given their high quality provision and their historical concentration in deprived areas, their role needs to be more widely understood so that short-term financial pressures do not lead to long-term loss of high quality provision"</p> <p><b>Andrews et al (2017, p.6):</b> "There is a risk that further investment in additional quantity of childcare provided by low-paid staff could prove to be ineffective, and simply increasing low-cost universal provision may result in more deadweight costs and have little impact on child development outcomes"</p>	<p><b>Faulkner and Coates (2013, p.13):</b> "The Green paper recommended that by 2010 there should be 3,500 <i>Sure Start</i> Children's Centres, so that all families with young children would have access."</p> <p><b>Butler (2016, p.3):</b> "The Government has rightly chosen to invest in the early years at a time of fiscal austerity. However, that investment has not been balanced: new spending on support with childcare costs must be matched with investment to raise standards and help the children with the greatest need for support in the early years"</p> <p><b>Butler and Rutter (2016, p.24-25):</b> "Various sources show steep cuts in spending on children's centres and early intervention services. The Early Intervention Grant, from which the majority of funding for children's centres is drawn, fell dramatically in value between 2010 and 2015"</p>

*Diagram 5.8 Characteristic 2.2 from themed cell 'Structural' and linked to Literature Review and Documentary Sources*

Whilst the private, for-profit market in childcare is burgeoning, the public sector, not-for-profit market as it applies to nursery schools is dwindling. It has been established that the dwindling number of nursery schools is due to lack of clear investment in the public sector. Nursery schools are literally “between a rock and a hard place”. They have all the obligations of a school but are only required to be funded at the PVI rate (Early Education, 2015). That being said, in their move towards a flat funding rate across the EYS, the government specifically acknowledged that MNS are schools, “and as such, bear costs over and above other providers because of their structure” (Jarrett and Perks 2017, p.4). To minimise disruption they have secured supplementary funding of £55 million a year for at least two years. This does not seem like enough time for MNS to readjust and devise new operational strategies for maintaining their high quality, and still be sustainable. MNS interviewees attest to the wide support provided by MNS in concurrence with Early Education (2014):

- working with other Nursery Schools and Children’s Centres locally and nationally
- supporting staff in PVI Early Years provision through local forums and cluster groups
- offering support and development opportunities for Childminders
- supporting visits from other settings
- working with local primary and infant schools through local collaborative
- supporting students/apprentices from local colleges and universities, including Teaching School alliances, SCITTs
- engagement with research into effective practice in the Early Years e.g. projects on 2-year-olds, wellbeing
- supporting Local Authority Early Years teams
- offering training for local parents (Early Education 2014, p.6-7).

Despite their diversification, their enhanced reach and well documented high quality, there has been no protection against closure or amalgamation, and MNS are currently in the throes of the ‘perfect storm’ as described by research participants:



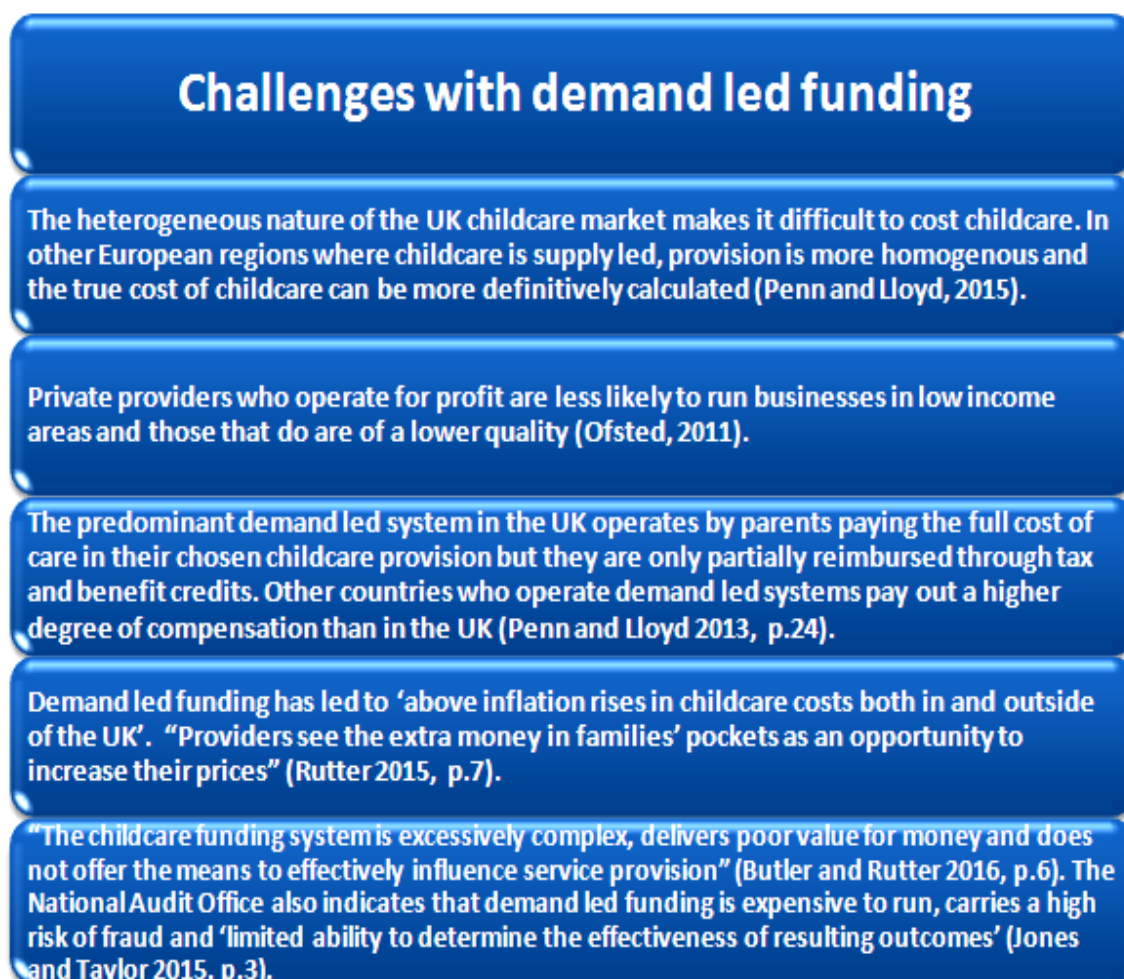
*Diagram 5.9 The perfect storm for MNS*

MNS exist to redress the balance for the “economically deprived”, as promoted by Margaret Thatcher in a 1973 House of Commons speech. However, this policy lost momentum due to the 1976 financial crisis, and the subsequent 1980 Education Act which “clarified earlier legislation stating that a Local Education Authority has the power – but no duty – to establish, maintain or assist nursery schools or schools with nursery classes” (West and Noden 2016, p.5). This left MNS subjectively at the mercy of individual Local Authorities and the level of value and importance they place on nursery education, as confirmed by the Independent Consultant interviewee; this also explains inconsistencies in the national overview of the EYS. Currently MNS are at crisis point, and by association, nursery provision in areas of deprivation. Despite Ofsted (2017) reporting that the number of “good

and outstanding” provision is now “almost identical” in affluent areas compared with the most deprived areas (p.27), this is not reflected in a significant narrowing of the gap between the most and least disadvantaged (Butler, 2016, Butler and Hardy, 2016, Andrews et al, 2017). There are ongoing concerns for small, single-site PVI settings in deprived areas as small businesses in areas of deprivation are essentially capped in their earning power due to the paying capacity of the families in the communities and also the fact that low-income families tend to use maintained sector Early Years facilities (Penn and Lloyd 2013, p.13). However, the loss of full-time provision in MNS is not conducive to job seeking and parents are left with having to resort to multiple childcare arrangements to sustain keeping paid work. Apart from whether it is viable for parents to work, the reality of passing children through various childcare systems in one day is an obstacle course that some parents are just not prepared to tackle nor do they want to subject their children to that level of enforced disruption to their daily lives. Penn and Lloyd (2013) emphasise volatility in a market where there has been a 15% turnover rate in for-profit childcare, with a further third of all providers now saying that their business is currently in difficulties (p.18). It is therefore alarming that in the demographic areas of greatest need, the plight of small single-site PVI settings and the plight of nursery schools will eventually converge to catastrophic effect on these communities. A childcare market assumes that buyers (parents) are properly informed about the ‘product’ they are purchasing and understand the rudiments of business transactions. In reality parents are operating within their own personal constraints and within a highly selective market in regard to access and affordability. A number of parents are already faced with having to ‘make do’ with inadequate childcare provision (Penn and Lloyd, 2013, Start strong, 2014).



‘Social insurance’ policy initiatives are already in jeopardy with steep cuts in spending on Children’s Centres and early intervention services. This significant and notable investment through the Early Intervention Grant, from which the majority of funding for Children’s Centres is drawn, fell dramatically in value between 2010 and 2015 (Butler and Rutter 2016, p.24), heralding a very obvious shift from “preventative to reactive services” (Butler and Rutter 2016, p.41). Muddled priorities and lack of vision prevail when well-intentioned strategies are undermined by a predominantly demand-led childcare market with supply-side subsidies (Rutter, 2015, Butler and Rutter, 2016). There are a number of issues associated with this system, as depicted in Diagram 5.10 below:



*Diagram 5.10 Challenges with a predominant demand-led childcare market*

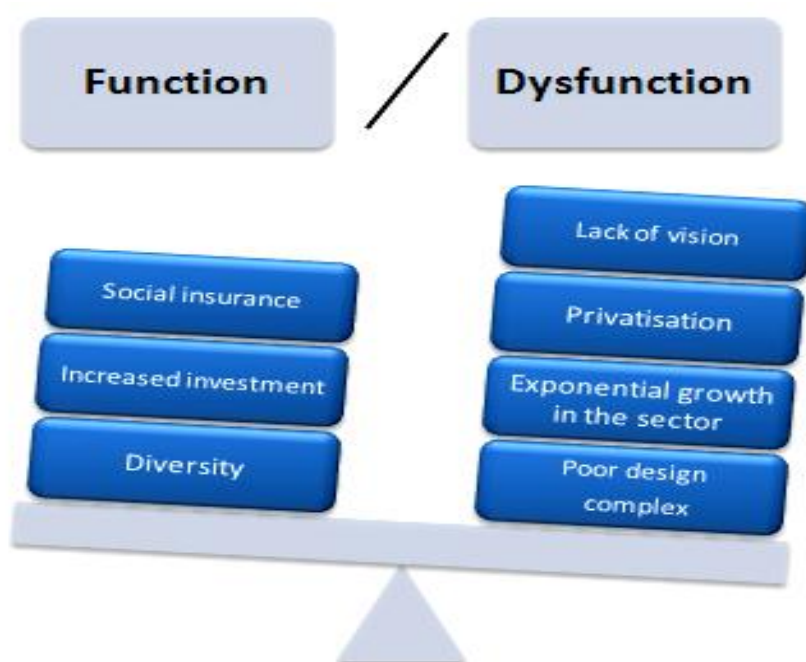
In the Netherlands and in France, early education is delivered within the maintained school system, therefore quality and function remain unaffected by market dynamics, even though these countries also adhere to a mixed economy of provision (Penn and Lloyd 2013). Supply-side funding would help to standardise improved quality within the EYS (Rutter, 2015), regardless, continued increased investment in a “more of the same” universal childcare model may result in “deadweight costs” that governments will not be able to afford in the future (Butler and Rutter, 2016, Upton, 2016, Andrews et al, 2017). On top of these issues, more recent policy initiatives like the 30-hour offer will also serve to promote higher childcare subsidies for families who are presumably better off, to the disadvantage of families in a lower income bracket or those having to resort to casual wages for ‘as and when’ work. It is interesting that “evidence suggests that many providers will opt not to deliver the 30-hour entitlement” (Andrews et al 2017, p.19), because it is not financially viable for them.

#### **5.2.1.6 Summary: Function/Dysfunction of the sector**

The current EYS is generally designed for what society needs from parents or what policy-makers perceive that children need. The continuing practice of formulating and implementing policies to address perceived issues in the EYS and then developing more policies to supersede the policies that are in place, is at great cost to the public purse and is abjectly counterproductive. Simply throwing billions of pounds at the EYS in its current state and praying for the best is not a sustainable plan. Money is essential for the EYS, but despite the record levels of investment in the EYS in recent times, there have been some very disappointing results. If the sector’s nature is undefined it stands to reason that investment will be misaligned. The UK has never had a “considered, informed, sustained and broad public vision” for the EYS, which is damaging for the sector (Moss and Penn, 2003). The lack of vision for the Early Years has resulted in a poorly designed EYS with commercial

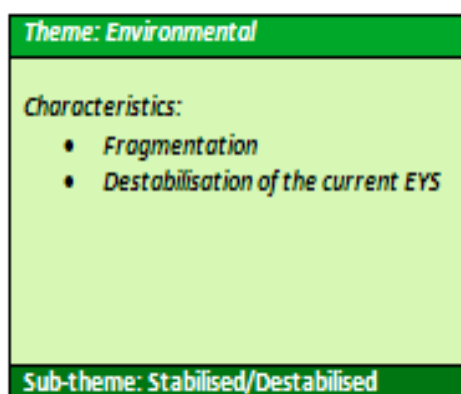


‘outgrowth’, and overly complicated systems which intractably seek to adhere to successive governments’ commitment to a mixed economy of provision, and a complicated system constructed on ‘marketisation’ alongside ‘universalism’. Based on the findings of this research, the continuum ‘Function/Dysfunction’ is associated with the complex and chaotic structural design of the sector with the concluding evidence tipping the scales towards the unfortunate state of ‘Dysfunction’ within the sector, (see Diagram 5.11 below).



*Diagram 5.11 Dysfunctional EYS*

### 5.2.2 Theme: Characteristics of an environmental nature



*Diagram 5.12 Environmental themed cell*

The environmental theme is an aggregate of surrounding conditions and influences within the EYS which will be discussed under the characteristics, ‘Fragmentation’, and ‘Destabilisation’ of the current EYS.

### 5.2.2.1 Fragmentation

Characteristics	Research from Literature Review and Documentary sources			
<b>Fragmentation</b>	<p><b>Bertram and Pascal (2002, p.5):</b> “Early years is an imprecise definition” “Few countries embraced the link between education and care in their terminology or used terms that reflected this phase in the child’s life as important in its own right”</p> <p><b>Gammage (2006, p.4):</b> “Children attend different centres at different ages, for different lengths of time and are taught and viewed in somewhat different ways by different sorts of professionals”</p>	<p><b>Capacity (2005, p.4):</b> “Childcare providers who want to draw down nursery education grant must now also satisfy clear and extensive standards in relation to education as well as care. While this is undoubtedly a progressive development for children, it has posed challenges and has introduced a larger element of competition into the relationship between childcare providers and schools”</p> <p><b>Rodd (2006, p.2):</b> “...despite continued calls to bring care and education together, these two systems still are not fully integrated”</p>	<p><b>Butler and Rutter (2016, p.15):</b> “The unplanned nature of the expansion of childcare provision has led to a significant degree of fragmentation in provision, with a schism between the maintained sector, where care is teacher-led, staff are paid within a public sector pay framework and work within their school’s professional framework, and the private and voluntary sector, where a minority of settings are led by a qualified graduate, staff wages are considerably lower and working conditions are variable”</p> <p><b>Upton (2016, p.1):</b> “The childcare market “is highly fragmented and over localised, with mostly small, single-site providers with limited scale economies”</p>	<p><b>Moss and Penn (1996, p.vii):</b> “Early childhood services are in a critical state and at a critical stage. The services are fragmented, inflexible, incoherent and full of inequalities, unable to meet the changing and varied needs of families”</p> <p><b>Senge (2006, p.3):</b> “From a very early age, we are taught to break apart problems, to fragment the world. This apparently makes tasks and subjects more manageable, but we pay a hidden, enormous price. We can no longer see the consequences of our actions; we lose our intrinsic sense of our connection to the larger whole”</p>

*Diagram 5.13 Characteristic 3.1 from themed cell ‘Environmental’ and linked to Literature Review and Documentary Sources*

Fragmentation is a symptom of societal conditioning resulting in a lack of capacity to connect “to the larger whole” (Senge 2006, p.3). This endemic societal conditioning of fragmentation is overlaid by a culturally disparate system which bears the scars of old and deep wounds concerning the difference between ‘childcare’ and ‘early education’. The vagueness of the term ‘Early Years’, is a concern for Early Years experts who prefer the more defining title of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), and the obvious reference to their

interdependency during a child's Early Years experience (Bertram and Pascal, 2002, Gammage, 2006). It could however be inferred that while care is an intrinsic aspect of early education, it is possible to have care without *purposeful* early education. The emphasis on 'purposeful' is aimed at conveying the understanding that children are learning whether the learning intention is purposeful or not.

The EYS has been in "a critical state and at a critical stage" for over twenty years (Moss and Penn 1996, p.vii). Current guidelines and funding frameworks promote a toleration of "good enough" Early Years provision which is failing children and families (Butler 2016, p.10). The lack of transparency in national policy regarding the Early Years has allowed "questionable concepts and structures" to go unquestioned and gives rise to the supposed validity of "narrowly focused government initiatives" that target "one particular service role or one particular group of service users" (Moss and Penn 1996, p.viii). Against this backdrop and despite well-meaning intentions securing *some* partial success for 'narrowly focused government initiatives', when taken as a whole, the stain of a crisis situation becomes apparent. Historically, maintained sector provision was different to private sector care services; with a far simpler landscape. The sector operated without much conflict, but seemingly mindless of the chasm that was developing between the concepts of 'care' and 'education'. The EYS has suffered from long periods when it has fallen off the public policy agenda, and then suddenly become endowed with huge public investment and a broadened remit. These 'fits and starts' have the perverse effect of continuously suffocating and then administering life support to a critically ill EYS. The relentless flurry of activity in the present time is tantamount to futile attempts at intubation for a dying sector.

Successive governments have been unable to clarify “interface issues between early education policies to promote children’s life changes and childcare policies aimed at promoting family economic well-being” (Lloyd 2015, p.147). This research has highlighted concerns among interview participants’ about elected members, non-experts and non-educators in leadership positions who are making life-altering decisions about the EYS, without any agreed values-base or a true understanding of the implications of their policy initiatives. Market forces play a strong part in the fragmented nature of the EYS. This has resulted in highly localised provision, with little consolidation. Despite the increase in the number of nursery groups, average group sizes have not changed much resulting in a modest scale of consolidation (Blackburn, 2014, Upton, 2016). Consolidation is necessary to bring a system into balance and to avoid ‘outgrowth’ of certain aspects of the system which tend to consume too much energy, time and resources, in contrast to what they contribute to the system. Market consolidation with regard to business sustainability is one aspect of this grave issue but strategic systems consolidation with regard to the effectiveness of the EYS is perhaps far more crucial. In keeping with the garden analogy, the most effective gardeners maintain their plants with suitable nutrients for them to thrive and periodically prune the plants to ensure the health of the garden. Without this cycle of growth, maintenance and consolidation the garden becomes overgrown and unmanageable.

The research findings highlighted the strong recurring theme of a silo effect within the sector which could be explained as a survival mechanism for making order out of chaos. This however, has contributed to territoriality within the EYS workforce, which further contributes to fragmentation (Capacity, 2005, Butler and Rutter, 2016). Interview transcripts tell an interesting story about working in the EYS: There were very few instances where interview participants’ from the maintained sector spoke explicitly about care but care was abundantly

implied in the rhetoric; and there were very few instances where early education was explicitly spoken about with interview participants' from the PVI sector but it was implied in their rhetoric even though measurably less than the maintained sector. During this research it became apparent that the context of early education is defined with a strong theoretical, philosophical and pedagogical basis within MNS, but it was evident that care in the Early Years has not been properly explored by either the people who work within the sector, or the people who influence it. It appears to be defined by the confines of the EYFS Welfare Requirements, reducing the context of care to a check list of legal requirements with a heavy Safeguarding emphasis.

The concept of 'care' as it applies to working with very young children has not been refined to its full potential, and as a result, care is perceived as falling in the lower skills set and thus perceived as the task element of delivering the Early Years experience to a child. There are no specific strategic, government expectations for non-graduate staff who mostly carry out the care functions in the EYS (Butler (2016)). Care has featured in this research as:

**A natural function which is performed as a routine task**

**A philosophical ideal associated with working with young children**

**An aspect of attachment theory linked to working with parents and children**

**An intervention strategy linked to the Welfare Requirements**

*Diagram 5.14 Aspects of care from research findings*

Care appears to be perceived as something that is administered 'to' or 'for' a child separately from the child's learning experience. It would appear that should care be given due

consideration and its own professional status, it would help to define reciprocity between the concepts of ‘care’ and ‘education’. The findings of this research indicate that care is an element of the domain knowledge that is necessary for an Early Years role, as depicted in Diagram 4.10.

### 5.2.2.2 Destabilisation of the current EYS

Characteristic	Research from Literature Review and Documentary sources			
<b>Destabilisation of the current EYS</b>	<p><b>Moss and Penn (2003, p.2):</b> “There have been long periods of public neglect, when options have been regularly closed off in a thoughtless manner because early childhood has not had a regular and valued place on the public agenda. These periods have been interspersed by spasms of political activity which fail to identify or address critical questions about direction, purpose and concept because they draw on no shared and sustained vision”</p> <p><b>Woodhead (2006, p.27):</b> “...continuing ambivalence towards making the rights of the child the explicit foundational principles underpinning reform of children’s services”</p>	<p><b>Dahlberg and Moss (2005, p.132):</b> “...the liberal welfare state, which emphasises private responsibility for welfare provision exercised through the purchase of private services in the market (in the case of preschools, by parents as consumers), with a targeted role for the state focused on children and adults ‘in need”</p> <p><b>OECD(2006, p.39):</b> “Where governments are concerned, attitudes to ECEC depend much on their particular Electorates and on a country’s socio-economic tradition. In the liberal economies, although States may help families in their child-rearing tasks, governments generally judge that they have little responsibility to support universal ECEC institutions, except to facilitate the labour market or to prepare young children for schools. As a result, investments in services are still limited, particularly where the youngest children are concerned”</p>	<p><b>Lee (1996, p.8):</b> “...there is little doubt that the service industries will remain in the forefront of economic controversy in the foreseeable future. Not only have they become part of the de-industrialisation and productivity debate, but they have also become part of the related arguments about privatisation and the role of the public sector”</p> <p><b>Penn and Lloyd (2013, p.14):</b> “Fees charged by providers are entirely discretionary (and sometimes information is withheld). As an example, according to the information supplied in handouts by one local authority the fees varied from £160 per week to £500 per week, from a poor part of the borough to a wealthier one”</p>	<p><b>DfE (2013, p.26):</b> “Parents value being able to choose which provider most suits their needs, but parents in disadvantaged areas are far less likely to have a choice of high quality provision than those in more affluent areas. Inspection evidence shows that early education provision in disadvantaged areas is generally of lower quality.”</p> <p><b>Hillman and Williams (2015, p.10):</b> “The rapid expansion of provision seen over the past two decades may have privileged quantity over quality, and not given adequate consideration to the detailed aspects of early years settings that drive positive outcomes.”</p>

*Diagram 5.15 Characteristic 3.2 from themed cell ‘Environmental’ and linked to Literature Review and Documentary Sources*

The UK EYS “does not compare well to leading examples in Scandinavia and elsewhere in Europe” (Butler and Rutter 2016, p.16). The current context is based on a view of children as ‘potential’ and ‘in transition’ to ‘becoming’ worthwhile, which is probably the fundamental flaw. There is a need to address the rights and the image of the child in UK society, not merely to just provide a more comprehensive and more effective service design (Woodhead,

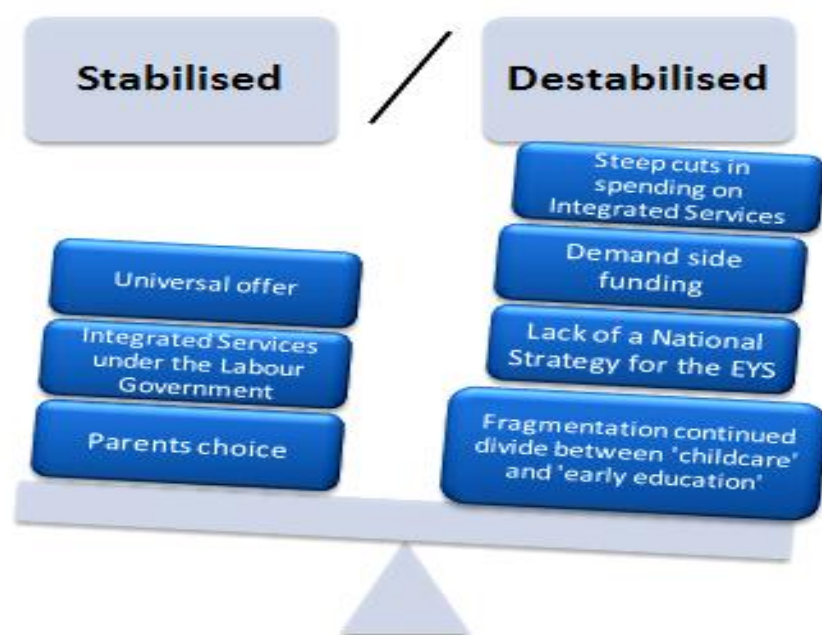
2006). Research participants' agree that 'universalism' and 'social insurance' should still stand strongly as governmental aims, but that the vision has lost clarity and the practice is now a confusing mess of the demands of the EYS role whilst attempting to navigate steep cuts in spending and retrenchment of funding in favour of newer governmental foci.

Destabilisation of the sector has occurred due to heavy investment in policy reform by one government which is then repealed, partially repealed or amended by another government. The sector is reeling from an overwhelming influx of policy initiatives, which sometimes conflicts, tangles and 'trips up' the EYS (Moss and Penn, 2003, Hillman and Williams, 2015).

#### **5.2.2.3 Summary: Stabilised/Destabilised sector**

The current EYS is a confusing jumble of different types of provision, different regulatory regimes, different funding streams, different workforces and policy contexts that continue to replicate historical contexts with the current realities of the EYS. This fragmentation far exceeds the structure of the EYS and reaches deep into the ideology of the liberal welfare state which perceives 'childcare' as a private responsibility with parents as consumers of services (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005). This is a key contributing factor to the exponential growth of the private childcare market. Early education on the other hand is promoted as a universal entitlement which is publicly-funded and includes the maintained sector EYS as delivered in nursery schools and nursery classes and reception classes in primary schools. The findings of this research bear out the reviewed literature in regard to the consequential improvidence, confusion, conflict and inequalities that afflict the EYS. Fragmentation and destabilisation go 'hand in hand' in an unhealthy EYS which is focused on growth without maintenance or consolidation. The unprecedented growth of private provision in the sector has favoured 'quantity over quality' (Hillman and Williams, 2015), which has incurred a

negative impact on the consistency of positive outcomes for children. The absence of a national strategy that is based on the rights of the child as a basis for policy making and reform is perceived as another aspect of the destabilisation of the sector alongside the adherence of successive governments to demand-led funding. Moss and Penn (2003) speak of “no shared and sustained vision” (p.2), which is central to the fragmentation and destabilisation of the current EYS. The continuum ‘Stabilised/Destabilised’ goes to the very root of a fragmented and unstable EYS environment according to the findings of this research. The concluding evidence tips the scales towards the regrettable state of a ‘Destabilised’ sector as depicted in Diagram 5.16 below.



**Diagram 5.16 Destabilised EYS**

### 5.2.3 Theme: Characteristics of an economic nature

Theme: Economic
Characteristics: Dualism within the sector in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment and Retention</li> <li>• Resources and CPD</li> <li>• Roles and Remuneration</li> <li>• Professionalism</li> </ul>
Sub-theme: Coherent/Incoherent

**Diagram 5.17 Economic themed cell**



### 5.2.3.1 Dualism within the sector

Characteristic	Research from Literature Review and Documentary sources			
<b>Dualism within the sector</b>	<p><b>Brind <i>et al</i> (2011, p.169):</b> "...nursery schools were most likely to report that they had experienced either a fair amount or a great deal of difficulty (14%) in filling Head teacher vacancies"</p> <p><b>Brind <i>et al</i> (2014, p.162):</b> "Nearly all nursery schools (95%) had a specific training budget for early years staff, 37% of primary schools with nursery and reception classes and 35% in primary schools with Reception but no nursery classes"</p> <p><b>Butler and Rutter (2016, p.15):</b> "Private and voluntary providers are subject to less stringent quality requirements than maintained settings"</p> <p><b>Butler and Rutter (2016, p.15):</b> "...a schism between the maintained sector, where care is teacher-led, staff are paid within a public sector pay framework and work within their school's professional framework, and the private and voluntary sector, where a minority of settings are led by a qualified graduate, staff wages are considerably lower and working conditions are variable"</p>	<p><b>Dahlberg and Moss (2005, p.134):</b> "...the relationship between care and education, the responsibility of national government, local government and individual institution, the construction and value of work with children; all these are intensely political issues but also political issues that need to be decided at the national level"</p> <p><b>Faulkner and Coates (2013, p.19):</b> "When introduced the EYPS was marketed as being equivalent to Qualified Teacher Status, but as is frequently the case, this was not matched by equivalent pay, and the qualification was not widely recognised particularly by parents"</p> <p><b>Ofsted (2015, p.9):</b> "Ofsted undertakes inspection activity depending on the specific provider and the legislation governing the inspection within that remit"</p> <p><b>Butler (2016, p.16)</b> "There are sharp differences in pay for staff in maintained and private and voluntary settings. Pay affects recruitment and retention: current levels of pay mean that it is very unlikely high-calibre graduates who wish to work with young children will train as early years teachers (rather than as primary school teachers)"</p>	<p><b>Cooke and Lawton (2008, p.6):</b> "Low minimum qualification requirements and the absence of a clear career ladder within the Early Years Sector restricts demand for higher skills, which in turn acts to hold down wages and quality. The result is that higher qualifications do not equate to extra pay, responsibility or professional development"</p> <p><b>Brind <i>et al</i> (2014, p.155):</b> "Staff in school-based settings were much more likely to hold QTS than staff in group-based settings. This is likely to be at least partly attributable to the requirement in the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework to have a member of staff with Qualified Teacher Status in maintained nursery settings"</p> <p><b>Nutbrown (2012a, p.47):</b> "Points against teachers also include the potential costs of training and the knock-on effects the improved terms of pay and conditions for QTS holders could have on the rest of the sector"</p> <p><b>Butler and Rutter (2016, p.24):</b> "Early years staff are among the lowest-paid professional groups in the labour market"</p>	<p><b>Cooke and Lawton (2008, p.33):</b> "Differences between the responsibilities of early years workers and those of professions such as teaching, are narrowing but gaps in pay and status are not"</p> <p><b>Miller and Cable (2010, p.2):</b> "The growth of early years professionalism has different starting points and has followed different paths. Individuals are also on a continuum of professional development and will vary at any point in time in relation to their professional knowledge, understanding and skills. The range and variety of spaces they are working in, the cultural, geographical and policy context of their work, working relationships and pedagogic practices"</p> <p><b>DfE (2017, p.6):</b> "A large percentage of early years staff were qualified to at least Level 3. Staff in school based settings were more likely to be qualified to degree level than those in other settings."</p>

*Diagram 5.18 Characteristic 3.1 from themed cell 'Economic' and linked to Literature Review and Documentary Sources*

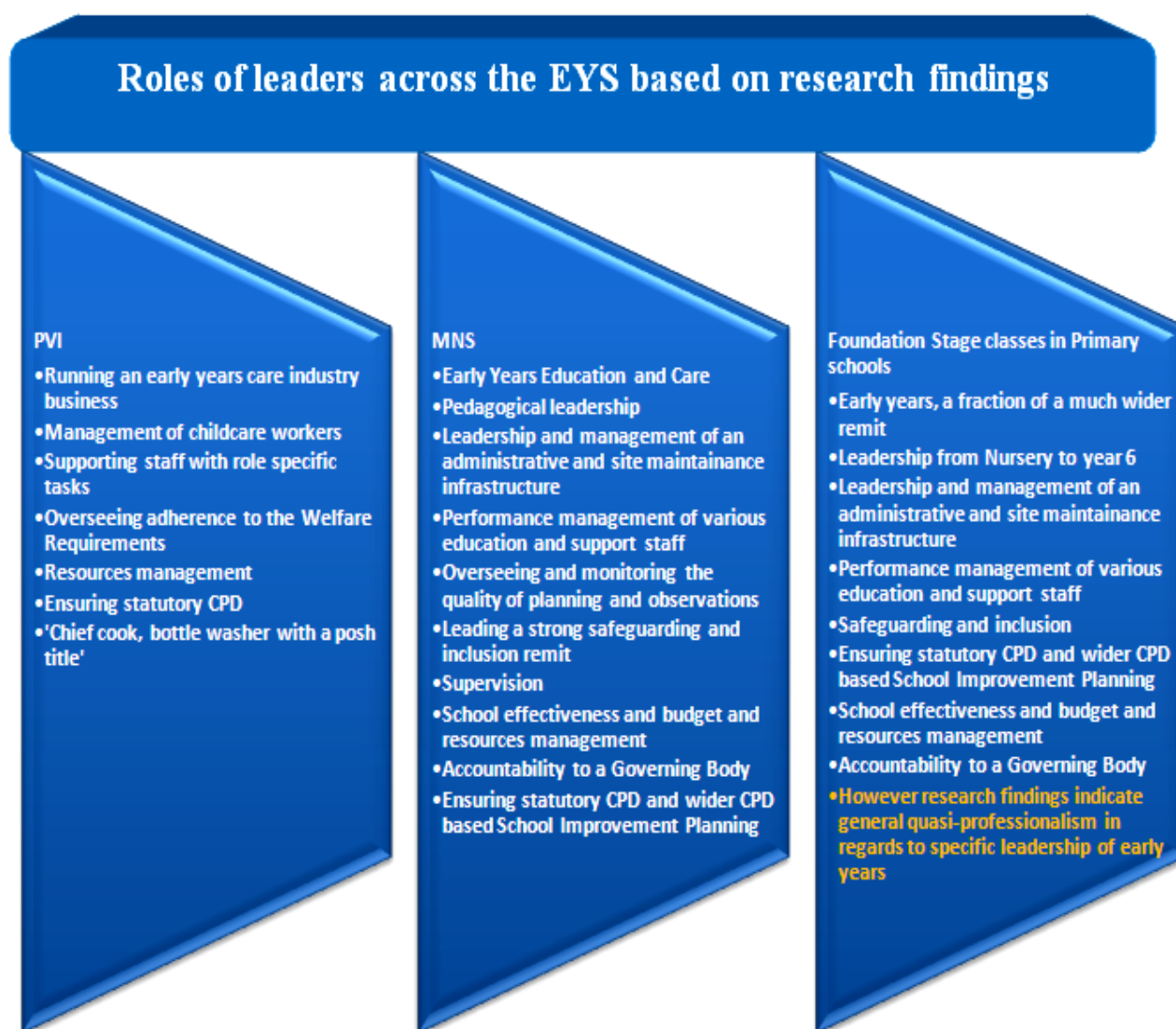
The sector in its current state suffers from dualism which coalesces around the EYFS (see Diagram 4.10). There is a ‘schism’ between the maintained sector and the PVI sector. Care in the maintained sector is teacher-led; “staff are paid within a public sector pay framework and work within their school’s professional framework” (Butler and Rutter 2016, p.15), which contributes to dualism in qualification, staff wages and working conditions within the sector, despite the entire EYS working to one Early Years curriculum with the same expectations. There were deep concerns about the implementation of the EYFS with regard to how it is understood by the workforce across the country (Cooke and Lawton, 2008). These concerns are still relevant where individuals’ professional development will vary at any point in time in relation to their “professional knowledge, understanding and skills” and variance in work environments, work contexts, “working relationships and pedagogic practices” (Miller and Cable 2010, p.2).

The sector continues to suffer from a lack of consensus regarding levels of expertise and competency for working with young children. This is further complicated by the confusing qualification matrix that has been imposed on the EYS in respect of QTS, EYPS/EYTS. The government declined to create a specialist birth-to-seven Early Years route to QTS and instead introduced the EYTS as they did not consider a route towards QTS as necessary for the Early Years (DfE, 2013). However they perceive that EYTS will be ‘seen’ as equivalent to QTS. This contradiction in terms has seeped into the very fabric of the EYS, which is rife with carefully balanced sentiments like ‘everybody is a teacher in the Early Years’ (Ball, 1994). The strategic transposition of championing lesser qualified non-education roles within the sector eats away at professionalism and continues to misdirect the validity of rigour within the sector. ‘Parity’ is now a persistent misnomer in the EYS, and operates as an oxymoronic wrecking ball that crashes at its structure. MNS interviewees have been strongly

affected by this initiative; the inference being that QTS is not necessary for the EYS and that everyone has a deep Early Years pedagogical knowledge base ‘just because’! This research flagged up graduates in various fields: law, hospitality, youth work, science, marketing and community studies; however these qualifications do not assume a depth of knowledge in child development. The participants who work directly with children despite their graduate status still had to re-qualify at Level 3 in Early Years.

Dualism within the EYS appears in a number of guises, especially when reform presents on the surface as ‘standardisation’ across the board, as is the case of the Common Inspection Framework. Ofsted inspections are carried out according to the legislation that applies to the provision being inspected; hence separate inspection handbooks exist for schools and for registered Early Years provision. Therefore maintained sector Early Years settings (nursery schools and foundation stage in primary schools) are subject to Section 8 (short inspection) and Section 5 (full inspection) of the Education Act 2005 using the School Inspection Handbook. Registered Early Years provision is still inspected under Section 49-50 of the Childcare Act 2006, using the Early Years Handbook (Ofsted, 2015). The headings, the delivery and the reporting format of the inspection have been standardised, but the legislation behind the different types of provision still applies. So while each process is similar, the differences between school and non-school settings are still applicable under legislation, therefore they are not the same. The majority of questionnaire respondents who answered the question disagree that the Common Inspection Framework is a standardised Ofsted inspection across the board, but the number of no responses, ‘don’t knows’ and the small percentage of those that agreed, indicate perceptible confusion in this regard.

Maintained sector staff are ensconced within a professional framework that is not apparent within the PVI sector. Weaker institutional relationships may be explicable for “small, single site providers with limited scale economies” (Upton 2016, p.1), but unfortunately, this serves to concrete the concept of ‘good enough’ as fine for a sector that is tasked with unfair expectations of delivering the same outcomes for children, despite the very obvious differences. Cooke and Lawton (2008) refer to a closing gap between teachers and Early Years workers; however, this research has found that leadership roles were distinctly different between those in the maintained sector and in the PVI sector as depicted in Diagram 5.19.



*Diagram 5.19 Roles of EYS leaders across the EYS based on research findings*

The research findings also denote an observable underlying tension in the remit of primary school Head Teachers and MNS Head Teachers. The overview of the role is similar in every way except for the wider scope of the primary Head remit as evidenced in Diagram 5.18.

The status of the role ‘Head Teacher’ should not be in question but if measures of value are based on whether the roles are statutory or non-statutory, it is somewhat more understandable that primary heads may feel that their roles are superior. This however fallaciously underestimates the pedagogic importance of educating the youngest members of society.

Resources and CPD within the maintained sector and the PVI sector both ranked in the research findings as a starkly different, in line with documentary sources (Brind *et al* 2014, p.162 – 164). A MNS class teacher confirmed the breadth and the depth of some of the training opportunities that were present in her school:

- Working with Family Support
- Four day Speech and Language course
- Brain Development and Neurolinguistic Programming
- Schemas and Schematic play
- ECOS training on the environment

In contrast CPD in the PVI sector appears to be problematic for reasons like cost, staffing ratios and the lack of a support structure, and carries a far narrower range. The research findings indicate that non-statutory training in the PVI sector can also be perceived as non-essential. It could be deduced that small, single site settings may have to choose to meet minimum standards to remain viable, while staff in maintained settings have contractual terms and conditions that stipulate a certain amount of training, which is securely lodged within the structure of the academic year, as a part of budget projections for the school (Butler and Rutter, 2016). Interestingly, Early Years specific CPD in primary schools was

flagged up as ranging from selective to non-existent, and whole school INSET was perceived to be ‘a sermon on the mountain’ with no relevance for the Early Years. This clearly speaks to the ‘patchiness’ in quality across the maintained sector.

Another EYS dichotomy can be seen in the reported improved standards and yet, a palpable decrease in ‘quality’ (a concept that has all but disappeared from the Early Years policy agenda). The loss of Local Authority services is a strong *leitmotif* across the sector, with resultant issues like added pressure to budgets to buy in services, and a reduction in access to LA staff who support the quality element of the PVI sector. The current EYS bears the hallmark of ‘marketisation’:

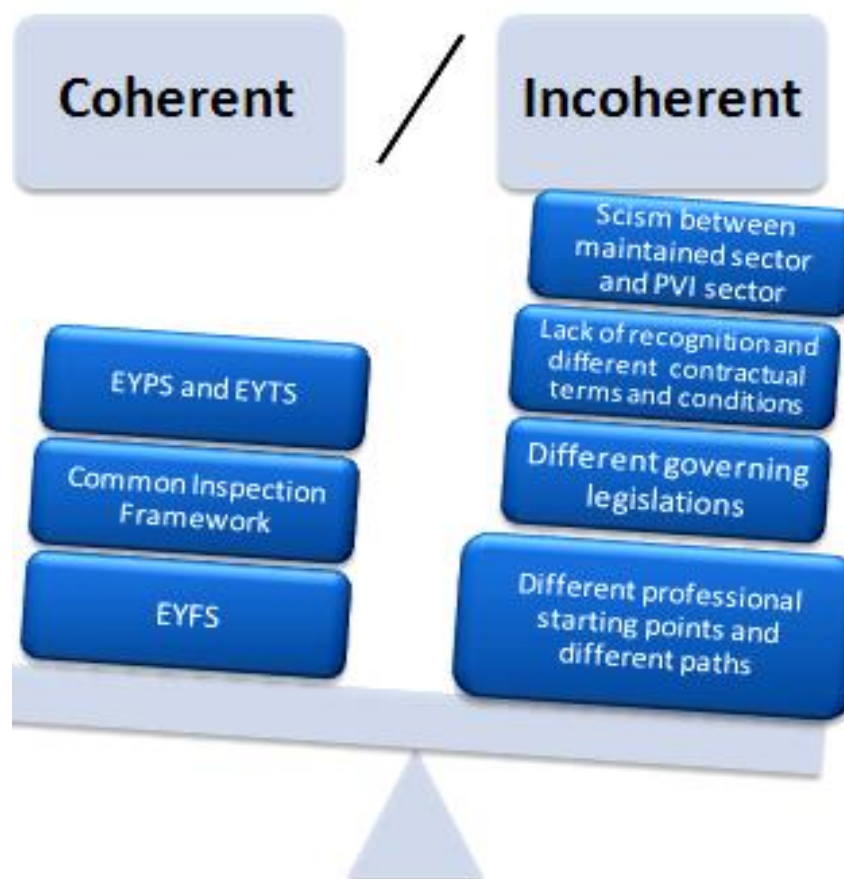
- Budgets from central government have been steadily reducing in real terms which is indicative of a decline in public or publicly-funded services
- Severe cuts to Local Authority budgets are indicative of a decrease in state funding which has both reduced resources and capacity to support local Early Years services
- The change in remit to focus on settings that ‘require improvement’ or are ‘unsatisfactory’. This must be seen within the context of ‘a deregulatory central government agenda which has decreased standardised quality requirements and left Local Authorities uncertain of their strategic role’ (Naumann, 2011, Butler and Harvey, 2016).

This speaks to a sector that is being abused by the subtleties of combining neglect with high control; it appears that as long as the sector is ‘dressed’ fairly acceptably, then the fact that it is really being left to its own devices, and receiving just enough nutrients to keep it alive, is overlooked. This is evident too in primary schools’ resourcing of nursery classes. That was a surprising revelation; this research revealed budgets as little as £140 for the year. This aspect

was not mentioned in the reviewed literature or documentary sources, but presented as a strong recurring theme among maintained sector interviewees' who either currently work in nursery classes in primary schools or had worked in a nursery class in a primary school in the past. The sector apparently operates well enough that its obvious incremental demise is being overlooked by a governmental system that seemingly favours the expense of emergency surgery to the relative benignancy of good-sense regular health checks.

#### **5.2.3.2 Summary: Coherence/Incoherence in the sector**

Dualism is apparent in almost every aspect of the operational EYS, as a result of the historical two-tiered system which remains stubbornly divided between 'childcare' and 'early education'. Diagram 4.23 demonstrates the wide variance and the sharp differences in areas like recruitment, retention, roles, resources, CPD and professionalism within the sector. The concept of 'equal but different' (Nutbrown, 2012b) plagues the current EYS, where political motivations appear to maintain the *status quo* while proposing to 'do things differently'. Calls for a more professional workforce have resulted in a confusing matrix of 'professional' roles that are promoted as having 'parity' but in reality carry different contractual terms and conditions and different salaries. Childcare providers across the EYS are promoted as doing the same thing and performing the same roles despite variable work remits and pay conditions. Recruitment and retention of a higher-skills workforce are suffering from a combination of low wages, a demanding role and a confusing career path within the sector. The continuum 'Coherent/Incoherent' hits at the economic constraints of the EYS that culture the continued dynamic of dualism. The concluding evidence tips the scales towards the adverse state of 'Incoherence' as depicted in Diagram 5.20 below.

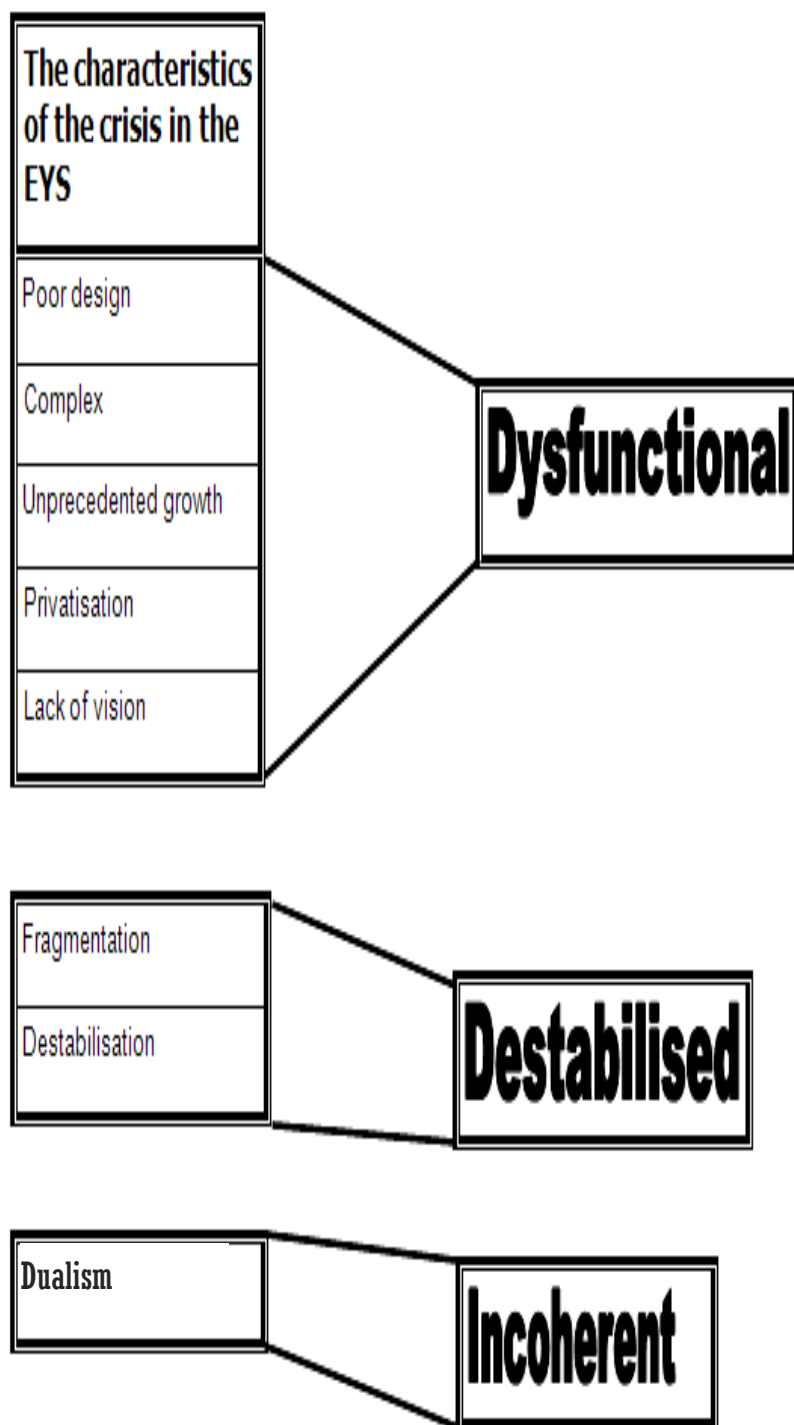


*Diagram 5.20 Incoherent EYS*

#### **5.2.4 Summary of Discussion of Findings for RQ1**

Diagram 5.21 below depicts all the characteristics of the perceived crisis as attributed to it by the answers to RQ1, and the conclusion which indicates that the current EYS is 'Dysfunctional', 'Destabilised' and 'Incoherent'.

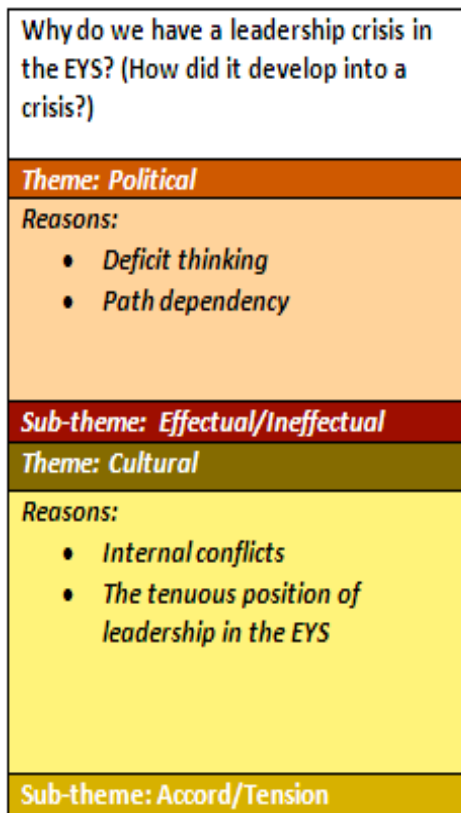




*Diagram 5.21 The characteristics and consequent circumstances surrounding the current EYS*

### 5.3 RQ2: Why do we have a perceived leadership crisis in the EYS? (How did it develop into a crisis?)

The reasons as gleaned from research participants for the perceived leadership crisis are depicted in the column below in Diagram 5.22. RQ2 is composed of two themed cells: ‘Political and ‘Cultural’. The research findings regarding the reasons for the perceived leadership crisis have been substantiated by the reviewed literature and documentary sources, and are depicted under the relevant discussion areas.



*Diagram 5.22 Column linked to RQ2*

Diagram 5.23 depicts the ‘Political’ themed cell in RQ2 which will be discussed under the reasons ‘Deficit thinking’ and ‘Path dependency’.

### 5.3.1 Theme: Reasons related to political issues



Diagram 5.23 Political themed cell

#### 5.3.1.1 Deficit thinking

Characteristic	Research from Literature Review and Documentary sources			
<b>Deficit thinking</b>	<p><b>Pearl (2002, p.336):</b> "Systemic refers to established processes whereby values, traditions, hierarchies, styles and attitudes are deeply embedded into the political, economic, and cultural structures of any society. The systems that have emerged are the consequences of historical influences modified by current political pressures. History establishes in various, often subtle or disguised forms, the means by which people are included or excluded from positions of power and influence"</p> <p><b>Swadener (2010, p.18):</b> "...attempts to solve problems of social exclusion or inequalities in educational opportunity' that 'lock us into false dichotomies, including oppressor/oppressed, donor/recipient, and benefactor/beneficiary roles, which function to preclude authentic collaborator or reciprocal ally relationships"</p>	<p><b>Woodhead (2006, p.28):</b> "...this is not about charity towards the young, needy and dependent. Children are no longer envisaged merely as the recipients of services, beneficiaries of protective measures, or subjects of social experiments"</p> <p><b>Swadener (2010, p.10):</b> "the language of deficiency', is pervasive in public policy discourses concerning young children and their families"</p> <p><b>Swadener (2010, p.13):</b> "...a continuing perception of poverty as a private and behavioural affair" allowing poverty "to be seen as rooted in failed and fallen women, failed mothers, failed children, and a failed work ethic, but not a failed and diminishing public economy, nor the histories of class, race and gender discrimination, not the actual consequence of failed public policies"</p> <p><b>Valencia (2010, p.xvii):</b> "Deficit thinking "is so ubiquitous it saturates the entire political spectrum"</p>	<p><b>McKimm and Phillips (2009, p.20):</b> "...service user's needs do not present themselves in neatly compartmentalised boxes and that to meet effectively the demands of education, health, housing, and social care practice requires reliance on a range of knowledge and skills not routinely the preserve of just one professional grouping"</p> <p><b>Valencia (2010, p.7):</b> "...deficit thinking is so protean in nature, taking different forms to conform to politically acceptable notions at the moment, and while the popularity of different revisions may change, it never ceases to influence school policy and practice"</p> <p><b>Swadener (2010, p.13):</b> "Early childhood and the broader field of education should move beyond the persistent tendency to pathologize the poor and to construct children in poverty and their mothers as an urban, or rural, "other"</p>	<p><b>Freire (1993, p.42-43):</b> "...those who authentically commit themselves to the people must re-examine themselves constantly. This conversion is so radical as not to allow of ambiguous behaviour. To affirm this commitment but consider oneself the proprietor of revolutionary wisdom – which must then be given to (or imposed on) the people – is to retain the old ways"</p> <p><b>Pearl (2002, p.336):</b> "The legacy of history finds current expression in denial of language, particular forms of miscarriages of justice, as well as ever-recurring stereotypes that influence decisions at every juncture and at every level of an individual's life. History establishes the basis for inclusion and exclusion in various societal institutions. Most powerfully, that historical legacy of inclusion and exclusion is increasingly infused throughout education"</p>

Diagram 5.24 Reason 1.1 from themed cell 'Political' and linked to Literature Review and Documentary Sources

The research findings indicate that the current EYS is rife with an ever increasing remit for dealing with families 'at risk' within the contexts of 'inclusion' and 'narrowing the gap'

without much understanding of the persistent tendency to “pathologize the poor” and “construct children in poverty” (Swadener, 2010). The ‘language of deficiency’ is now persistently connected to young children and their families both at macro-and micro-economic levels (Swadener, 2010, Valencia, 2010). A prevailing issue for the EYS arises from dichotomous situations that leave the sector confused as to the role it plays (Cooke and Lawton, 2008, Miller and Cable, 2010, Nutbrown, 2012b, Butler, 2016, Butler and Rutter, 2016), and with the adverse effect of locking in the roles of “oppressor/oppressed, donor/recipient, and benefactor/beneficiary” within the sector (Swadener 2010, p.18).

The EYS carries a heavy ‘social insurance’ remit which stretches the original primary purpose of early education and care. Systems that emerge around the EYS are derived from “historical influences modified by current political pressures” (Pearl 2002, p.336). Despite the intricacy of the EYS, the current political climate has fostered a worrying trend of formulating simplistic solutions for complex social problems by neatly compressing them “into discrete observable, measurable categories” (Marshall 1995, p. 9). There is a lot of power associated with ‘social insurance’ roles; power that can be misplaced without constant self-examination. These concerns also surfaced in regard to working with families as part of the Children’s Centre agenda as expressed by a MNS interviewee who referred to staff wearing a ‘halo’, and parents almost ‘worshipping the staff’, which resonates with Swadener’s concept of false dichotomies. The research findings indicate that the ‘language of deficiency’ is firmly ensconced within EYS idiom. This is not a criticism of those who work in or for the sector, but rather an observation of how thoughts and working contexts are shaped by deficit thinking through a pervasive public policy ideology. The concept of ‘bestowing on to’ a child has seeped into the very fabric of the EYS prompting concerns from the Independent Advisor interviewee that despite an increase in political talk around social

need, more children live in poverty. The danger being that decisions around Early Years are made in respect of individuals' professional heritages, meaning that teachers view children through the lens of teaching and learning, doctors' through the lens of health and medical practices, rather than decisions being made from the basis of the rights of a child. This idea resonates with Woodhead (2006), who advocates for a rights perspective, as children should no longer be perceived merely as "recipients of services or beneficiaries of protective measures" (p.28).

Democratic education is perceived to be the antithesis of deficit thinking, and is based in human rights and the rights of the child, with citizens as strong agentic collaborators.

Valencia (2010) warns that if moves are not made to encourage democratic education then deficit thinking will continue to thrive, and "structurally misdirect" education policy (p.7).

The suggestion of democratic education seems very sound in principle, but the practicalities of embedding this would seem unlikely as it would require a whole paradigm shift for successful implementation which does not bode well for the current EYS.

### **5.3.1.2 Path dependency**

Diagram 5.25 below indicates the concept of path dependency which is frequently referred to as "a faddish term" without "a clear meaning" (Pierson, 2004). That being said, path dependency aptly describes how we have arrived at the convoluted state of the current EYS; 'Policy A' is developed as the best solution to a problem at that given time, then when 'Policy A' doesn't work as well as planned, 'Policy B' is put in place to address the issues "left over from or caused by Policy A". When 'Policy B' turns out to not be as effective as it should be, 'Policy C' is implemented to "fix what went wrong with Policy B, which itself was designed to fix the negative effects of Policy A". This results in a loss of sight of the

initial problem that was being addressed when ‘Policy A’ was first put in place. During this process there is a build-up of “structures and bureaucracies” around these policies that “reinforce and entrench” particular perspectives and practices (Stevens 2015, p.2).

Reason	Research from Literature Review and Documentary sources			
<b>Path dependency</b>	<p><b>Moss and Penn (2003, p.x):</b> “There is a role for privately managed services, parent and community-run services and school-based services in the system of early childhood services but the system requires transformation of what we have, not more of the same; it requires clear direction to be given to service development, not leaving development to the free play of market forces. It requires recognition that services are social and cultural institutions, not mere purveyors of services to private consumers”</p> <p><b>DfE (2016, p.3):</b> “To deliver the extended 30-hour entitlement, and ensure that all children can continue to benefit from high quality early education, we need to get the funding right and ensure that early years providers are funded on a fair and sustainable basis. We have committed to increasing the average hourly rate paid to providers for delivering the entitlements and the £1 billion extra annual funding includes £300 million per year for a significant uplift to government funding rate”</p>	<p><b>Moss and Penn (2003, p.vii):</b> “Much of the responsibility for the critical situation we are now in must be assigned to the action or inaction of successive governments”</p> <p><b>Perry et al (2010, p.33):</b> “...the desire to make a mark may explain the popularity of structural proposals”.</p> <p><b>Perry et al (2010, p.36):</b> “noticed an inclination for Ministers to see changes and solutions as obvious, the application of a straightforward common-sense insight that they brought to matters. This reflects not just clear ideology – that choice and competition, transparency, or business techniques or central control must be applied to the problem at hand- but also a degree of self belief of politicians”</p> <p><b>Butler (2016, p.10):</b> “The early years landscape today contains a variety of services but the pattern of state-funded early education, private and voluntary services and patches of integrated provision remains intact”</p>	<p><b>Stevens (2015, AEI blog):</b> “...and all the while, we’ve built up structures and bureaucracies around these policies that reinforce and entrench particular views and practices, and shape our thinking about what makes sense to do next.”</p> <p><b>Cerna (2013, p.4):</b> “Once a country has set on a certain policy path, it remains difficult to change this path because actors and policies have become institutionalized which necessitates great efforts and costs by actors who desire change.”</p> <p><b>Stevens (2015, AEI blog):</b> “...what’s most striking in light of the history is the extent to which our current debates are confined to very well-worn ruts in the early childhood policy road. We’re spending a lot of time trying to do more of what we already know how to do, rather than defining our real goals and pursuing the most promising avenues to address those.”</p>	<p><b>Pierson (2004, p.10):</b> “...the dynamics of self-reinforcing or positive feedback processes in a political system”.</p> <p><b>OECD (2006, p.47):</b> “Early childhood policy is a complex field. It is concerned with providing education and care to young children but it is also linked with women’s employment and equality of opportunity; child development and child poverty issues; labour market supply; children’s health, social welfare and early education. In addition to more programmatic and qualitative issues, ECEC policy makers need to address issues of provision and access, family benefits, parental leaves from work, family-friendly measures, modes of funding, and the status and training of personnel”</p>

**Diagram 5.25 Reason 1.2 from themed cell Political and linked to Literature Review and Documentary Sources**

Path dependency either deeply embeds directionless principles, or partially or successfully uproots initiatives that have been established at great expense to provide invaluable services for children and families. The loss of sight of the original intention of the voucher system, which was introduced in 1996 and has since become shrouded under layers of political investment, was cited as a prime example. The undervaluing of the sector at public policy level leaves the EYS as just needing some “straightforward common-sense insight” (Perry et al, 2010). However the issue remains that Ministers may be assessing circumstances as they stand, and making value judgements about these circumstances without any real understanding of the sector and without insight into the historical origins of previous policies. When policy and practice become institutionalized and established as cultural convention, unpicking them in order to bring about a transformation requires phenomenal effort and what amounts to insurmountable costs in the current fiscal climate (Cerna, 2013).

There is also a danger that administrators who are not educators employ “dubious methods and practices” which serve to strengthen an “anti-intellectual climate” (Callahan, 1962). This certainly exists around the parameters of the EYS because of the pervasive misjudgement that working with young children does not require specialized knowledge (Powell and Dunn 1990, p.63). This misjudgement also feeds the idea that any elected member can make decisions about the Early Years as it really only requires common sense and nothing more. There is a pervading perception among a number of interviewees’ that there is a lack of understanding of the EYS, and possibly a resistance in accepting higher-level skill attributes like pedagogy, ethos and research as endemic in Early Years which effectually stymies the sector and keeps it ensconced in its current malaise.

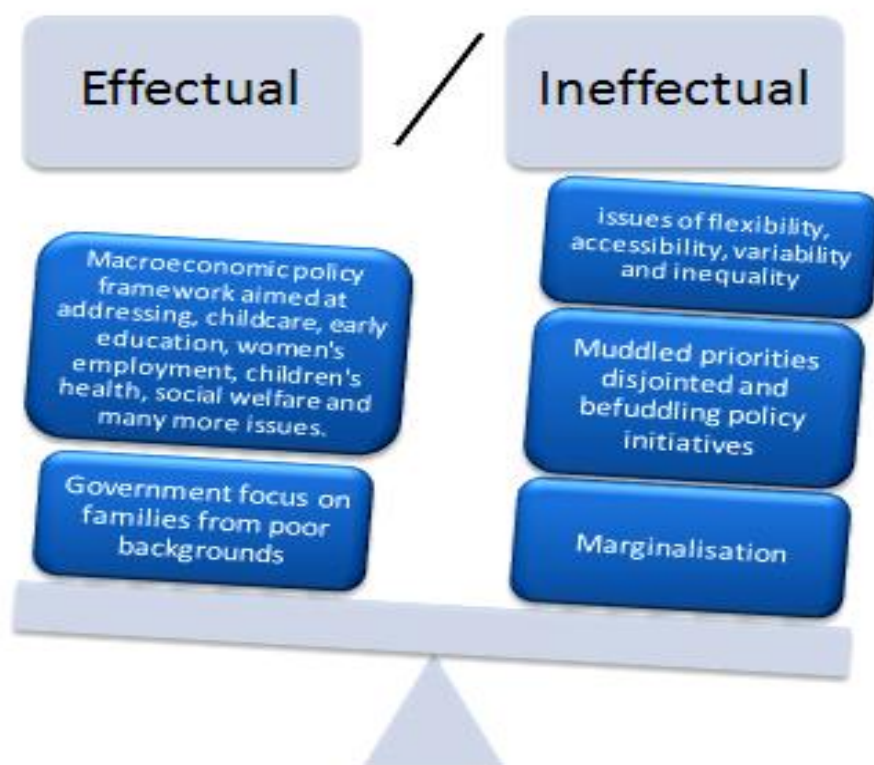
### 5.3.1.3 Summary: Effectual/Ineffectual functioning of the sector

The ‘language of deficiency’ is embedded in the EYS and it creates an almost elusive quality in categorising families as being ‘less than’. The persistency of the achievement gap may lie in the ‘protean nature’ of the deficit thinking that is ensconced in policies and practices from central government through to the point of delivery. This research found an embedded culture of deficit thinking in the EYS but this culture appears to have developed from a fast-changing agenda with an ever-increasing social remit and no national strategy. A set of terminologies that is based in deficit thinking is now associated with the Early Years offer and these appear to almost ‘roll off the tongue’ of those who work within the sector, with little thought of how they serve to marginalise fellow human beings. Deficit thinking equates poor academic achievement with low-income families and culturally and linguistically diverse communities and aims to “solve problems of social exclusion or inequalities in educational opportunity” (Swadener, 2010). This research found that the EYS has to be mindful of the subtleties of power-based roles that undermine reciprocity with children and families; the sector does have some expertise for assessing and mitigating deficit thinking but this expertise appears to lie within the higher-skills level of leadership and professionalism within the sector.

The crisis situation in the EYS can be explained as the result of successive governments acting on current knowledge without due regard to historical background. Successive governments are in the pattern of inheriting inefficient policies which were remediable, had available information been utilised to move the agenda on to a better path. The complexity of policy reform should however not be underestimated as explained by OECD (2006) which lists the societal circumstances that are being addressed during the process. This gives some context to why it is often easier to maintain the *status quo* than to invest in transformation of current systems. It appears that successive governments have based their policy decisions on

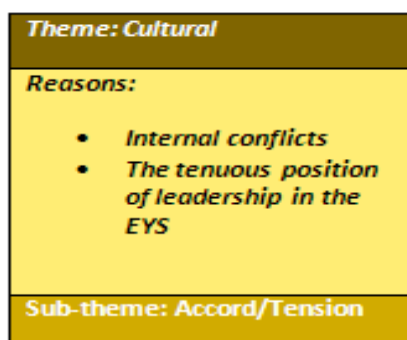


forecasts that perceive the EYS as a commodity which operates well enough as predominantly a childcare market place. Unfortunately, this allows for the tolerance of “good enough” Early Years provision (Butler, 2016). This is further exacerbated by path dependency, as issues of flexibility, accessibility, variability and inequality are not deemed important enough to warrant being addressed as a matter of urgency. Macroeconomic policy frameworks which continue to undermine the maintained sector in favour of the PVI sector have left the EYS with confused priorities, disjointed and befuddling policy initiatives, and fragmented funding, which have increasingly become more difficult to piece together at a microeconomic level. A continued commitment to a divided system in the EYS is one of the main ingredients of the current crisis situation. The sector is crying out for transformation, but Marshall (1995) is almost prophetic in concluding that “we cannot restructure a structure that is splintered at its roots” (p.15). The continuum ‘Effectual/Ineffectual’ assesses whether Early Years policy reform is robust enough to have the capacity to produce the stated political aims of the EYS. Deficit thinking coupled with the ongoing dynamic of path dependency is not the right combination for producing the desired effects for the sector, as is established by the findings of this research. The concluding evidence tips the scales towards ‘Ineffectual’ as depicted in Diagram 5.26 below.



*Diagram 5.26 Ineffectual EYS*

### 5.3.2 Theme: Reasons related to cultural issues



*Diagram 5.27 Cultural themed cell*

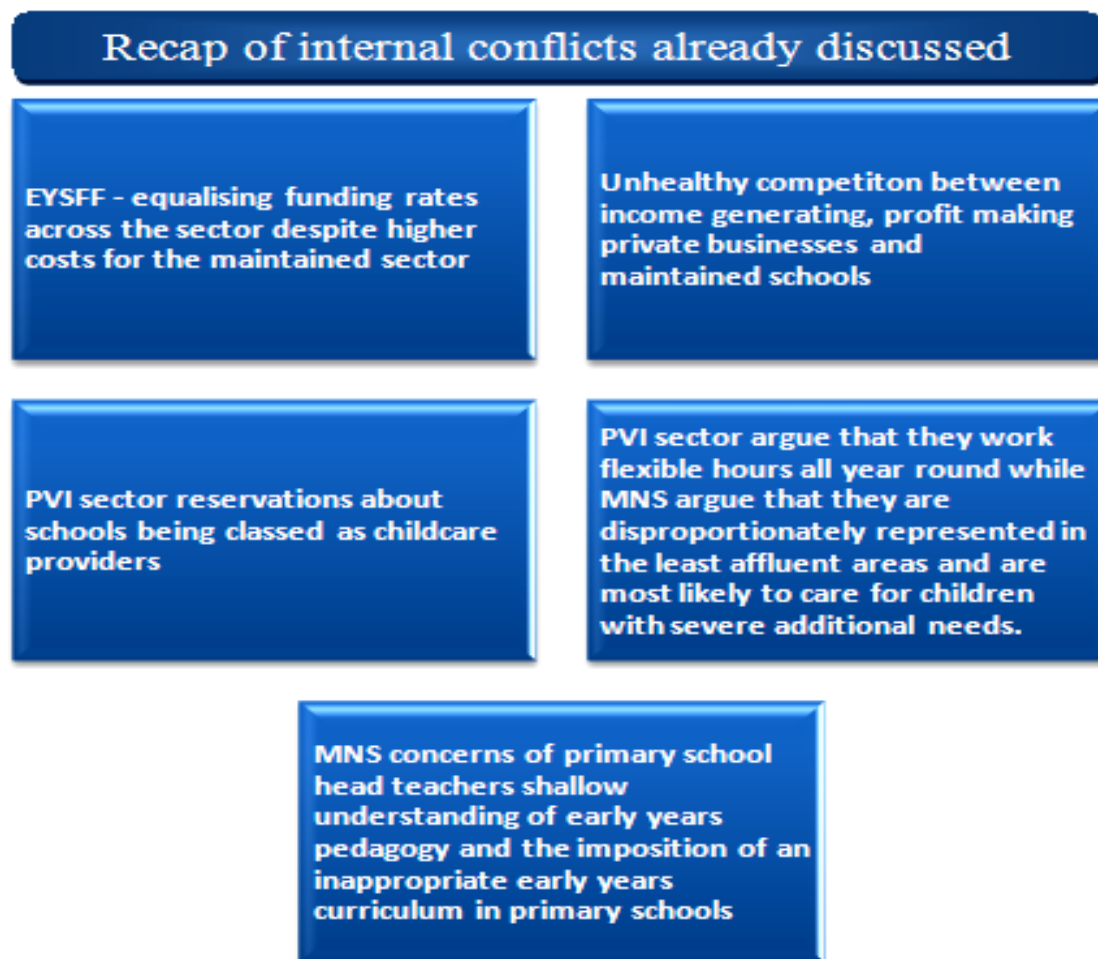
Diagram 5.27 depicts the 'Cultural' themed cell in RQ2 which will be discussed under the reasons 'Internal conflicts' and 'The tenuous position of leadership'.

### 5.3.2.1 Internal conflict

Reason	Research from Literature Review and Documentary sources			
<b>Internal conflicts</b>	<p><b>Early Education (2015, p.2):</b> "Nursery schools are caught between a rock and a hard place: they are required to employ a head and qualified teachers, and meet the costs of being a school without the economies of scale of a primary school; but they are only required to be funded on the same level as private and voluntary providers who can employ much lower qualified, cheaper staff"</p> <p><b>Butler and Rutter (2016, p.4):</b> "Childcare in the least affluent areas is dominated by maintained providers in schools, the majority of which do not offer day-care, supported by a limited patchwork of voluntary services and childminders. Families therefore often lack access to year-round, flexible day-care. This market particularly fails to meet the needs of parents who work atypical hours"</p>	<p><b>DfE (2016, p.5):</b> "The funding levels that different providers receive for delivering the same entitlement vary considerably and not necessarily for good reasons. Funding levels should be determined by relative costs of delivery (and influenced by market prices in local markets). Instead they are driven by historic spending patterns and widely varied / unpredictable council decisions. This is neither fair nor efficient ... It will also jeopardise manifesto delivery because it will not incentivise sufficient numbers of providers to deliver 30 hours of free childcare"</p> <p><b>Hopkin et al (2010, p.84):</b> "Maintained sector providers lead children to perform better in more cognitive measures, like the naming vocabulary assessment, but when it comes to social development measures, children perform better when they attend private or voluntary sector providers"</p>	<p><b>Dyer(2016, BERA Blog):</b> "Practitioners are reluctant to identify what level of knowledge is required for practicing without supervision"</p> <p><b>Kane (2008, p.41):</b> "There is repeated evidence from teachers, head teachers and student teachers that early childhood teachers are considered by other teachers as lowest on the educational ladder of status and respect"</p> <p><b>Simon et al (2015, p.3):</b> "Pay is particularly low for childcare workers employed in the private sector (£5.60 per hour compared with £7.80 per hour in the non-private sector, LFS 2012-14) which suggests a large proportion of under 21s and apprentices are employed in private sector early education and childcare provision."</p> <p><b>Upton (2016, p.4):</b> "there is a great deal of variability in prices paid by parents, and high rates of price inflation overall"</p>	<p><b>PriceWaterhouseCoopers (2006, p.32):</b> "Providers may struggle with costs related to staff reward and training, as the increased educational component of care increases the need for the recruitment of highly trained staff and the "continuous development" of staff already in place."</p> <p><b>Grenier (2006, p.159):</b> "What do nursery teachers actually do? If you are finding it hard to answer the question, perhaps that explains the current uncertainty in government"</p> <p><b>Butler and Rutter (2016, p.4):</b> "...schism between the maintained sector, where care is teacher-led, staff are paid within a public sector pay framework and work within their school's professional framework, and the private and voluntary sector, where a minority of settings are led by a qualified graduate, staff wages are considerably lower and working conditions are variable"</p>

**Diagram 5.28 Reason 2.1 from themed cell Cultural and linked to Literature Review and Documentary Sources**

The research findings indicate that the current EYS is dysfunctional, destabilised, incoherent and ineffectual, which are all having a debilitating and restrictive effect on the workforce (Fuller 2007, Dyer (2016). The sector is rife with internal conflicts, some of which are historical, and others which are emerging due to new policy initiatives. The diagram below recapitulates some of the internal issues that have already surfaced in previous sections.



**Diagram 5.29 Recap of internal conflicts**

Supervisory staff in day care provision are “almost universally qualified to at least Level 3” (Brind *et al* 2011, p.151) with staff generally having their highest qualification at Level 3 (p.143). However, the proportion of staff with at least a Level 6 qualification was substantially higher in school-based settings (p.145). This is not a level playing field for a sector that is purported as “delivering the same entitlement” throughout (DfE, 2016).

The depth of cultural conflict runs quite deep, as 52.50% of questionnaire respondents (of whom at least 3/4 overall were from the PVI sector), felt that Head Teachers were not essential for the Early Years. The PVI ex-manager interviewee goes a step further, by questioning whether there is a need for the Early Years maintained sector, if the PVI sector fulfils ‘all its little tick boxes according to statistics and Ofsted’. The problem however, is the

massive variability in PVI provision, alongside the growing numbers of children with complex educational needs which the PVI sector is not intrinsically equipped to deal with. This is substantiated by the MNS Head Teacher who states that her school is at ‘saturation point’, with high numbers of children with SEND who are signposted to the school because the curriculum is carefully developed to meet the unique needs of all children.

Some of these internal conflicts carry an overtone of professional superiority on the part of the maintained sector; the primary school Head Teacher interviewee felt that was how it was supposed to be, as staff in schools are better qualified as a legislative requirement. That was perceived by this interviewee as a simple statement of fact; however this research revealed that facts are frequently distorted by ‘political correctness’ which has cultivated a pervasive culture of seething resentment within the sector. There is a deep sense of not being able to be truthful about the professional divide within the sector, for fear of causing offence to those who are less qualified. This is clearly a socially constructed situation that has taken root, and plays out when a Head Teacher is reprimanded by a TA for defining roles within a team, as expressed by the MNS head interviewee or the retired MNS head interviewee who states that offence would be caused by explaining the difference between a manager’s role and a headship role. Political correctness prevails, due to the persistence of a narrow view of the expertise needed within the sector, and the resistance to widening the vocabulary used to describe the operational context of the EYS (Howard 2008). Feelings of resentment erupt when, for example, the term ‘outstanding’ is seen as a classification of equal measure, despite a difference in legislation, self-evaluations, resumés and expectations, which has cultivated ‘professional jealousy’ from the PVI sector as expressed by the retired nursery school Head Teacher.

The research findings indicate that non-specialist staff have inadvertently contributed to the loss of a creative curriculum and created an enforced ‘sit them down and drill them’ culture which appears to be a misguided attempt at school readiness for ‘when learning really matters’. This was a concern for MNS interviewees, who highlighted that many primary school Head Teachers are reliant on their Foundation Stage Leader without any way of knowing if their practice is sound, a fact that was supported by the primary school Head Teacher interviewee who expressed not being as confident in leading the Foundation Stage. There appears to be an tacit acceptance of quasi-professionalism regarding the leadership of Early Years in primary schools, which should raise concerns for performance management and the concept of “knowing” that is essential for Head Teachers to be able to contribute to “theoretical debates” for “critiquing assumptions about knowledge and skills of employees” (Fuller et al 2007, p.745). The research findings also revealed some instances within primary schools where there was a lack of awareness of the latest reviews of the EYFS, and no evidence in practice to indicate an awareness of changes to the welfare requirements. This was likened to ‘living in a bubble’ by the nursery school deputy head interviewee; this directly speaks to an almost unconscious disregard of the value of Early Years. Concerns were also raised by the retired nursery Head Teacher about nursery data rarely feeding into the school’s baseline data and whether Foundation Stage Leaders are on senior management teams in primary schools.

MNS were identified as strong, expansive working and learning environments (Fuller et al, 2007), with MNS interviewees regularly making reference to CPD and investing in staff to develop their skills and expertise. Constraints like ratios, lack of staff cover and cost were cited by PVI interviewees as barriers to CPD. This context, although understandable, definitely resonates with a restrictive working environment where staff training is secondary to the needs of

the organisation. This is candidly expressed by the owner/manager from the PVI sector who had concerns about ‘up-skilling’ staff, stating that it would be far easier for staff to leave and go to work in the maintained sector for more money and less working hours. Her comments carry an underlying sense of being caught in a ‘restrictive’ trap, rather than choosing to be there, as employers may feel compelled to “adopt more restrictive approaches to workforce development as a deliberate strategy” (Fuller et al, 2007) to keep employees operating as “technicians” carrying out “pre-approved tasks” that are more beneficial for organisational aims than for personal development.

The Independent Advisor perceived staff in the PVI sector as achieving ‘the tasks set within their caring role’, but displaying a ‘limited, compressed, tightly contained version’ of early education. Children need and deserve the best early education to thrive, not practitioners who are unable to articulate their roles as grounded in more complex pedagogical principles. This raises some concern that courses designed to raise professionalism within the sector are based on the acquisition of core competencies, rather than professional development. In the opinion of an ex-manager from the PVI sector, many Level 3 and unqualified staff have ‘great skills with children’, and effort should be expended in identifying people rather than relying on qualifications. Whilst the notion of talent identification might have some merit, this perception is symptomatic of the internal conflict between the PVI sector and the maintained sector, regarding one of the many grey areas that exist. ‘Great skills with children’ is a part of the ‘good-enough’ culture that surrounds the EYS. Affluent families’ purchase the best Early Years experience that money can buy, yet ‘good-enough’ appears to be fine for less affluent families. The Cross-sector practitioner clarified the scale of the affordability issue when she shared that she spent more on childcare fees than she did on her mortgage. Current circumstances are calling time on the EYS which is reliant on parents who are being priced out of the market. Frustration at trying to

navigate the system while competing with the PVI sector is strongly expressed by the Business Manager interviewee, who informed that charging parents more in demographic areas where deprivation is rife is not generally an option. Maintained sector PVI provision has specific challenges in remaining competitive whilst still paying out public sector salaries for highly qualified staff. It is therefore understandable that nursery schools would resent being paid the same rate as PVI's, while still needing to cap their prices to remain competitive yet the PVI sector can charge any fees they like, with fees to parents "outstripping inflation" over the past ten years (Upton, 2016).

The perspectives of interviewees as expressed above are symptomatic of "characteristics of oppressive cultural action" as described by Freire (1996). Freire's concept of the "fundamental dimension" of "divide and rule" clarifies the preservation of political hegemony through repressive methods of government bureaucracy, which serve to isolate and to create and deepen rifts, even while appearing to help and support. Interviewees are deeply submerged in a "focalised view" of their aspect of the EYS, rather than seeing the sector as a "dimension of a totality" which in turn hinders their ability to critically perceive the reality of the entire EYS. This lack of consciousness of 'totality' further drives the already present divisiveness that exists in the sector.



### 5.3.2.2 The tenuous position of leadership in the EYS

Reason	Research from Literature Review and Documentary sources			
<p><b>The tenuous position of leadership in the EYS</b></p>	<p><b>Nivala and Hujala (2002, p.92):</b> "Does the contradiction between 'hard' and 'soft' leadership rise from an unclear definition of the mission of childcare for different levels of leadership? Or is the status of children, their needs and early education too low to be dealt with on a macro level and used as language in decision making. Do people at the macro level of leadership feel that educational leadership is like 'talking rubbish'?"</p> <p><b>Rodd (2006, p.4):</b> "Leadership is a term that is bandied about in numerous arenas and professions, but it is one which still is discussed infrequently in relation to early childhood' especially in reference to the impact of 'rapid change' in the EYS where there is little or no reference to 'leadership within the profession that could facilitate the gradual and systematic implementation of appropriate changes"</p> <p><b>Tolley et al (2008.p.5):</b> "...micro political skills, coalition-building, psychotherapeutic interventions to remove any 'sick' relationship patterns, and manipulation of symbols"</p>	<p><b>Rodd (2006, p.182):</b> "The role of the leader has become instrumental in managing change in organisations, with leaders regarded as orchestrators of change' but 'the early childhood field continues to experience acute and chronic change where pressures for rapid and extensive changes have occurred over an extended period of time"</p> <p><b>Siraj-Blatchford and Manni (2007, p.10):</b> "The leader who develops contextual literacy demonstrates an understanding that schools are dynamic organisms, continually evolving, rather than static organisations. It also requires a recognition that education contexts differ at every level; they differ between individual children, families, local communities, defined by socio-economic class, ethnicity, etc. With fluctuating staff morale and energy levels, the arrival of new staff and students and the departure of others amongst numerous other factors, schools continually have to adjust and make room for new energies, ideas and conflicts"</p>	<p><b>Rodd (2006, p.5):</b> "Leadership in early childhood appears to be a phenomenon that has been delved into off and on for the past 30 years, yet it continues to be an enigma"</p> <p><b>Cooke and Lawton (2008, p.32):</b> "Low pay, low status and the high proportion of women in the workforce interact and reinforce one another"</p> <p><b>Butler (2016, p.23):</b> "The absence of leadership for practitioners in the early years is felt in an imbalance in public debates – in the media and in political discussion – about early years policy and funding, which focus primarily on political issues such as childcare fees and setting-level issues such as financial sustainability"</p> <p><b>Kalitowski (2016, p.4):</b> "...the overall proportion of graduates working in the PVI early years sector in England remains low at around 13%"</p> <p><b>Butler (2016, p.9):</b> "One defining tension in early years policy, for example, has been between the imperative of affordable care and the need for investment in well trained, well paid educators"</p>	<p><b>Marshall (1995, p.8):</b> "Our society is going through intense social and political upheavals, and this has left virtually all institutions and institutional leaders confused, isolated, and sometimes endangered"</p> <p><b>Rodd (2006, p.5):</b> "...nor have they drawn attention to the evolving thinking about the nature of leadership in the early childhood field in particular. This may be attributed, at least in part, to the apparent vagueness and haziness about what is meant by leadership in early childhood and its practical relevance"</p> <p><b>NUT (2010, p.5):</b> "...it is the role of the head teacher and deputy head teacher in maintained nursery settings which is most under threat from the introduction of the EYSFF, as the DCSF has advised local authorities to review senior staffing structures as part of their preparatory work for the EYSFF. 'If this expertise is lost it can never be replaced. Leadership is seen as crucial to raising standards within the primary and secondary sectors; it should be no different for the early years sector"</p> <p><b>Mistry and Sood (2012, p.28):</b> "EY leaders seem reluctant to take on whole-school leadership roles. Part of this reason may be that EY leadership in some primary schools is not given enough importance"</p>

*Diagram 5.30 Reason 2.2 from themed cell Cultural and linked to Literature Review and Documentary Sources*

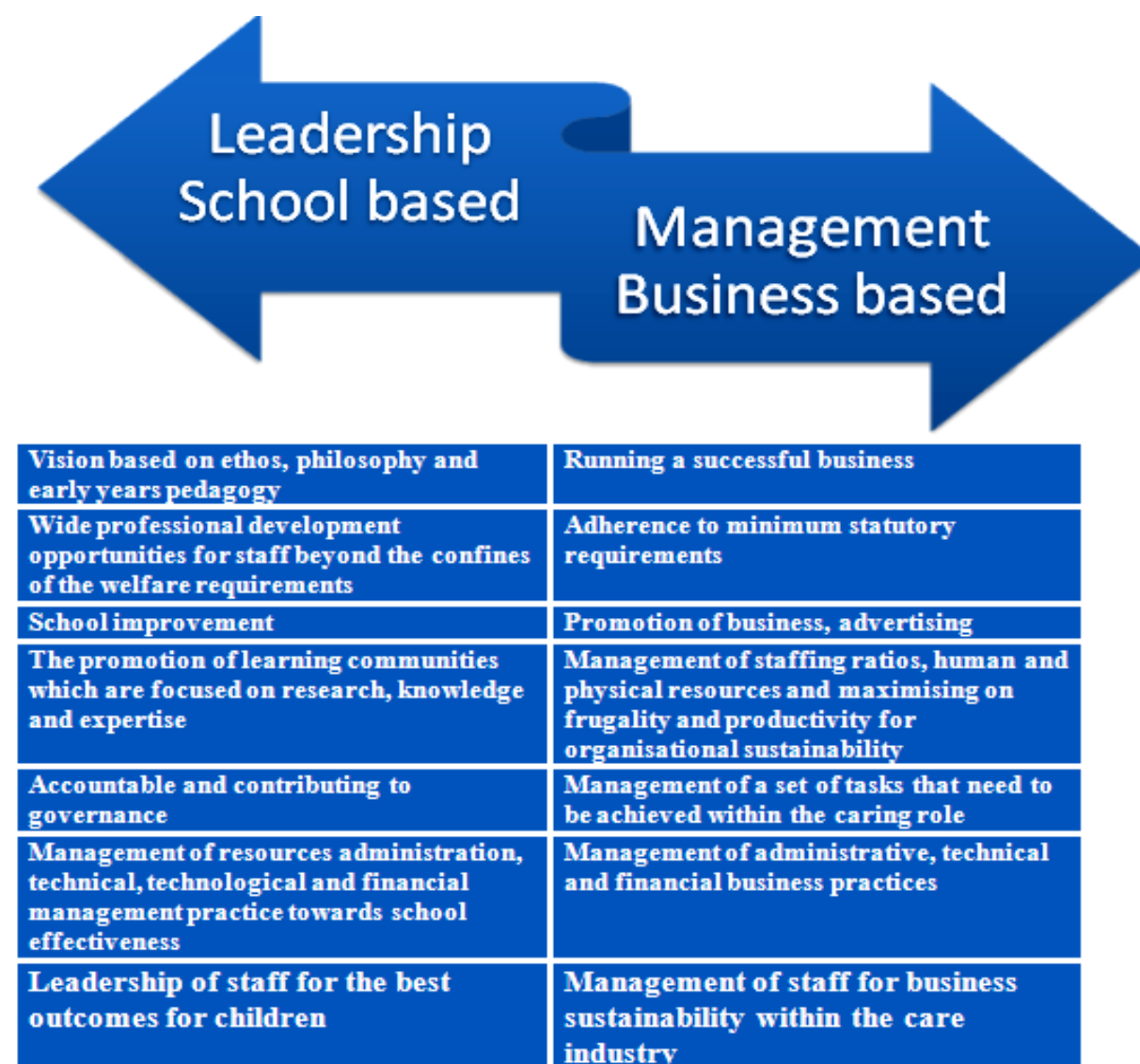
The divergence of leadership on a macro-level from leadership on a micro-level in the EYS is an aspect of the contention surrounding the tenuous position of leadership in the sector. On a macro-level the EYS is focused on policy issues, finance and economic policy and on a micro-level the focus is on care, education, child development and supervision (Nivala and Hujala, 2002, Butler, 2016). The EYS carries heavy social reform responsibility and effective leadership of said EYS is of significant importance on both macro-and micro-levels, yet the context of leadership in the EYS is ill-defined, arbitrary and seemingly imbued with the underpinning perception that working with young children ‘is not rocket science’ and ‘anybody can do it’. There is a fair amount of political rhetoric surrounding professionalism in the sector; despite all this, leadership in the EYS is described as an “enigma” and a “phenomenon” that has been probed periodically over the last 30 years (Rodd, 2006).

The position of leadership in the EYS is subject to “dramatically conflicting forces” where “things are getting better, and things are getting worse” (Senge 2006, p.xvi). This statement feels particularly poignant when conflicting forces play out spectacularly, and allows for “frenzy and chaos” which undermines the development of values-based systems and “opens the door for opportunistic grabs as individual power and wealth” (p. xvii). The EYS is inundated with public issues that are derived from well-intentioned policies as a result of policymakers’ focus on obvious symptoms, and not on underlying causes. This produces “short-term benefit but long term malaise” (p.19). Documentary sources highlight nursery school headships as a strong position in Early Years leadership, with high qualifications and expertise in child development and Early Years education; however, the research findings reveal that nursery heads are not popular within the sector, despite their obvious contributions to its health. There is no question that leadership is seen as vital to raising standards in the primary and secondary school sectors, but there is some struggle with the concept in MNS.

However, the rapid pace of policy reform in the EYS requires leadership that can “facilitate the gradual and systematic implementation of appropriate changes” (Rodd 2006, p.4). The concept of “formal authority shackled by informal power” (West 1999, p.193) is a symptom of the tenuous position of leadership in the PVI sector, as expressed by the Owner/manager interviewee. Leadership that merely requires enough ability to check off the list of requirements that have been imposed on the EYS is a frightening concept. This confirms why higher-level skills are perceived as unnecessary for the EYS and why higher-level professionals shun EYS roles and it also explains why the ‘technician’ role has become embedded in the EYS.

Siraj-Blatchford and Manni (2007) speak about the predominantly female workforce, and the prevailing societal male perspective of leadership. Butler (1988) explains that we exist in a culture where “the false universal of ‘man’” is generally “coextensive with humanness itself” and bringing “female specificity into visibility” has been about rewriting “the history of culture in terms which acknowledge the presence, the influence, and the oppression of women” (p.523). Butler however states that there has been a lack of eagerness to distinguish this oppression in regard to the persistent reproduction of gender identities “which sustain discrete and binary categories of man and woman”. Butler explains, “my situation does not cease to be mine just because it is the situation of someone else, and my acts, individual as they are, nevertheless reproduce the situation of my gender, and do that in various ways” (p.523). In agreement with Freire (1996), there is a need to acknowledge the personal within the political, whilst acknowledging that it is the acts of human beings that create and maintain oppressive conditions. Therefore transformation of the sector needs to acknowledge the predominantly female workforce, and whatever goes with that but also that the concept of leadership of itself is without gender and as such, should not expect more or less of

leadership of the sector based on gender; human beings, whatever gender, are capable of leadership. The gender debate undoubtedly affects the EYS but it also positions the EYS in a much wider totality where the ecology that needs to be disturbed to bring about transformation is far greater than the sector, and requires commitment for change from both within and outside it. Siraj-Blatchford and Manni (2007) also speak about the concepts of leadership and management being viewed as separate instead of parallel. Interestingly, the research findings picked up ‘leadership’ and ‘management’ as separate factions in the sector. Strong leadership was evident in the maintained sector, and strong management was more evident in the PVI sector (see Diagram 5.31 below).



*Diagram 5.31 Expressions of leadership and management within the current EYS*

The findings highlighted that the context of management was ensconced in the maintained sector in a deep and meaningful way, but educational leadership generally appeared to be superficial and ‘piecemeal’ in the PVI sector. Leading a school which has no need to turn over a profit is very different to managing a business to maximise profit, despite political goals and the politically correct promotion of the entire sector being the same. Research participants’ perspectives across the sector tell a story of conflicting expectations, differing legislation and contradictory initiatives, which is described by the retired nursery school Head Teacher interviewee as ‘being thrown into an arena without a referee and any agreed rules of engagement’. Reviewed literature resounds with the overwhelming need to define the position of leadership in the EYS and reconcile the importance of strong and role-relevant leadership/management in regard to the overall EYS purpose. This struck resonance with research participants, sadly though, not in a way that indicates a conjoined agreement across the sector.

It would appear that the confusion surrounding leadership roles in different organisational structures has resulted in unrealistic expectations for leaders in the EYS. The ability to plan, influence and implement change are key elements of leadership in the EYS (Rodd, 2006) which is wholly achievable when change is allowed to go through the measured pace of “initiation, implementation and institutionalisation” (Fullan, 2001). However, the pace of change intensifies when circumstances are at a critical level, and the EYS has been experiencing the pressures of “rapid and extensive’ change over a protracted period of time (Rodd 2006, p.182). There is evidence that constant change is taking an emotional toll on both leaders and staff, as expressed by the primary school deputy head interviewee who speaks of ‘the frustration of change’ creating ‘a spiral of dissatisfaction and depression’.

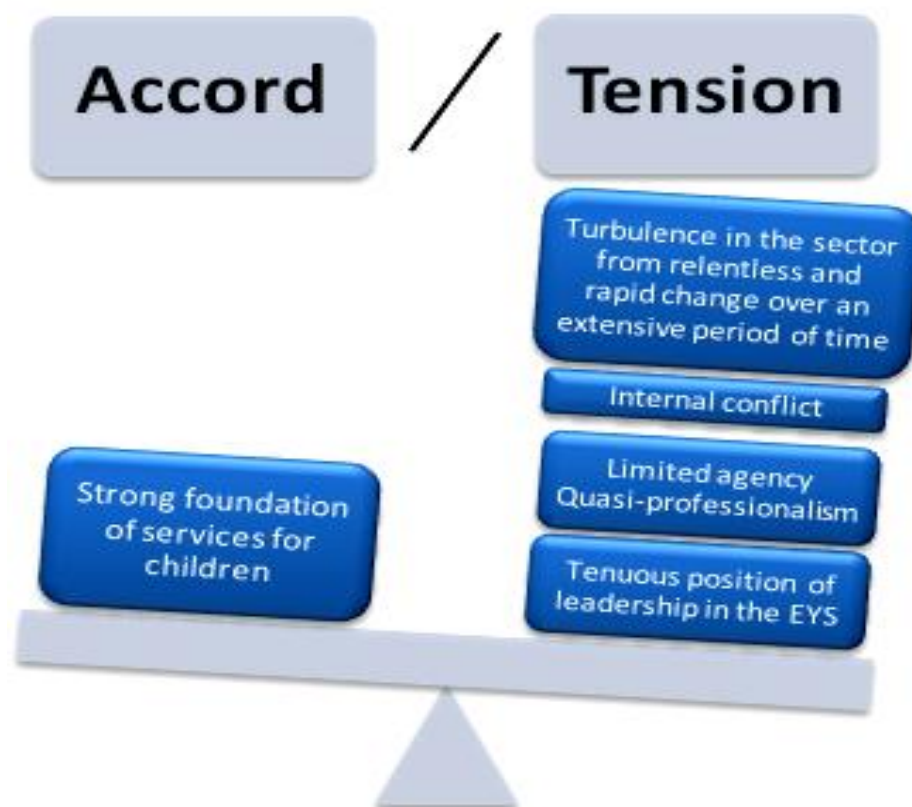
### **5.3.2.3 Summary: Accord/Tension in the sector**

The EYS is rife with confused priorities and internal conflicts; despite the PVI sector being the government's preferred provider of Early Years services, this research indicates that they feel undervalued. Nursery schools are highly successful; however this research indicates that they also feel undervalued and are disappearing from the Early Years landscape at an alarming rate. The research highlights Early Years education in primary schools as needing to be better resourced, and that the profile of Early Years generally needs to be raised, but also indicates that teachers who work in nursery classes also feel undervalued. Clearly something has gone drastically wrong. The EYS has an educational remit, but is also in the unique position in which private businesses deliver a considerable quantity of nursery education, despite being subject to less stringent quality requirements than the maintained sector. Nursery schools are schools, and as such are structured to fulfil certain legal requirements. They are publicly-funded bodies but are now funded at the same rate as the PVI sector. The PVI sector is predominantly composed of profit-making businesses but they are publicly-funded at the same rate as maintained sector schools. All of this symbolises the inevitability of internal conflicts within the sector.

Applying Freire's wisdom of "organised disorder" to this situation serves to illuminate the toxic dynamics in the current EYS. The sector, being submerged in its own reality, has internalised the government's conceptualisations, and is thus unable to discern the effects of political hegemony. But it is nonetheless "chafing" from these effects, which often times produce the response of "horizontal violence"; lashing out at fellow victims (Freire 1996, p.44). Freire states that to underestimate the importance of subjectivity in the process of transformation is both "naive and simplistic". However, practitioners need to stir their submerged consciousness by acquiring a "critical awareness" of their current circumstances if

they are ever going to successfully agitate for the transformation that the sector needs.

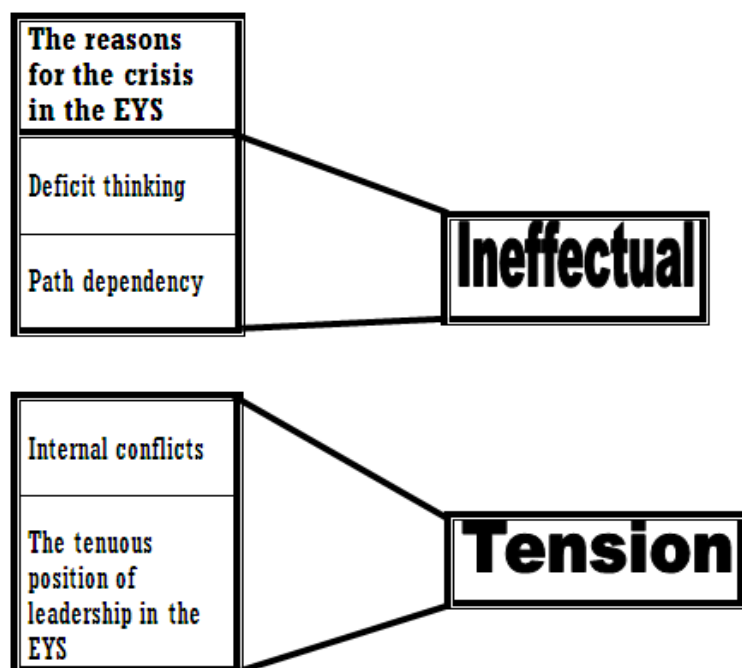
Leaders in both contexts were passionate about their roles, but they are currently focused on isolated aspects of the sector. Leaders in the sector are ‘battle-worn’ from managing the turbulence that is present in the current EYS. There is a sense of helplessness exuding from EYS leaders when attempting to manage the ‘organised disorder’ which is being imposed on the sector at such speed that there is little time to think, process and plan, resulting in the crisis state of constantly reacting to the stimulus of change. The position of leadership in the EYS needs to be defined and clarified to help alleviate the crisis situation, as well as to de-escalate the internal conflicts that are currently present in the sector. The continuum Accord/Tension explores the culture of people who work in and with the EYS. The toxicity of internal conflicts, plus the tenuous position of leadership is symptomatic of a sector that is in crisis. The concluding evidence tips the scales towards pervading ‘Tension’ within the EYS as indicated in Diagram 5.32 below.



**Diagram 5.32 Pervading tension in EYS**

### 5.3.3 Summary of Discussion of Findings for RQ2

Diagram 5.33 below depicts the reasons why we have a leadership crisis in the EYS and concludes that the current EYS is ‘Ineffectual’ and suffering from ‘Tension’.



*Diagram 5.33 The reasons and consequent circumstances surrounding the current EYS*

**5.4 RQ3: which strategies could be developed to address the perceived leadership crisis in the EYS?**

Which strategies could be developed to address the leadership crisis in the EYS?
<i>Theme: Paradigmatic</i>
<b>Recommendations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A clear strategy for the EYS</i></li> <li>• <i>The management of a strong pedagogic approach within the sector</i></li> <li>• <i>Using philosophy to help define the sector</i></li> <li>• <i>Isonomic rigour based on a defined EYS offer</i></li> <li>• <i>Conditions that should be endemic within the sector</i></li> </ul>
<b>Sub-theme: Regress/Progress</b>

*Diagram 5.34 Paradigmatic themed cell*



Diagram 5.34 depicts the ‘Paradigmatic’ themed cell in RQ3 which have been grouped under the headings; ‘Strategic’, ‘Pedagogic’, ‘Philosophic’, ‘Isonomic’ and ‘Endemic’

#### 5.4.1 Theme: Recommendations on paradigmatic strategies

Recommendations	Research from Literature Review and Documentary sources			
<b>Strategies</b>	<p><b>Woodhead (2006, p.4):</b> “A human rights perspective reframes conventional approaches to theory, research policy and practice in ways that fully respect young children’s dignity, their entitlements and their capacities to contribute to their own development and to the development of services”</p> <p><b>Butler and Rutter (2016, p.6):</b> “The most effective approach to funding pre-school childcare is supply-side funding, where investment is made directly in services. This approach provides the means to offer universal access to services and effectively shape quality, affordability and flexibility”</p> <p><b>Andrews <i>et al</i> (2017,p.20):</b> “The authors conclude that increasing the quantity or flexibility of support targeted at those in need would be more cost-effective than providing universal entitlements”</p>	<p><b>Moss and Penn (2003,p.2):</b> “...a national policy on early childhood services based on a considered, informed, sustained and broad public vision.”</p> <p><b>Butler (2016, p.4):</b> “The Department for Education should develop a new workforce settlement for early years staff who do not have a graduate qualification, with a clear progression framework and continuing professional development standards”</p> <p><b>Early Education (2015, p.3):</b> “Government should promote the expansion of nursery schools into those local areas where they are not currently present – in particular the most deprived areas, to mitigate market failure and recognise the greater need for quality early education to close the gap for the most disadvantaged children”</p> <p><b>Butler (2016, p.7):</b> “...increasing the number of qualified early years special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) to provide advice and support to settings”</p>	<p><b>Early Education (2015, p.3):</b> “The expertise of maintained nursery schools in providing suitable places for children with SEND, and sharing their expertise with the sector, must be protected and enhanced”</p> <p><b>Early Education (2015, p.3):</b> “Urgent action needs to be taken to stabilise funding for maintained nursery schools at a level sufficient to cover costs of a full-time head teacher and appropriate numbers of qualified teachers, through binding guidance to local authorities”</p> <p><b>Butler (2016, p.4):</b> “The Department for Education should re-commit to a vision of graduate-led early education and childcare by making teaching in the early years a priority area for teacher recruitment and incorporate early years into the Teacher Supply Model”</p> <p><b>Butler and Hardy (2016, p.38):</b> “Use a simple formula that offers sufficient funding to enable settings to deliver high quality care. This does not mean the same amount of funding is suitable for all settings of the same type – settings caring for a high proportion of children from disadvantaged backgrounds should receive additional resources”</p>	<p><b>Butler (2016, p.4):</b> “Ofsted should consider publishing online the separate grade for early years provision in schools”</p> <p><b>Butler (2016, p.7):</b> “...providing financial incentives for settings to provide training and professional development for non-graduate staff in settings with a low turnover”</p> <p><b>Butler and Rutter (2016, p.5):</b> “Replacing the ineffective Childcare Act 2006 ‘sufficiency duty’ with a properly funded entitlement to childcare for pre-school children from age one extending across a full day and for 48 weeks of the year”</p> <p><b>Butler and Hardy (2016,p.7):</b> “...strengthen the strategic role of local authorities in closing the gap in the early years”</p> <p><b>Butler (2016, p.6):</b> “...creating an ambitious business development programme to support social enterprises and foster those business models that are most successful in offering high quality care to diverse communities”</p>

*Diagram 5.35 Recommendations from themed cell Paradigmatic and linked to Literature Review and Documentary Sources*

### 5.4.1.1 A clear strategy for the EYS

#### Strategic

*“Valuing Early Years education as a stage in its own right: in terms of turning school-readiness on its head; in terms of valuing children as individuals; and the legal rights that they're suppose to have under conventions.” (Deputy Head, Nursery School)*

*“A part of a seamless strategy from ideally birth, but probably, or actually if I could keep that school a bit longer, six until eighteen, yea. That would be my overarching strategy in that it wasn't an Early Years strategy; it was part of the overall education and learning strategy.” (Owner/Manager, PVI Setting)*

*“A social economic model of early education which brings children's outcomes way into adulthood; it's the value of the predictors of the model from the age of two, like the end of child poverty. So for me the model is driven by systems and not by people.” (Independent Advisor, Cross-sector)*

*“There needs to be an element of working together while maintaining competition. I feel people need to share, be open and share their philosophies so that a group consensus can become in terms of what (Local Authorities) believe Nursery Schools should look like, how they should be publicised, how they work together with nursery classes and PVI's.” (Deputy Head, Nursery School)*

Diagram 5.36 Strategic recommendations from Research participants

#### Strategic

- A national strategy for early years based on supply side funding (Moss and Penn 2003, Butler and Rutter, 2016)
- Define the EYS as a 'dimension of a totality' thereby understanding the EYS as a totality in itself as well as a part of other totalities which in turn is a part of the bigger picture. This will allow the government to have an informed overview of the sector and allow for alignment of all the disconnected and disjointed policy initiatives that presently exist in the EYS (Freire, 1996).
- Strengthen the role of Local authorities to enable them to work with and broker support in raising standards across the EYS (Butler and Hardy, 2016).
- Promote the expansion of nursery schools and stabilise their funding at a level that is appropriate for retaining head teachers and teachers (Early Education, 2015).
- Re-invest in Early Intervention Services and secure the future of integrated services including a properly funded entitlement to childcare for pre-school children from age one extending across a full day and for 48 weeks of the year (Butler and Rutter, 2016).
- Increasing the 'quantity or flexibility of support' for those in need would reduce 'dead weight' costs and would be more cost-effective than continuing to provide universal entitlements (Butler and Rutter, 2016, Andrews *et al*, 2017).

Diagram 5.37 Strategic recommendations adapted from research findings, Literature Review and Documentary sources.

#### 5.4.1.2 The management of a strong pedagogic approach within the sector

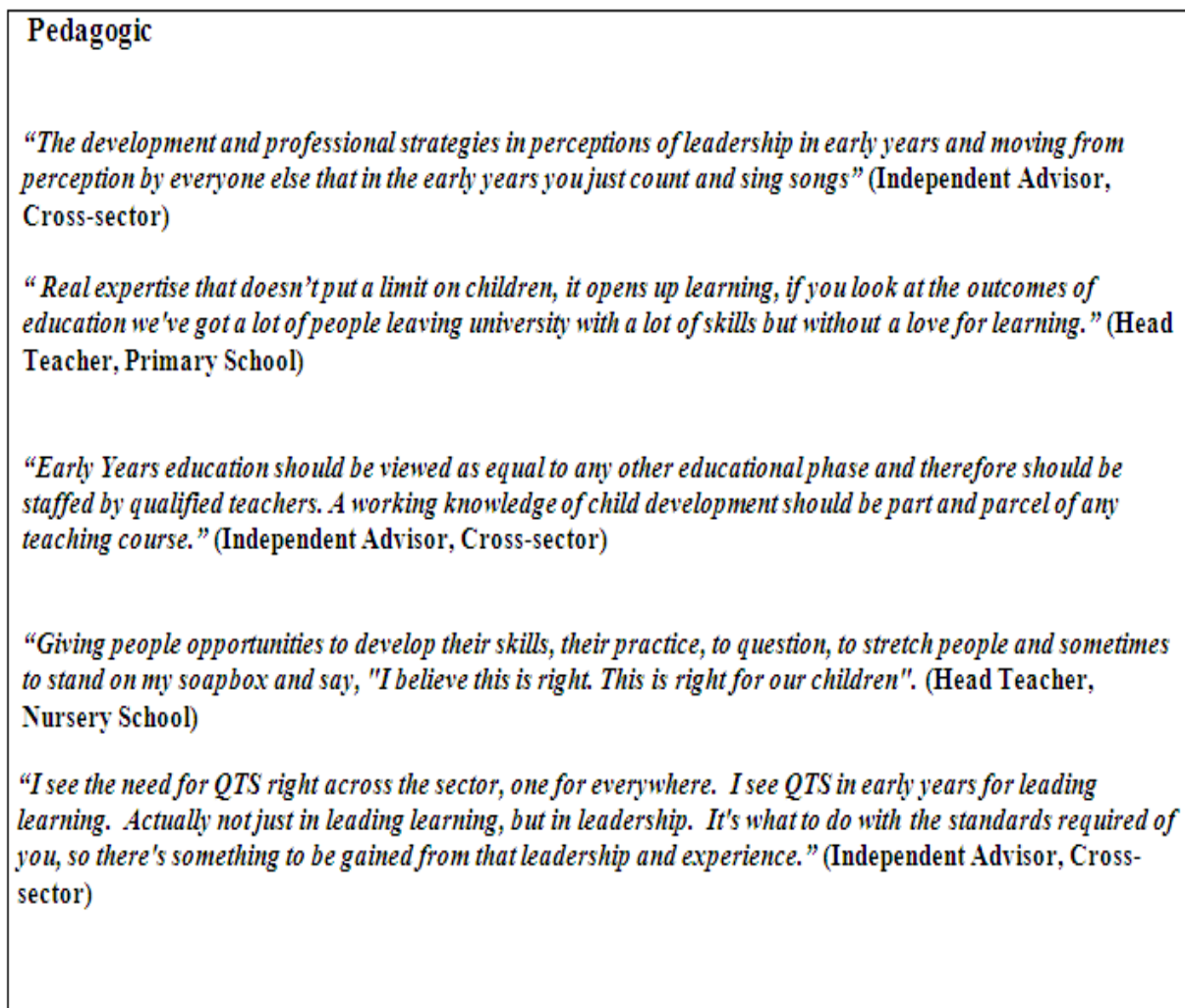


Diagram 5.38 Pedagogic recommendations from Research participants

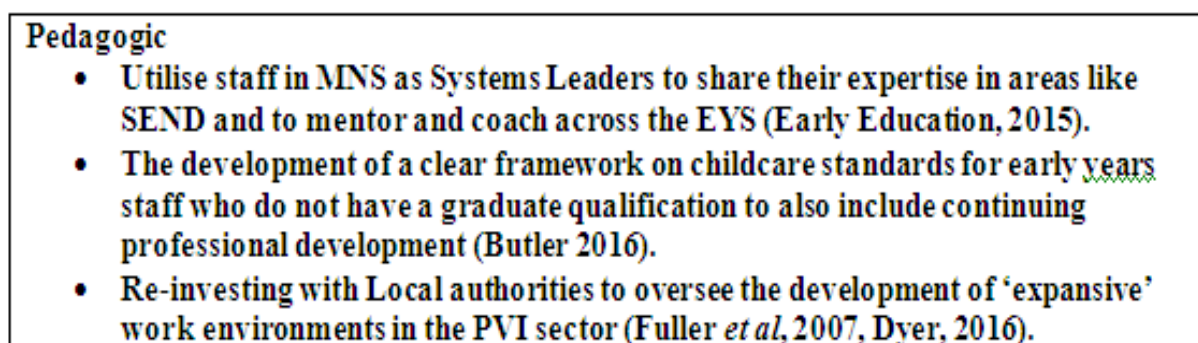


Diagram 5.39 Pedagogic recommendations adapted from research findings, Literature Review and Documentary sources

### 5.4.1.3 Using philosophy to help define the sector

#### Philosophic

*“I would define it better based on need; parents and children, and I would look at some of the models that are working better in other countries and adapt the best bits for the UK context.” (Retired Head Teacher, Primary School)*

*“My ideal model would be more European and starting formal school later and giving them more time in the Early Years, maybe until age seven or eight.” (Early Years practitioner, Cross-sector)*

*“I would build more nursery schools or else try to embed the nursery school approach in Primary nursery classes and make it mandatory for increased funding in the foundation stage in primary schools.” (Nursery class teacher, Primary School)*

*“To make sure that there was a nursery school attached to every school if there was all the money in the world. Every child should have the opportunity to be able to go to a nursery school and if needed for a parent, a full time place and extended school day as well if there was all the money there as well for the child” (Independent Consultant, Cross Sector)*

*Diagram 5.40 Philosophic recommendations from Research participants*

#### Philosophic

- Reframe ‘conventional approaches to theory, research policy and practice’ from a human rights perspective that fully respects the rights of the child (Woodhead, 2006).
- Develop a programme to support social enterprises to foster business models that need to utilise a pedagogical approach (Butler, 2016).
- Renounce the ‘language of deficiency’ that pervades early years services. Children should not be viewed as solely the ‘recipients of services, beneficiaries of protective measures or subjects of social experiments’ (Woodhead, 2006, Swadener, 2010).

*Diagram 5.41 Philosophic recommendations adapted from research findings, Literature Review and Documentary sources*



#### 5.4.1.4 Isonomic rigour based on a defined EYS offer

##### Isonomic

*"It has to have an appropriate level of funding to make it fair and that's not the cheapest funding, that's the best funding, the most funding we can get for the best outcomes of our families and children. I think for certain aspects of the role there should be standardised funding and for additionality in terms of the education there should be more."* (Retired Head Teacher, Nursery School)

*"The rigour involved around all provision should be standardised because I do think there are massive differences in the expectations in terms of capability and outcomes between different settings and I do think they need to standardise for paying people, for funding people at the same rates for example in the PVT's and also in wraparound provision, I do think that it is quite important that we have that."* (School Business Manager, Cross Sector)

*Diagram 5.42 Isonomic recommendations from Research participants*

##### Isonomic

- Simplify the funding formula to offer sufficient funding to enable high quality provision for all settings, the amount of funding should recognise operational context with additional funding for settings who support high numbers of children who are entitled to special rights and settings that work with children and families who are existing in difficult circumstances (Butler and Hardy, 2016).
- The government should commit to supply-side funding as a means of offering universal access to early years provision while creating the opportunity to effectively shape and standardise 'quality, affordability and flexibility of the early years offer' (Butler and Rutter, 2016).

*Diagram 5.43 Isonomic recommendations adapted from research findings, Literature Review and Documentary sources*

#### 5.4.1.5 Conditions that should be endemic within the sector

<p><b>Endemic</b></p> <p><i>"I think that maybe recruitment of staff should be a bit more stringent."</i> (Room Leader, PVI Setting)</p> <p><i>"There's an awful lot of people out there with Level 3's - and probably even unqualified - who have got great skills with children, so it's about identifying people."</i> (Ex-manager, PVI setting)</p> <p><i>"I would increase the status of Early Years teaching and leadership."</i> (Deputy Head, Primary School)</p> <p><i>"Recognising the value of Early Years within training modules such as NPQH, NPQICL."</i> (Deputy Head, Nursery School)</p> <p><i>"I think we need to market ourselves on what we do much, much better and the impact of what we do; I think we need to make that more visible to other audiences as well."</i> (Head Teacher, Nursery School)</p>
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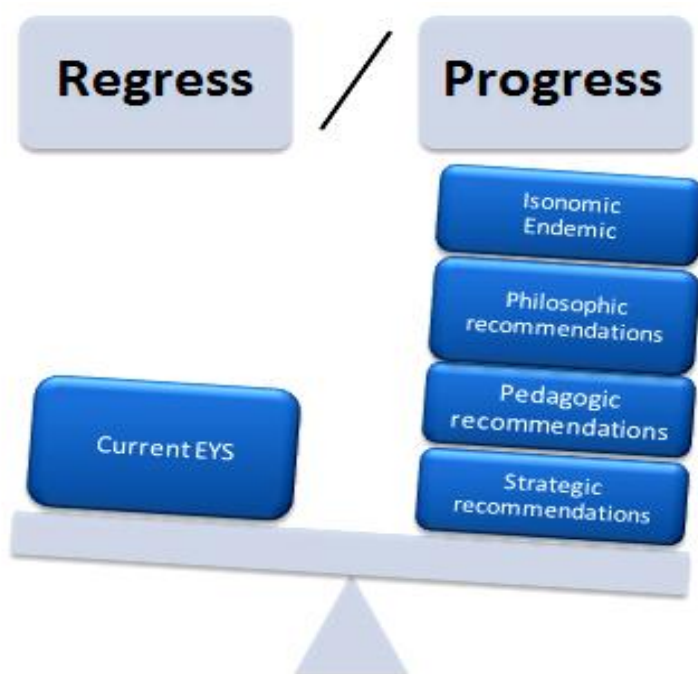
Diagram 5.44 Endemic recommendations from Research participants

<p><b>Endemic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eradicate quasi-professionalism in early years in the primary sector by ensuring that head teachers have the capacity 'to contribute to theoretical debates about types of knowledge' as well as having 'a basis for critiquing assumptions about knowledge and skills of employees' (Fuller <i>et al</i>, 2007).</li> <li>• Ensure the early years is a priority in head teacher recruitment and incorporate early years into the Teacher Supply Model (Butler, 2016).</li> <li>• Ofsted should publish the grade of early years provision in primary schools (Butler, 2016).</li> <li>• Define the knowledge and skills necessary for practitioners at different levels in the EYS (Fuller <i>et al</i>, 2007).</li> <li>• Eradicate pseudo-professional status' that purport to be 'equal but different' and revisit Nutbrown's recommendations for an Early years Specialist route to QTS in the early years (Nutbrown, 2012).</li> <li>• Develop training modules and shadowing opportunities to support staff in the PVI sector to go beyond 'the materiality of their role' especially for staff who are 'stepping up' vocationally in their early years roles. This will enable the staff to move past the status of 'technicians' who carry out preset roles into developing their capacity as 'creative and critical experts' (Cooke and Lawton, 2008, Dyer, 2016).</li> </ul>
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Diagram 5.45 Endemic recommendations adapted from research findings, Literature Review and Documentary sources

#### 5.4.1.6 Summary: Regress/Progress in the sector

Both the recommendations from research participants', and those of the researcher, are observations that have been derived through experience and seem appropriate for the transformation of the current EYS which is in a critical state. The continuum 'Progress/Regress' explores the recommendations of research participants in conjunction with recommendations from the reviewed literature and documentary sources. The concluding evidence tips the scales towards 'Progress' within the EYS, as depicted in Diagram 5.46 below.



*Diagram 5.46 Progress in the EYS*

#### 5.4.1.7 Summary of Discussion of Findings for RQ3

Diagram 5.47 below depicts recommendations regarding the leadership crisis in the EYS and concludes that these recommendations would help to alleviate the crisis situation that exists in the current EYS.

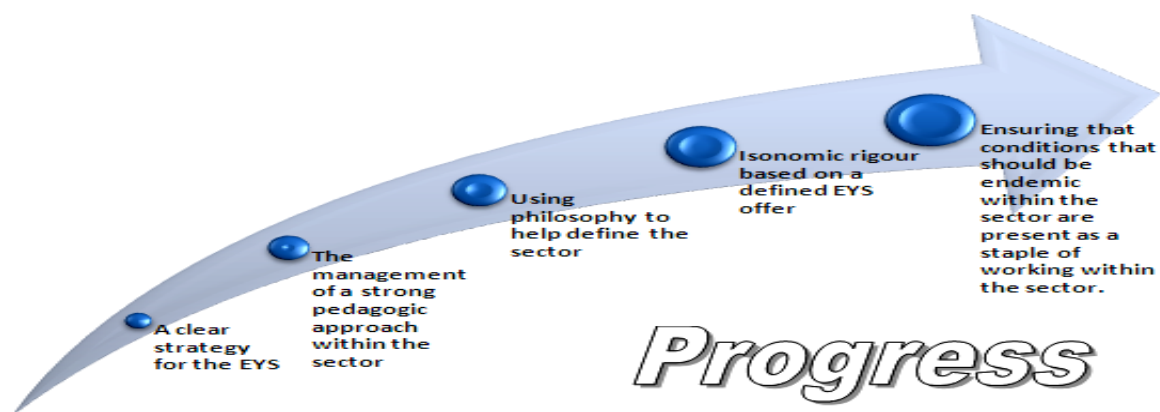


Diagram 5.47 Recommendations for the EYS. 'The transforming agenda'

## 5.5 Summary of Chapter

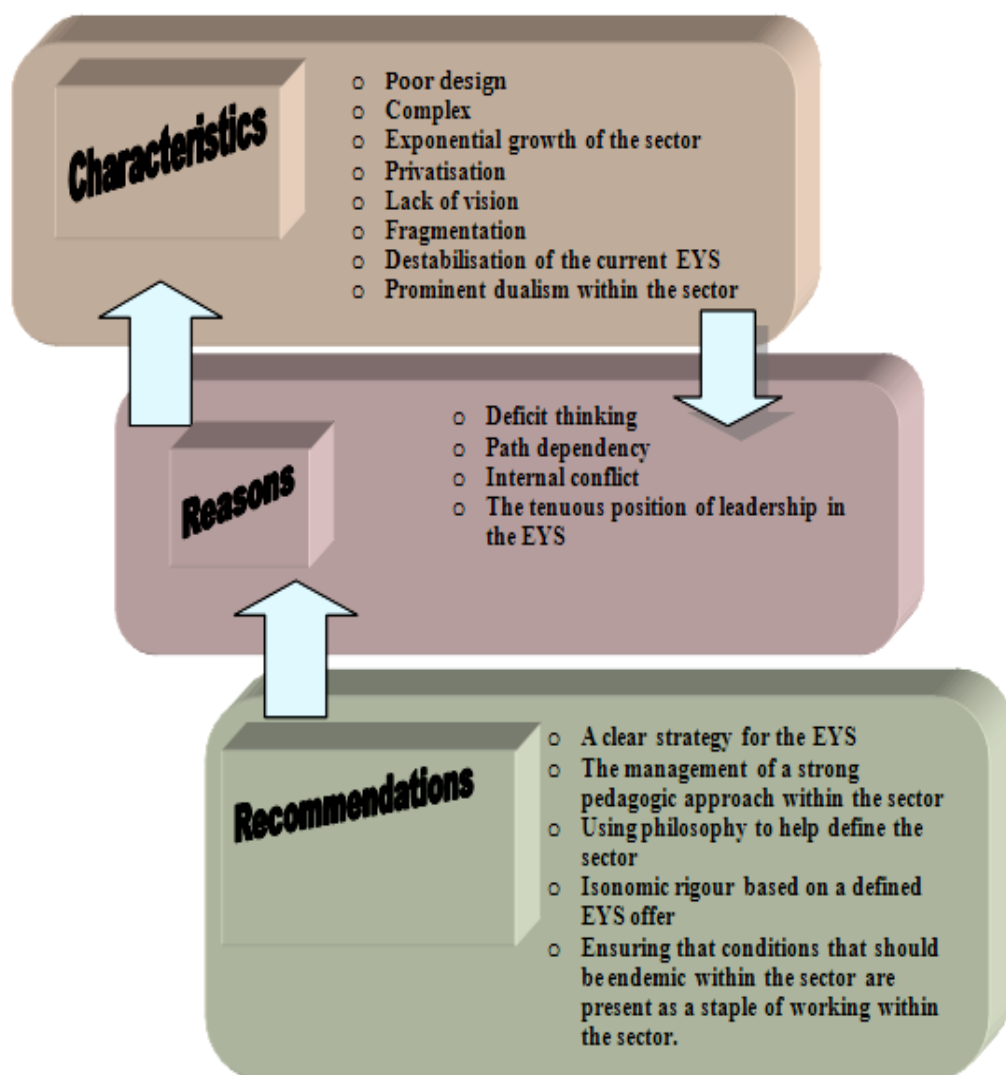


Diagram 5.48 Overview of the EYS crisis and recommendations for positive change



Diagram 5.48 above indicates that a transformation which might offer a feasible solution for the crisis is far from simple. Nevertheless, a simultaneous and consistent approach might neutralise the spread of the current crisis and begin to effect the positive change that the sector so badly needs.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusion**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

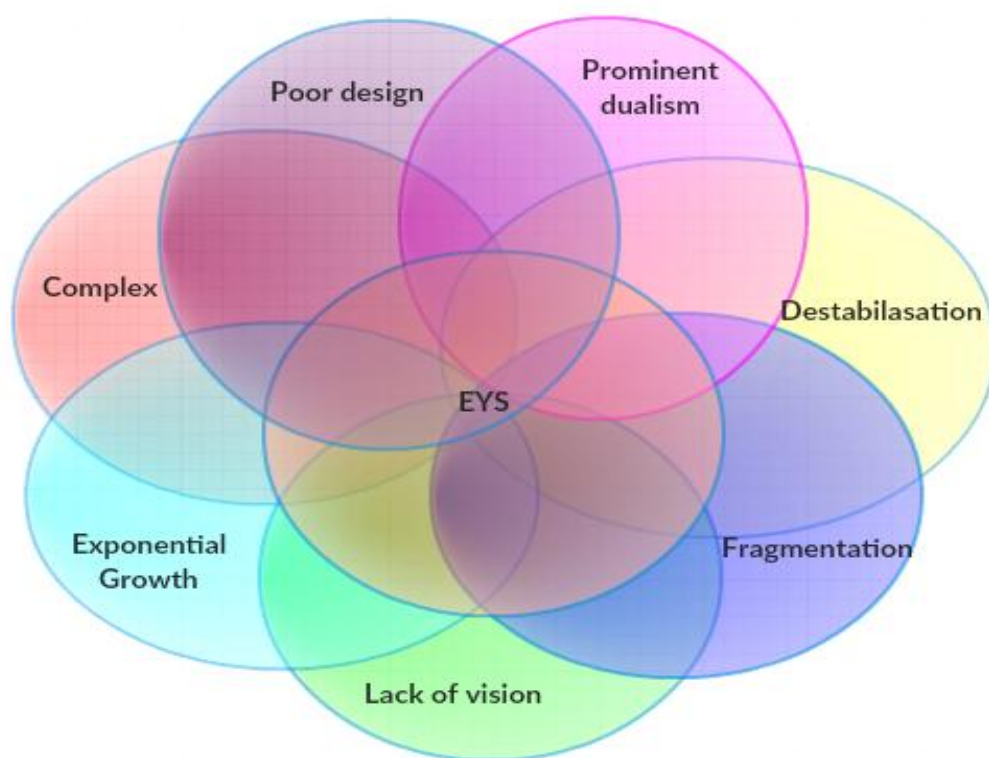
This chapter presents the conclusions of the study and offers insight into the experience of the researcher in conducting the study; highlighting the strengths and limitations of this thesis, the contribution to knowledge and also suggestions for further research into the EYS. The chapter concludes with sector recommendations. Broad issues associated with the crisis are discussed in conjunction with interviewees' perspectives, which helped to unpack the processes, relationships, operational contexts, external and internal pressures and issues that affect the sector. The three research questions which steered the discussion on the identified issue as well as guided all the stages from inquiry through to reporting are:

- What are the characteristics of the perceived leadership crisis in the EYS?
- Why do we have a perceived leadership crisis in the EYS? (How did it develop into a crisis?)
- Which strategies could be developed to address the perceived leadership crisis in the EYS?

#### **6.2 RQ1: The Characteristics of the Perceived Leadership Crisis in the EYS**

EYS practitioners are expected to provide a rich Early Years experience for the children in their care and expectations for outcomes for children and families are high. However, the sector which is resourced through a combination of demand-led funding with supply-side subsidies and public sector funding is currently suffering from policies that are opposed to each other in principle. The EYS continues to operate within the constraints of different funding arrangements, regulatory frameworks and operational contexts which collectively

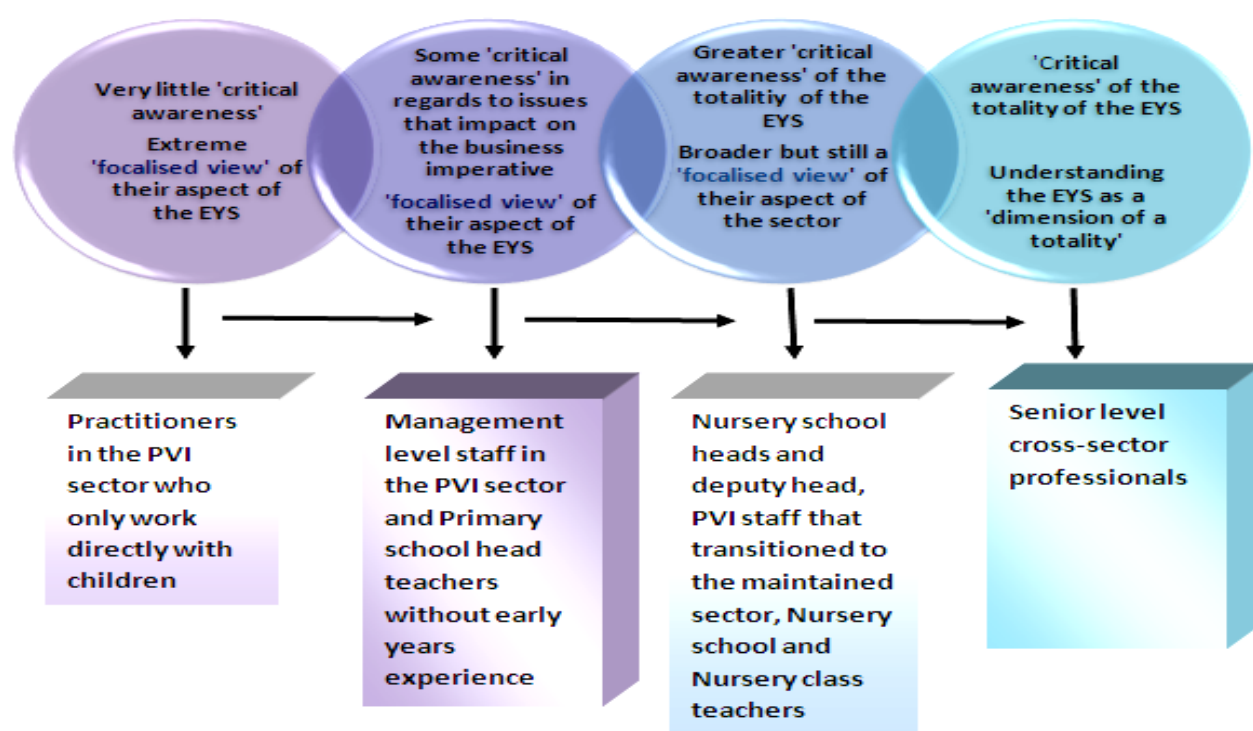
aim to deliver the same curriculum through a system consisting of a diverse range of professional heritages, perspectives, qualifications and CPD opportunities. RQ1 explored the characteristics of the perceived crisis; these highlighted the structural, economic and environmental incongruence of the sector. The diagram below gives some indication of the complexity of the crisis situation by depicting the EYS at the centre of the overlapping characteristics of the perceived crisis.



***Diagram 6.1 Characteristics of the crisis in the EYS***

Approximately 85% of the childcare market is to be found in the PVI sector, with the vast majority of that figure being private, for-profit business. The exponential growth of private business concerns within the EYS has not been matched by expansion of publicly-funded provision, which has left the sector in a position of uncontrolled growth without appropriate attempts at maintenance and consolidation; consequently it is beleaguered by issues of accessibility, flexibility, affordability and equality.

One of the characteristics of the leadership crisis as revealed by this small-scale study is a heterogeneous community of leaders across the sector from divergent settings operating within a kaleidoscope of backgrounds, qualifications and training, experience, orientation and perspectives. The majority of questionnaire respondents and interviewees' from the PVI sector had a "focalised view" of the EYS (Freire, 1996). A greater level of critical awareness was evident in certain groups of EYS staff with critical awareness of the totality of the EYS being most demonstrated by senior level cross-sector professionals, see Diagram 6.2 below.



**Diagram 6.2 Continuum of 'critical awareness'**

That is a significant finding as it could be concluded that this lack of consciousness of totality carries considerable weight in maintaining the *status quo* of divisiveness within the sector.

### 6.3 RQ2: The Reasons for a Leadership Crisis in the EYS

There is a concomitant need to examine the reasons underlying the crisis situation, and to go beyond the symptomatic manifestations of the characteristics of the crisis. The purpose of

RQ2 is to offer some insight into how political and cultural influences produce consequential change in the sector as a whole, and affect the behaviours, skills, and dispositions of practitioners and stakeholders. Political investment in the EYS is complex. This study reveals that the combination of the cycle of investment, changes in government, subsequent changes in policy direction, cuts in spending and retrenchment of funding results in extreme fragmentation and turbulence in the sector. The ambivalence of successive governments over making the rights of the child the underpinning principle in Early Years reform has inadvertently nurtured the persistence of deficit thinking, which continually influences policies and practices surrounding the EYS. The research found a culture of deficit thinking in the EYS with practitioners regularly using a “language of deficiency” (Swadener 2010, p.10).

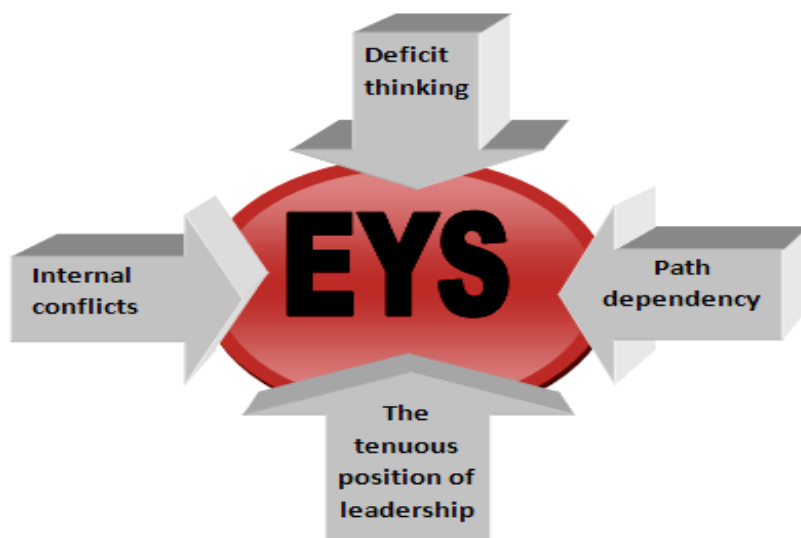
The tenuous position of the leadership within the EYS is steadily undermining the effectiveness of leaders in implementing changes in dispositions and practice. Cultural turbulence is being fed by generic misconceptions that presume identical attributes of professionalism, irrespective of context variables within the sector. Dualism is widespread in the sector due to the incompatibility of a two-tiered system and the complex policy goals which seek to professionalise the sector. This has been done by promoting parity in qualifications that carry different qualifying criteria, terms of study, and contractual terms and conditions - which continues to deepen rifts and undermine the validity of leadership in the EYS. This duality continues to thrive in a culture of political correctness which consistently undermines the rigour and professionalism of the sector. The sector is suffering from a promotion of “universal values”, to the detriment of “particular values” which define and clarify the sector (Howard, 2008). Path dependency has allowed for adherence to misguided or under informed ideologically driven policy decisions which has left the sector

carrying an ever increasing ‘social insurance’ remit with reducing budgets and dwindling resources.

The sector is generally perceived as a low wage, low status workforce with a high percentage of females. The research found that the gender dynamic does have a bearing on the current context of the EYS but, it is also an issue of the wider society which persists in categorising “discrete and binary” male and female identities (Butler, 1988). This needs to be addressed from both outside and within the sector. Workforce development within the sector is uneven and in some cases, symptomatic of the “Expansive/Restrictive” continuum in working environments (Fuller *et al*, 2007). The research highlighted that though highly qualified staff from different professional fields work within the sector in varying roles, nevertheless, there persists a “schism” between a teacher-led, professional, public sector pay framework context in the maintained sector, and the conditions of less-qualified staff, lower wages and variable working environments in the PVI sector (Butler, 2016). These findings are significant in that they highlight issues like the role of the ‘technician’ and the context of “organised disorder” (Freire, 1996) that typifies the current EYS. These issues are difficult to navigate and are making conditions increasingly more untenable for the sector.

The quadrangle of reasons identified in Diagram 6.3 below constricts the sector, and produces the effect of squeezing ‘expansive’ working environments in the maintained sector into ‘restrictive’ ones, by systematically funnelling away public funds and methodically whittling away at publicly-funded provision like nursery schools and Children’s Centres. Restrictive working environments in the PVI sector, with weaker institutional relationships,

are also becoming even more restrictive, as more responsibility is being placed on them without sufficient funding.



*Diagram 6.3 Reasons for the Crisis*

#### **6.4 RQ3: Strategies that could Address the Leadership Crisis in the EYS**

There are a number of suggestions from the reviewed literature and also from interviewees' to address the leadership crisis. Transformation from the 'inside-out' is currently compromised, as practitioners across the sector are so submerged in the government's conceptualisations of the EYS that they are predisposed to the persistent and acrimonious internal conflict (Freire, 1996) that is evident in the sector. This finding is considerable, as the reviewed literature has highlighted recommendations which are over a decade old, which would have started the metamorphosis of the EYS from an 'outside-in' perspective had they been implemented. This is a worrying 'stalelated' position for the current EYS. Marshall (1995) has some wise words about transformation "adding wings to caterpillars does not create butterflies"(p.15); this study has unveiled political efforts to effect change but avoid transformation, which have resulted in the sector being "awkward and dysfunctional" (p.15). It would seem feasible, that EYS practitioners, professionals and stakeholders need to work

together to both effect change and lobby for a strategic input on the part of policy makers, and a period of rest for the sector to allow for transformation.

### **6.5 Strengths and Limitations of the Study**

Conducting a small-scale case study to explore an area of interest has been both rewarding and insightful. The complexity of the perceived crisis demanded an extensive literature review, as well as due regard to Miles and Huberman (1994), Ribbins and Gunter (2002), Cohen *et al* (2007) and Denscombe (2010) amongst others, in order to ensure the rigour of the research design. Every effort was made to make sure that research participants' realities reflected their truths, which allowed for meaningful interrogation of the data leading to some reasoned conclusions which have been used to inform recommendations for the sector. The perspectives of Cross-sector interviewees were especially illuminating in regard to governance, finance and social justice and how these are woven into the EYS. However, it would have been useful to interview some local government representatives in order to have a broader view, and it would have been beneficial to invest more time in ensuring that questionnaire responses reflected a more balanced perspective. The interpretative stance of this research, allowed for the perceptions of a crisis in the EYS to be explored through generated "thick description" (Geertz 1973 in Cohen *et al* 2007, p254) provided by research participants. Hopefully, these personal experiences have created a rich descriptive study which captures the distinct nature of EYS.

### **6.6 Contribution to Knowledge**

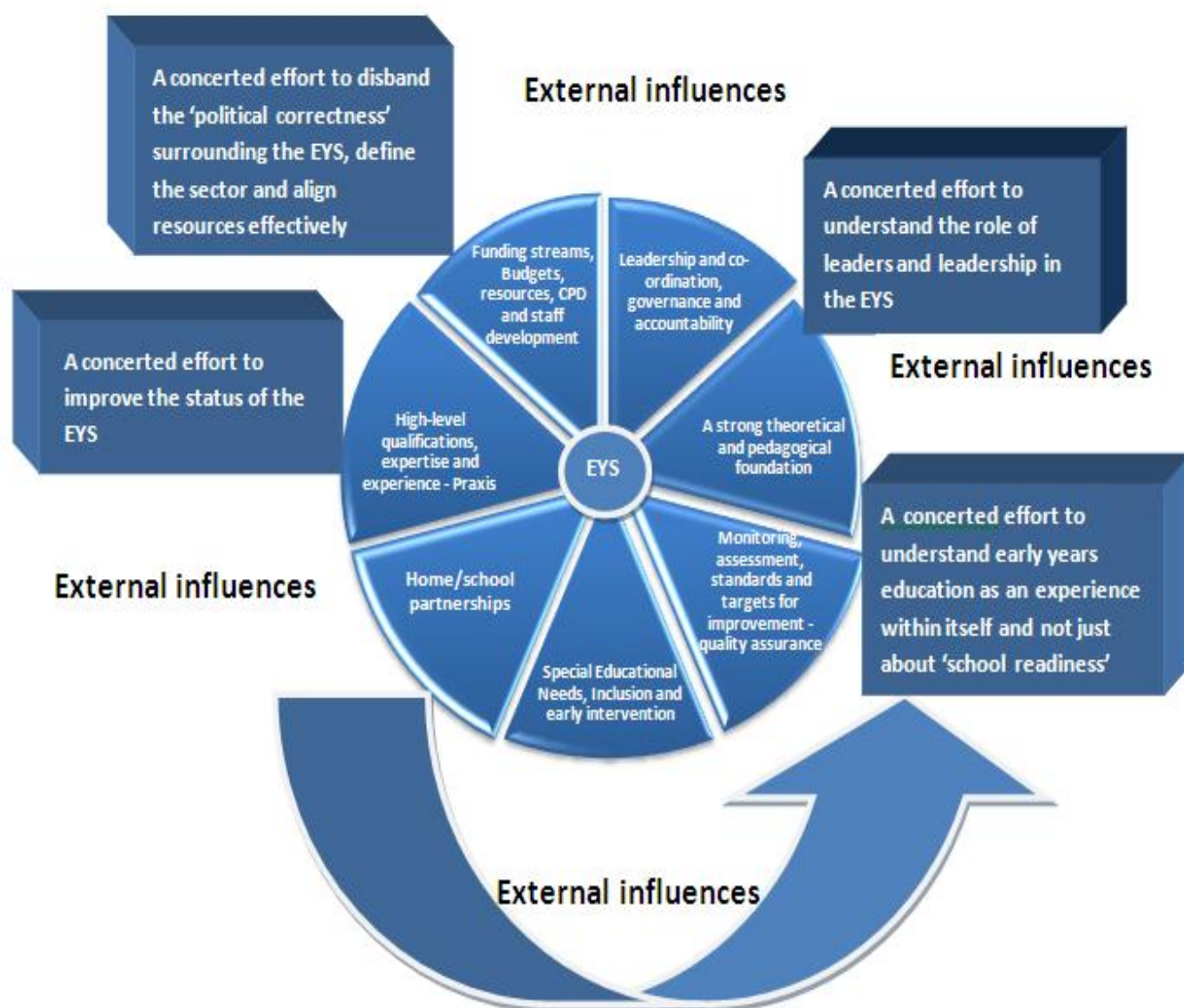
The findings from this small-scale study should hopefully impel policy makers and educators to develop some strategies for well-needed national policy on Early Childhood Services.

Diagram 6.4 below represents the key elements in effective Early Years practice and Diagram



6.5 is a reflective toolkit for EYS leaders; both represent my contribution to the EYS knowledge base.

### 6.6.1 Key Elements of Effective Early Years Practice – A Pedagogical Approach



*Diagram 6.4 Key elements of effective early years practice - A Pedagogical Approach*

### 6.6.2 A Reflective Toolkit for Early Years Leaders

The reflective toolkit below is designed to create a better understanding of the reality, the context and the potential of the current EYS with the aim of EYS leaders spearheading the transformation of the sector. The toolkit is presented over four pages and a larger version of

this toolkit with the questionnaire and Diagram 4.14 is to be found in Appendix 7. Diagram 4.14 (p.147-150) is a framework I have devised for analysing and describing the ecology of the EYS depicting external and internal commonalities and differences from the experiences of interview participants. By focusing on the relationship between different parts of the data, it became possible to draw descriptive and explanatory conclusions clustered around the current EYS as interview participants experience it. The defining feature of this framework is the matrix which denotes the cultural, social, and political environment in which the perceived crisis has developed. The matrix is presented as rows, columns and cells of summarised data which provide a structure for systematically reducing the data to obtain a holistic, descriptive overview of the external and internal factors that affect the ecology of the current EYS as well as an overview of the ecology of the EYS. This framework could serve as the basis for assessing the perceptions of leaders in the EYS who would be using the Leadership Toolkit. The framework has the capacity to adjust and accommodate differing views from a heterogeneous early years workforce mainly because the aim, as it relates to the key findings of the research, is for leaders in the sector to understand the subsystems that make up the EYS as a suprasystem and then understand the EYS concentrically as a component of other systems. A system by definition is both part and whole; therefore the persistence of viewing the EYS in isolated terms or with ‘focalised’ lenses impedes understanding the tensions, gaps and capacity of the total sector (Friere, 1996). Opening up these discussions will widen the narrative surrounding the EYS as advocated by Howard (2008) and hopefully foster a healthier ecology for the sector. Leadership reflection aided by this toolkit should provide a balanced, rational and effective system with clarity on: purpose; specification; interaction; economies of scale; and networking opportunities. I am hopeful that it may also be of assistance in more thoughtful and informed policy decisions to shape and direct the efficacy of the EYS for years to come.



<b>The risks of demand-led funding with supply-side subsidies are understood</b>				
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Please explain:</b>				

<b>The effects of rapid and relentless policy changes are understood</b>				
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Please explain:</b>				

*Diagram 6.5 A Reflective Toolkit for Leaders in the EYS with a Sample of the questionnaire*

## 6.7 Further Research

There is some indication from the reviewed literature that the insights from this study, although subjective are far more widespread than just within the Midlands. A more comprehensive study might examine a wider demographic region, to allow for a more varied perspective of personal experiences. Studying the impact of restrictive working environments on professional development within the EYS is an area of critical significance for both practice and policy communities. Little is known about how education as a business concern operates to advance 'social insurance' policy aims. A research agenda is needed to unpack basic information on the infrastructures of Early Years provisions to evaluate relative contributions to the sector. It is also imperative to develop professional care standards that encompass both knowledge of child development and the Welfare Requirements.

## **6.8 Conclusion**

There is considerable evidence of a leadership crisis in the EYS. The sector manifests characteristics of the crisis in its structural, environmental and economic make-up. The reasons for the crisis lie within the political and cultural dynamics of the sector. The EYS suffers from a lack of ‘critical awareness’ of itself as a totality, and how it is situated within other totalities. Leaders in both the PVI sector and the maintained sector are passionate about their roles, but only focused on their isolated aspect of the sector. Currently the EYS lacks the conceptual framework to define its own operational context. Leaders across the sector are worn down from managing the relentless turbulence that has been occurring over a protracted period of time. Transformation of the sector is necessary from ‘outside-in’ as well as ‘inside-out’ and will require a concerted effort on the part of successive governments, EYS leaders, practitioners and stakeholders. Something needs to be done in order to stem this crisis to achieve more consistent and better outcomes for children and families, Early Childhood Services and their staff.

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## Appendix 1

### Participant letter

Date:

Dear ,

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in an interview I am conducting as part of my EdD Leaders and leadership in Education at the University of Birmingham under the supervision of Dr. Tom Bisschoff. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part.

The objective is to research leadership shortage and a crisis in recruitment and retention in education. I would like to interview you as you are presently a Middle leader/classroom teacher and therefore a potential Senior leader/Head teacher, ideally suited to share your opinions, your career plans and your perceptions of leadership in the EYS.

Participation is voluntary and will involve an interview of approximately one hour in length to take place in a mutually agreed location. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish and you may also decide to withdraw from this interview at any time. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded to facilitate data collection, and later transcribed for analysis. If you wish, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to delete, modify, clarify or elaborate on any points. This may require an additional hour approximately, of your time. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study unless explicitly authorized by yourself and I would also like your permission for quotations to be used as necessary. The information collected will be used for research purposes only. The data will be kept confidential by storing it on a password encrypted computer with paper copies of transcripts being stored in a locked cabinet. All data will be deleted or destroyed when analyses are completed. Results of this study may be published and may include quotations from your interview. There are no known risks from participating in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this process, or would like additional information regarding your participation, please contact me on 0121 464 0056 or by email at *[v.daniel@washwdhn.bham.sch.uk](mailto:v.daniel@washwdhn.bham.sch.uk)*.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. Please keep this letter for future reference.

Yours Sincerely,

Valerie Daniel

**Please Initial Box**

- |    |   |                          |
|----|---|--------------------------|
| 1. | I confirm that I have read and understand the information letter regarding the interview and have had the opportunity to ask questions. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | I agree to take part in the interview.  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | I agree to the interview being audio recorded   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5, | I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications   | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Name of Participant	Date	Signature

Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

## Appendix 2

### Negotiating Access for interviews at Heads and Early Years Forums

My name is Valerie Daniel. I am conducting research on the: Perceptions of a Leadership Crisis in the Early Years Sector. The project is part of my Education Doctorate in Leaders and Leadership in Education at the University of Birmingham under the supervision of Dr. Tom Bisschoff. If you have any further questions regarding this process after today's talk, or if you would like additional information regarding your participation, please contact me on 0121 464 0056 or by email at [v.daniel@washwdhn.bham.sch.uk](mailto:v.daniel@washwdhn.bham.sch.uk).

I am addressing you today as the heads/managers of your organisations; because you have the authority to grant permission to conduct my research with either yourselves or members of your staff should they wish to take part.

My study is designed as a Case Study, the main aim being to glean multiple perspectives to help to gain insight into the unique nature of the Early Years Sector. The private sector and the maintained sector are the two embedded units ensconced within the EYS and it is my intention to address these two aspects of the Early Years Sector through sampling individuals in leadership in both these areas. The chosen method for conducting the research will be a combination of semi-structured interviews (which is what I am seeking permission for today), a questionnaire (which will be sent out via the internet and in some cases posted out if preferred) and data sourced from public records on current practice.

I am seeking a cross section of staff that occupy these positions for interviews and would welcome any support or suggestions you can offer towards this aim:

Sector focus	Interviews
Nursery school	1 Head teacher (retired/resigned) 1 Incumbent head teacher 1 Deputy head teacher 1 Class teacher (Leadership aspirant)
Nursery classes in primary schools	1 Head teacher (retired/resigned) 1 Incumbent head teacher 1 Deputy head teacher 1 Class teacher (Leadership aspirant)
Private early years sector	1 Manager (retired/resigned) 1 Incumbent Private Manager 1 Deputy Manager 1 Room Leader (Leadership aspirant)

The staff identified above will be asked individually for their consent to take part in the project and I have provided you with example copies of the consent forms for the interviews. I would like to emphasise that participation is entirely voluntary. All recordings and returns will be kept strictly confidential. They will however be used in the research, but under no circumstances will any names or any identifying characteristics be included. Similarly, while

some contextual information on the Early Years Sector will be provided in the research, no names or identifying characteristics will be used.

You now have the opportunity to discuss what has been outlined above or to ask any questions you may have about this research.

I will now give out copies of this discussion for your signatures. The reasons for this are indicated at the bottom of this document. I will retain the signed copy and leave you with an unsigned copy for your reference if you wish.

Please sign the form to show that:

- You have read the comments outlined above;
- You have the authority to grant permission for the research to be conducted with either yourself or with staff from your organisation; and you agree for the research to be conducted with someone from your organisation.
- You have received the example consent forms for the interviews;
- You have had the opportunity to discuss what is outlined above and all your questions about the research have been answered;

\_\_\_\_\_ (signed)

\_\_\_\_\_ (printed)

Please indicate your personal expression of interest, your contact details and your preferred contact times below.

### **Contact details**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number/s: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred contact times: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3

### Interview Schedule for Early Years Leaders

Name:

Position:

Date of Interview:

Time:

This interview is being conducted as a part of requirement for the module in the EdD programme on Leaders and leadership in Education. The objective is to undertake an interview of no more than one hour with Early Years Leaders to further explore their perceptions of leadership in the Early Years Sector (EYS).

**Participant to read and sign Participants letter. Researcher to offer any further explanations of the ethics. Researcher to retain signed copy of the Participants letter.**

### **Interview protocols**

1. I will speak as clearly and directly as I can, if you are unclear about a question, please stop me and I will repeat the question again slowly and clearly.
2. Please do not hesitate to let me know if you need to stop for a comfort break or for any reason.
3. The interview should take 1 hour and I would like to be respectful of your time. If the interview is taking longer than expected I will attempt to pick up the pace or would it be possible to negotiate some extra time if you wish to continue with the interview?
4. I will try as best as I can to avoid jargon but please do not hesitate to ask if I have used a terminology that you are unfamiliar with.
5. I will from time to time ask follow-up questions to establish a basis for an opinion, to clarify or elaborate on an answer or to follow relevant leads.

### **Biographical questions**

Please state your name?

How old are you? (I hope you don't mind me asking) 49

What are your qualifications?

Are you U.K. born?

How long have you been a leader in the EYS?

### **Scoping Questions**

What is your current post?

How long have you been in the current role?

How did you become an EYS leader?

What are your career plans for the next 3-5 years?

### **Main Interview**

1. Can you describe what your role entails?
2. How would you describe the Early Years Sector in England?
3. How do you feel your role as a professional in an early setting is perceived by others?
4. What are your experiences regarding the status of your role?
5. How do your qualifications equip you for a leadership role in the Early Years Sector?
6. Are there any challenges in balancing your personal and leisure time with the demands of your role?
7. In your opinion what do you contribute to the EYS?
8. Could you speak a bit about Continued Professional Development opportunities that you have received in the last two years?
9. Do you perceive any difference between the leadership role in the PVI sector and the maintained school sector?
10. Can you explain why there may be difficulties in recruitment and retention for an early years leadership role?
11. Have you any suggestions on how a leadership role in the Early Years Sector could be promoted as a viable professional option for leadership aspirants?
12. How do you support staff to deal with the rapid pace of policy change in the early years?

13. Can you explain the context of safeguarding within your early years leadership role?
14. What is your opinion on the role that PVI settings play in the Early Years Sector?
15. Is there any reason in your opinion why PVI sector should not be enough for the Early Years Sector?
16. Do you believe there is a role for qualified teachers in the Early Years Sector?
17. Is there any reason in your opinion why nursery classes in primary schools should not be enough for the Early Years Sector?
18. Can you explain the main differences between a nursery school and a nursery class?
19. Is there any reason in your opinion why nursery schools should not be enough for the Early Years Sector?
20. What issues do you face in your role as an EYS leader?
21. At this time there is evidence that indicates that Nursery Schools are dwindling in numbers. What do you think will be the impact on the EYS if this trend continues?
22. What is your philosophy for working with young children?
23. What would be your ideal Early Years strategy?
24. What do you think should be done to ensure the quality of the Early Years Sector in the present climate of austerity?

### **Interview probes**

#### *Elaboration probes*

- Tell me more about that?
- Can you give me an example?
- Could you elaborate on that?

#### *Clarification probes*

- I'm not sure I understand what you mean?
- Can you help me understand what that means?
- I'm having trouble understanding the problem you've described. Can you talk a little more about that?

- Could you repeat that for me?
- My understanding of what you are saying is..... Am I right?

Thank you for your help and your time.



## Appendix 4

## Interview Transcript Example

Line	Transcript	Notes
1	I Date of interview, What's today's date?	Name anonymised
2	R 9 <sup>th</sup> April	
3	I I will speak as clearly and directly as I can, if you are unclear about a	
4	question, please stop me and I will repeat the question at any point, do	
5	not hesitate to let me know if you need a comfort break, the interview	
6	should take roundabout an hour and I would like to be respectful of your	
7	time so if it is taking longer than expected then I will pick up the pace. I	
8	will try my best to avoid jargon but I think you should be familiar with it,	
9	from time to time I will ask follow up questions if there is something that	
10	needs to be probed. Some biographical questions, please state your	
11	name?	
12	R -----	
13	I How old are you? (Sitting forward, legs folded under her cross-legged up	School name anonymised
14	in the chair. Smiling)	
15	R I am 26	
16	I What are your qualifications?	
17	R I have BA honours with QTS	
18	I Are you UK born?	
19	R I am.	
20	I How long have you been a teacher?	
21	R This is my fourth year.	
22	I What is your current post?	
23	R I am a Nursery Teacher at .....	
24	I How long have you been in your current post?	
25	R Since September. So just over nine months.	
26	I Why did you choose teaching as a profession?	
27	R Because I wanted to make a difference to children's lives. And because I	
28	wanted to be an early years teacher because I value that as the most	
29	important stage in a child's development. (Short pauses, clearly thinking)	
30	I How did you become a nursery class teacher?	
31	R I trained to be a primary school teacher and I always thought I'd be a Year	
32	Six teacher but then in my final placement I went to a children's centre	
33	and fell in love with nursery and everything it stands for. (one hand	
34	moving around in a circular motion, legs still crossed, touching lip)	
35	I What are your career aspirations?	
36	R Err..... I want to do a Masters in Early Education and I'm very interested in	
37	research and theories and pedagogy. So I would like to be on the	
38	leadership team of a school I think – possibly as the SENCO. But then also,	
39	it sounds really high, but maybe then write a book or... Write one of	
40	these inspirational books about a certain element of Early Years. And	
41	maybe be, I don't know, a uni lecturer I don't know. Teach the students	
42	how to be an Early Years Teacher. I don't know (Laughter, not humour	
43	though, feels like nervous or embarrassed laughter, looking up..... hand	
44	over hand circular motions, sat back suddenly and tucked in legs even	
45	tighter in the crossed legged position)	
46	I Can you describe a typical day at work for you?	
47	R Err..... There isn't a "typical day". There are timetables and things that	

Line	Transcript	Notes
48	we do every day err..... but there isn't a typical day in nursery. Every	
49	day is different. (Scratching forehead, wrinkled brow)	
50	I What would your timetable look like?	
51	R The children will come in and we do the register with them. We greet	
52	them. We say hello. We see how they are doing. Err..... and then we go	
53	into free- flow and so they can go and choose what they want to do and	
54	we play partner and become involved in what they are doing and talk to	
55	them. They have the choice to go outside or inside and we support them	
56	in that. And then because it is a fulltime nursery we have a story session	
57	before lunch and then we have our lunch hour where we go down with	
58	the children to have dinner or go outside with them. And then in the	
59	afternoon there is free flow again apart from on a Friday and a Monday.	
60	On a Monday we sometimes have music with a music teacher who comes	
61	in, or on a Friday we have a party if it is a child's birthday or we have a	
62	celebration of some sort – whether it be..... (Flow of language,	
63	scratching upper lip, looking up, very expressive hand movements. Tailing	
64	off, looking uncertain)	
65	I Ok. You have actually described quite graphically what happens in a day	
66	with children but can you give me some aspect of what goes behind that	
67	in terms of your planning...	
68	R In terms of what I do?	
69	I Your... whatever support, what happens with the children.	
70	R So before and after school?	
71	I Just any part of a typical day for you because you have given me	
72	everything that happens with the children but a part of what is	
73	happening is stuff that you have to do...	
74	R ...Before and after...	
75	I And during	
76	R So before school we will come in and, and I will come in early and make	
77	sure the environment is set up for the children. Urm we, at the end of	
78	each day we have a reflection on what the children have been doing and	
79	what interests have occurred and any observations that we've done and	
80	what we've picked out from that. And then we talk about how we can	
81	move that on or deepen the learning and the thinking for the following	
82	day. Or if it's an interest, then it's what can we do next? And how can we	
83	develop this? And err.. (Scratching upper lip, touching ear, looking a bit	
84	desperate and seemingly needing reassurance that she is on the right	
85	track, very difficult for me as I am desperately trying not to influence her	
86	responses)	
87	I OK... What about things like briefings and meetings?	
88	R Yeah. We have briefings and meetings. We have a briefing on a Monday	
89	and a meeting on a Wednesday. And then teachers have a teaching and	
90	learning meeting on Tuesday, where again we discuss learning and	
91	development and children's progress, things like that.	
92	I So, it's a very full week.	
93	R Yeah. A very busy week	
94	I Ok. Can you explain what Early Years Education means to you?	
95	R Err. It's its'. It's everything. Early Years Education is err, is I dunno. It's...	
96	(Looking almost frantic!! She is really nervous!! Shrugging shoulders,	
97	moving one hand in a circular motion as if feeling for words.)	

Line	Transcript	Notes
98	I Are you ok? .....You actually gave a bit when you started. You said you	
99	believed it's was the most important phase.	
100	R Yeah. It. It's for children it's they learn the skills and the independence	
101	and they have the intrinsic motivation to learn and to explore. And it's	
102	just amazing to be a part of that everyday and watch them grow and	
103	develop. And when you have those wow moments where a child says	
104	something or does something that's truly incredible it's just indescribable	
105	so that what Early Years Education means to me. Do you mean like to	
106	me? Or just my..... (Arms resting on crossed legs, shoulder shrugs,	
107	rubbing up and down the length of her arm)	
108	I To you.	
109	R To me it's it's, It's, it's a whole massive part of my life and what I believe	
110	in and what I see as extraordinary and you know, you, the weekend you	
111	find you are thinking about what to do next week or you see something	
112	and that becomes a motivator for you to, to do something or to buy	
113	something or to..... (Sitting upright suddenly, still crossed legged,	
114	hand gesticulations in a sideways chopping motion, tailing off again and	
115	appearing uncertain again)	
116	I Ok. No that's really good. Thank you. What are your career plans for the	
117	next three to five years? Actually you gave me a... (This is feeling quite	
118	bitty as her nervousness is impacting on me, (considered stopping the	
119	interview but gave her a bit more time to see if she would relax)	
120	R I wanna do my Masters. So I hope to do my Masters in the next three to	
121	five - well to have completed my Masters in the next three to five years.	
122	I Ok.	
123	R I want to look at the advanced skills teacher's role as well.	
124	I OK.	
125	R Because that incorporates the Children's Centre role where you can do	
126	the outreach work and you can work with private settings and schools	
127	who perhaps don't have as much of an understanding about the	
128	importance of Early Years and support them in that. And I think when I	
129	said about writing a book and thing, that's where my passion lies. I've	
130	been a part of a school that perhaps didn't value Early Years Education as	
131	much as it should be valued and you can see the effect that it has on the	
132	children and on the staff. So I think part of what I'd like to do is that.	
133	(She is beginning to relax, still sitting cross legged but her body language	
134	is not as tense, quite animated, change in facial expression – furrowed	
135	brow)	
136	I Can I just ask you something? You've just said something really	
137	interesting. You said you've been part of a school that didn't value early	
138	education. Was that a Nursery School?	
139	R No, it was a Primary School.	
140	I Can you just expand on that a little bit more for me? You don't have to	
141	say where	
142	R It was a four form entry Primary School. Err, and I was the Nursery	
143	teacher along side a Nursery manager err and there was five or six	
144	teaching assistants in a Part time Nursery and err. And when I say the	
145	school didn't value it, the building was old, it was dark, there was no	
146	training opportunities, there was.....the staff were demoralised and	
147	they were very much used to doing things the way that they've always	

Location anonymised

Line	Transcript	Notes
148	been done. But Early Years Education has moved on so much in people's	
149	understanding of children's development and what works, that they	
150	needed new life to be put into the learning environment (derisive laugh,	
151	chopping motion mirroring strong feelings behind the words, smoothing	
152	hair behind ear).	
153	I And was that new life accepted from you?	
154	R No.	
155	I It wasn't	
156	R I was met with so many barriers err	
157	I Ok.	
158	R And it was almost we were there to babysit the children and play with	
159	them but even teacher colleagues higher up in the school....., even, even	
160	the Early Years Co-ordinator wasn't somebody who believed in Early	
161	Years and wasn't an Early Years teacher. (Expression change, looks angry!	
162	Hand gesticulations mirroring the wealth of feelings behind the words,	
163	eyes wide open appearing to indicate incredulity!)	
164	I Mmm.	
165	R So that just meant that it didn't matter what I did or what we did to	
166	change, it was never gonna become embedded because it wasn't valued,	
167	because it wasn't seen as something that was important to the school.	
168	(Shrugging shoulders, open palms facing upwards now twirling jewellery	
169	around wrist)	
170	I Ok. Thanks for that. Err, what is your opinion on how a professional	
171	career in the Early Years Sector is generally perceived?	
172	R That we play with children, we babysit children, we're the glorified	
173	childminders in a school and that they see, I find a lot of parents believe	
174	that if they get their children into the school that has the nursery with	
175	the school that they wanna be, that they want their child to go to, it's	
176	not because it has a good Early Years ethos, it's because they'll make	
177	friends and we, we, we. I find that in Early Years, people don't know what	
178	an Early Years Teacher is. A lot of people underestimate what an Early	
179	Years Teacher does- that we have the same qualifications that every	
180	other teacher has - in fact probably more, often, because we've done the	
181	research, we've done the study visits, we've done the reading. So, yeah I	
182	think... (humourless laughter, hands pressing on chest, wrinkled brow,	
183	facial expression showing concern, fluctuating between scratching face	
184	and rubbing up and down the length of her arm, seems agitated,	
185	clenched teeth)	
186	I So, would you that say all Early Years Teachers have done the research...	
187	R No (laughs)	
188	I Or done the reading?	
189	R Only the ones that are passionate about what they do.	
190	I And how often do you come across those?	
191	R I find in Children's Centres a lot of them are like that. They want to be	
192	there, they're part of it, they've chosen to be an Early Years Teacher. I	
193	find in..... From my experience of Primary School Early Years teachers,	
194	that they've been told that they need to go into Nursery and actually if	
195	you are put into Nursery in a primary school it's seen that you are not a	
196	very good teacher (rotating a glass of water on the table, sudden jerky	
197	hand motions)	

Line	Transcript	Notes
198	I Oh!	
199	R And that you know, the best teachers are put in Year Six.	
200	I Oh.	
201	R And the weaker teachers are put into the Nurseries.	
202	I Ok.	
203	R Which isn't true.	
204	I So that brings me to another question. What do you feel about Nursery	
205	School Headship as a viable career option?	
206	R I think, err..... Nursery Heads have a lot to juggle. And it's probably one	
207	of the more challenging headships. Err..... for me Headship is not	
208	something that I think I want. (long pauses for thought)	
209	I Why is that?	
210	R I don't know. I think my passion lies more in working with the children. I	
211	think Nursery Heads have a lot to deal with politics and a lot to deal with	
212	staff management and issues and that detracts from the children and,	
213	and being a part of the children and everything we love about Early Years	
214	sometimes can get lost in the fight and the constantly changing agenda	
215	and fighting for politics and fighting to stay aaah....., you know to stay	
216	aaah..... viable Nursery School, you know and I just – that's not my	
217	passion. (Uncrossed legs, sitting up, quite a bit of hand gesticulation,	
218	scrunched brow with hand in a clawlike position, facing downwards in	
219	tight circular motion, open palm repeatedly turning upwards and then	
220	downwards in a quick motion)	
221	I But do you see it as a worthwhile role?	
222	R Yes, definitely it's just I think that it's challenging and requires special	
223	people.	
224	I Special people?	
225	R Very special people, Very challenging and you know, it's an extraordinary	
226	job and like I said, I think actually it's, it's, it's harder than, than a primary	
227	school to a certain extent because you are fighting people for them to	
228	believe that it's not just given to you. So yeah, I think Nursery Heads are	
229	extraordinary. (Head nods for emphasis)	
230	I Thank you. Please give me your opinion on the highly publicised, political	
231	declarations of acquiring a better qualified workforce in Early Years.	
232	R I think the way it that was publicised made out that everybody who	
233	works in Early Years isn't very well qualified. Err .....but to a certain	
234	degree I agree with that the training to be an Early Years Teaching	
235	Assistant or Nursery Nurse needs to be more rigorous and more.....	
236	And from my experience of a university I, my Primary Teaching course	
237	didn't include a lot of Early Years (Flow of language but pensive and	
238	appears to be talking through a thought process).	
239	I Are you understanding though the current context of Early Years	
240	Teacher? Have you heard of the new Early Years Teacher's role?	
241	R Yes I have heard of new the Early Years Teacher status and I think that is	
242	ridiculous. (strength in voice, throwing hand to the side in an open palm	
243	sideways movement)	
244	I Oh could you tell me what you mean by that. That's interesting.	
245	R Well I'm an Early Years Teacher and I have done a four-year degree to	
246	become a teacher. I haven't had a dumbed down qualification handed to	
247	me, and so what they are trying to do is demoralise Early Years teachers	

Line	Transcript	Notes
248	by taking away that stance of being a teacher and going through those	
249	qualifications and having to do all that and to be able to mean that a TA	
240	can go through a years training and become an Early Years teacher is	
251	just..... but then the Cathy Nutbrown report was saying that some of	
252	these Teaching Assistants don't have enough qualifications and it's the	
253	whole hair or care and then now they are bringing out something that	
254	means that those people who didn't want to be hairdressers and wanted	
255	to be Nursery Nurses can now then become an Early Years Teacher and	
256	can do my job..... And I'd like to see, you know, and even my TAs, I'd like	
257	to see them do.... have my..... not being big headed, but have my depth	
258	of understanding and to be able to do the planning and the observations	
259	and to be able to look at the deeper level stuff because that's not	
260	something that just comes through doing a course or through having a	
261	label it's through study and research and experience and hard work and	
262	caring. (Whole body on alert!!! Sitting upright, chopping hand motions,	
263	wide sweeping arm motions, angry facial expression, clenched teeth,	
264	strength in voice, chopping motion on the table, counting off on fingers,	
265	clearly some strong feelings about this!)	
266	I And that depth of understanding, what is it that you've? Because you've	
267	just said that you trained to be.	
268	R A Primary School teacher.	
269	I Exactly and you now have an Early Years specialism what is it that bridged	
270	that gap for you in terms of that depth of understanding that you have	
271	for Early Years?	
272	R Research.	
273	I Research.....	
274	R And training and books and experience and experience. That, that, I think	
275	even Early Years Specialist Primary Teacher needs to continue to research	
276	and read and dialogue about children's learning and be passionate about	
277	children's learning experiences. (Expressive hand gesticulations, tapping	
278	the table with fingers turned downwards in a clawlike position)	
279	I Could you expand on the context of dialogue?	
280	R Yeah, being in that setting that you can have those professional	
281	discussions and you can research and learn and develop and it's not	
282	something that you can just do. You can't just be a Early Years Teacher	
283	because you are doing a little bit more than just playing with children.	
284	(One hand open palm upwards, tight sideways movements)	
285	I Please describe what is involved in the practice of teaching young	
286	children in your school?	
287	R Err. What's involved in the, in the. What goes through my head when I'm	
288	doing something with the child do you mean?	
289	I What's involved in the practice that whole ethos of working with young	
290	children. So you've mentioned things like research. You've mentioned	
291	things like planning and depth of knowledge how does that translate into	
292	what happen in the, in the, work environment?	
293	R You mean like through children's experience and through observations	
294	and that?	
295	I Yeah.	
296	R Read me the question again?	
297	I Some of the concepts that are involved in the philosophy and practice of	

Line	Transcript	Notes
298	teaching young children.	
299	R So it is observations and researching with the children as well. So it's	
300	their interests, their discussions and questioning and knowing when to	
301	observe and when to question and making those questions meaningful	
302	and not just a test. Not just what colour is that? Having those genuine	
303	conversations with the children about what they are doing, about what	
304	they are interested in and as an adult using your knowledge and your	
305	experience to push that interest further to engage them deeper in it so	
306	my children are really interested in space so it's about not just floating	
307	along the surface of that's a planet. We live on Earth. It's looking at	
308	gravity. It's looking at how can we get to space. What can we do? It's	
309	problem solving with them and setting up those challenges and having	
310	those provocations in the environment so that they're continually excited	
311	by something that they once said. It's sparking that interest with them	
312	and keeping that going so that they're continually engaged with the	
313	environment and with what they are doing and they wanna come to	
314	nursery and they are excited to come to Nursery and that they know that	
315	they are being appreciated and what they say is being valued and they're	
316	driving it further and you are there with them. (Sitting forward suddenly.	
317	Animated, fired up!! Speaking quickly and articulately, facial expression	
318	shows pleasure. (Glad I did not stop the interview, it was useful to adjust	
319	the pace of the interview)	
320	I Thank you. We're getting there. Sorry I know it's taking longer but we're	
321	getting there.	
322	R That's ok.	
323	I How do you? Well actually you've answered the next question which was	
324	about value added for each child in your class, and I think that pretty	
325	much covered that one. So what professional development training, do	
326	the Early Years staff in your school receive?	
327	R From my experience of working in a Children's Centre if I go to my Head	
328	Teacher with something that I am interested in and if I can justify what	
329	it's gonna do for the Centre or what it's gonna do for the children in my	
330	class then it's normally something that I can access.	
331	I Is that a Nursery School or a Children's Centre?	
332	R A Nursery School that is in a Children's Centre.	
333	I Because we have Children's Centres that are err that are not Nursery	
334	Schools so we are talking about.	
335	R A Nursery School with a Children's Centre attached.	
336	I Ok. Ok.	
337	R So the training opportunities there are varied and wide and you don't just	
338	concentrate on education..... You get to know about the Children's	
339	Centre side of it as well and family support.	
340	I Can you give me just a hint of some the training you've been on since	
341	being involved in a Nursery School?	
342	R I've been on a Speech and Language four-day course, which looked at	
343	how we can support Speech and Language Therapists and develop	
344	children who have a speech and language difficulty. Err....., I've been	
345	on an Early Ed course which looked at brain development and	
346	Neurolinguistic Programming with children and how their err..... How	
347	what they do as a baby can affect their whole lives err..... and how the	



Line	Transcript	Notes
348	brain assimilates information. I've been to Pen Green, which is a centre,	
349	and looked around the centre but also looked at Schemas and schematic	
350	play with children and again that links to brain development and how	
351	children learn..... Err..... I've been on some ECOS training about	
352	environment..... (Counting off on fingers, thinking in between	
353	statements, tailing off giving the impression that there is more but can't	
354	recall at the moment)	
355	I That's really, really good thank you. That's very good. Would you like a	
356	comfort break?	
357	R yes please. <i>It's crap isn't it?</i> (Conversation here is clearly not a part of the	
358	interview. (Transcriber A.M.)	
359	<b>People keep talking about play as if there is nothing more. They don't</b>	
360	<b>seem to realise that play is constructed. There is a whole scaffolding</b>	
361	<b>around that. I'll be back in a second.</b>	
362	I OK, we are back. Oh dear I thought I had turned off the tape. Never mind.	
363	(Laughter) What is your opinion on the role that private, voluntary and	
364	independent settings play in the Early Years Sector?	
365	R I think that they are often business and therefore money driven so don't	
366	place as much emphasis on the children's learning. Err..... they often	
367	don't have teachers or people who have Early Years qualifications to a	
368	higher level behind them and so need support from Children's Centres or	
369	from Early Years Teachers in order to make sure that the quality of the	
370	experience the children get is what they deserve. (Sitting cross legged	
371	again but much more relaxed, calm response, pause for thought).	
372	I But, but, can I just say, in terms of the EYFS somebody from a private or	
373	voluntary setting would say that they're delivering the EYFS the same as a	
374	Nursery School so does that not make everybody equal in the Early Years	
375	Sector?	
376	R No, because the EYFS is a guidance and the quality of the provision that	
377	you provide for children in Early Years is dramatically different across the	
378	sector. It goes back to the understanding of children not just playing and	
379	the EYFS not just being a tick chart of things that the children have to	
380	achieve. It's more about what they are gaining, what life skills they are	
381	doing, how they are developing. And within the context of the play there	
382	is so many different things going on. And I think somebody who perhaps	
383	doesn't have that experience or passion or has ulterior motives i.e.	
384	through money that can drastically change the experience the children	
385	get. Err, private Nurseries. With the new thing that's come out that you	
386	only need - the new ratios for babies - I can't remember. (Very forceful	
387	language, sideways chopping hand motion, fired up again, legs uncrossed	
388	and sitting up, becomes irritated at the lapse in memory (seemingly	
389	slightly resentful at the hiatus in her flow of thought)	
390	I Are you speaking about the government plans for deregulation?	
391	R So that you can have two members of staff in a room, that's just, to	
392	everybody who believes and understands early years that's just ridiculous	
393	because how can one person be there helping and playing and being	
394	alongside all of those children. But to a private nursery it may be fantastic	
395	because it's more money saving, they don't need as many members of	
396	staff and they haven't got as many staffing costs so they, you know. The	
397	government have sold it that they are gonna pass on the savings to	



Line	Transcript	Notes
398	parents. And to parents it probably sounds brilliant because it's gonna	
399	bring down their childcare bill. But again it's that lack of understanding	
400	about what Early Years does with the child, what Early Years Teachers do.	
401	How people who understand Early Years work with children. It's not just	
402	babysitting.... (Serious facial expression, furrowed brow, words	
403	sometimes quite clipped then a flow of quick speech, sounding a bit worn	
404	down at the end)	
405	I So is there any reason the PVI sector should not be enough for the EYS?	
406	R For all the reasons mentioned above but mainly the difference in the	
407	quality of the early years experience.	
408	I Thank you. What is your opinion on the role Nursery Schools play in the	
409	Early Years Sector?	
410	R I think everybody should go to a Nursery School.	
411	I Can you expand on that?	
412	R Sorry. So what's my opinion on what Nursery Schools do in the sector?	
413	I Mmm.	
414	R Nursery Schools, especially the ones that have Children's Centres	
415	attached, they're a base for a whole family not just for three and four-	
416	year-olds. Nursery Schools are Government funded ways of parents	
417	accessing childcare but not just private nursery childcare, it's quality	
418	childcare with the LEA maintained, so there are teachers, there are Head	
419	Teachers there are deputies there is a clear management structure linked	
420	to staff qualifications and experience. It's ensuring the children are	
421	getting the quality of care they deserve. (relaxed, comfortable explaining	
422	with fluid hand movements)	
423	I Thank you.	
424	R And with Children's Centres attached like I said, it's a base for the whole	
425	family.....the whole community.	
426	I We've only got three questions left now. Please describe the difference	
427	between a Nursery School and a Nursery Class?	
428	R A Nursery School is a Local authority school that is focused just on early	
429	years, They need to have a head teacher and a deputy and teachers. My	
430	experience of teaching in a Nursery School and Children's Centre, you	
431	have got a holistic approach. There's the emphasis on the children	
432	learning and early years being a vital stage of development. You've got	
433	family support there to support the parents. You've got colleagues who	
434	are like-minded, who you can have those professional discussions with.	
435	You've got experience and knowledge and the whole setting is driven for	
436	that stage. So I found that you feel more valued as a member of staff but	
437	also that the children's experience is a million times better. (counting off	
438	on fingers, wide, fluid, sweeping arm motions, calm)	
439	I And a Nursery class, what do you think?	
440	R It's a whole other structure. Early years is just like a bit added on in my	
441	opinion. They are far more focused on the statutory bits from Reception	
442	onwards. Like I said before, I think that it's just the pits really. The	
443	pressure is from Year Six downwards. So there's no value to Nursery. It's	
444	seen as the bit where the children make friends for Year One. You know,	
445	there was no value to anything the Nursery did. They were just part of	
446	the school. Three and four-year-olds where gong to have to sit in an	
447	assembly because that's what the whole school did. Who expects a three	

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448	or four-year old to sit for an hour through something they don't	
449	understand. What's the purpose of it? What's the point? But it's that, it's	
450	that you're part of the school and this is what the school does. It was so	
451	school readiness and what children needed to do for school not what	
452	children needed to learn that would put them in their mindset for the	
453	rest of their lives. The interests that children have in Nursery School can	
454	sometimes shape their whole career and that's just not valued.	
455	I Can I just ask how do budgets reflect on that? (Arms crossed over body,	
456	scratching shoulder, open palm turned inwards to face, shoulders moving	
457	in a shrugging motion, face scrunched up seemingly indicating concern,	
458	strength in voice, head moving side to side in quick nods indicating	
459	disapproval, quite agitated!)	
460	R The Nursery class budget in the school that I worked in was non-existent	
461	for three years. The Nursery class had no budget. (Head still moving side	
462	to side indicating the non-existent budget)	
463	I No budget?	
464	R No budget for resources or anything. It was. If you wanted to cook you	
465	had to seek approval first to buy the ingredients. If you wanted maths	
466	resources you had to go to the Maths Co-ordinator. If you wanted literacy	
467	resources you had to go to the Literacy Co-ordinator but then when you	
468	go and try to explain to these co-ordinators that you wanted a pair of	
469	tweezers because that links to sorting or with the Literacy co-ordinator	
470	because that links to fine motor they don't understand that it's all	
471	interlinked. You cannot just say, that child is doing maths because they	
472	don't recognise it if they are not sitting there with numbers. (frustration	
473	evident in facial expression, sideways chopping motion, tapping the table	
474	quite forcefully)	
475	I Oh.	
476	R They are learning about so much more than just. You know like painting.	
477	They're not just painting. You don't go to the Art Co-ordinator to request	
478	supplies because the children are just painting. They're learning to write,	
479	they're leaning to mark, they're learning colours, they're learning	
480	textures, what happens when I mix this with this? It's not just something	
481	you can just label as they are doing painting today. So budget wise that	
482	was extremely difficult. (Furrowed brow, pent up frustration evident, lips	
483	curled appearing to indicate disgust, clearly not good memories)	
484	I You are seriously saying that the Nursery class did not have any budget of	
485	it's own at all?	
486	R Not an independent budget. No. The second year that I was there we had	
487	a budget of £1000 for Early Years. So that was four reception classes and	
488	a 120-place Nursery class	
489	I Are you saying just a thousand pounds for the whole year?	
490	R A thousand pounds.	
491	I OK.	
492	R And that was it.	
493	I And in your current post?	
494	R Whereas in a Nursery School you have money for resources, you have	
495	money for trips, you have money for cooking and you have money for	
496	food ingredients. You have money for anything to do with what you need	
497	to enhance the children's experience. It's not enough because it'll never	

Line	Transcript	Notes
498	be enough, because you can never do enough but there is a lot more	
499	money available because the money that the children get through pupil	
500	premium is invested back into the pupils and into the Year Six children.	
501	(Very passionately, ticking things off on her fingers)	
502	I Pupil premium does not apply for early years, I don't think at the	
503	moment.....	
504	R No sorry. I meant through the school's budget.	
505	I Are you saying that pupil premium is used for early years education in the	
506	primary school?	
507	R That was my understanding...	
508	I The children are allotted a certain amount.	
509	R Yeah, In Nursery Schools the budget allotted to nursery children is	
510	invested into resources for these children not for children in Year Six. The	
511	school that I worked in called it pupil premium.	
512	I So this partially goes to the answer is there a reason in your opinion why	
513	Nursery classes in Primary Schools should not be enough for the Early	
514	Years Educational Sector?	
515	R So you mean take away the Nursery Schools and just have Nursery	
516	Classes?	
517	I Yeah.	
518	R I don't even know how to answer that. No. God No..... It would just take	
519	away everything. In order to do that you would need to invest millions if	
520	not billions of pounds into people understanding Early Years. (Suddenly	
521	sitting bolt upright, nodding sideways emphatically, facial expression	
522	indicating what appears to be dismay!)	
523	I But technically Early Years Teachers in a Nursery Class must understand	
524	Early Years?	
525	R But no, because like I said before, they're not Early Years trained. The	
526	gentleman that I worked with was a Year Six teacher the year before he	
527	became my manager as a Nursery manager. He had no experience of	
528	Early Years. He didn't even know what EYFS was. He was put there	
529	because of his management skills. He wasn't put there because he	
530	understood what he was doing as an early years expert. So many	
531	teachers who are in a primary school are put into Early Years as a part of	
532	the whole shift of the school. In the school that I worked in you had to	
533	move every year. When I was leaving, which was part of the reason I why	
534	I left, they were going to move me to reception because they didn't value	
535	what I did in Nursery. She saw that shift as a promotion and an indication	
536	that I was valued as being better than just a nursery class teacher!! When	
537	I spoke to the Head she couldn't understand why I just wanted to be a	
538	Nursery Teacher. I didn't want to be a Reception Teacher, and the next	
539	year, be a Year One Teacher because my passion was in nursery. She	
540	couldn't understand that as a Head. She thought that it was because I	
541	was lazy or because I thought Nursery was easy. (Leaning forward, both	
542	feet firmly planted on the ground, expression appears to be pleading for	
543	me to understand. Serious facial expression, clenched fist, chopping hand	
544	movements to emphasise words, look of incredulity)	
545	I So it was seen as a promotion?	
546	R For me to move up? Definitely. It was seen that giving me a class in	
547	reception was more important than me carrying on in Nursery and doing	

Line	Transcript	Notes
548	what I believed in. And part of the reason I didn't want to move into	
549	reception was because it became so formalised because the children had	
550	a set timetable and they were expected to do phonics everyday, well to	
551	be honest we had to do phonics in Nursery, but it was delivered like the	
552	children were in a Year One class! Blends and phonemes! No early years	
553	strategy, no early years approach!! The Literacy Hour, the Numeracy	
554	Hour, there was assemblies, you know, everything was timetabled about	
555	their day. And they were in Nursery!! These were my children going on to	
556	an even more regimented Reception yet she wanted me to become a	
557	Reception Teacher. (Sitting back suddenly, jerky hand movements,	
558	obviously very, very frustrated, frowning and looking sad)	
559	I Doesn't that go against the context of the EYFS. Because the EYFS says	
560	that..	
561	R But that's what happens, they see Nursery as the bit where children get	
562	to play at learning and the Reception as the school readiness and then	
563	Year One they're are straight into the formal teaching. And when I spoke	
564	to my school about things like the Scandinavian approach where they	
565	don't even do formal teaching till age seven, the Deputy Head, who was	
566	the Early Years Co-ordinator looked at me as though I was mental,	
567	because she just couldn't grasp it. When I said about Reggio, I was	
568	actually asked what book that was!!! (One palm sweeping off the other in	
569	a forward movement indicating straight into formal teaching. Finger	
570	twirling around by head, indicating mental)	
571	I Ok.	
572	R And after I've left now somebody said something about Reggio and they	
573	said, 'Oh yeah ----- used to talk about that but they didn't understand	
574	anything to do with where all these pedagogies and philosophies and	
575	everything that we do in the early years comes from. It was just, you're	
576	playing with the children. In schools, Nursery is seen as the bit where the	
577	children make their friends, Reception is the bit where we get them	
578	ready for school and we get them setting down for as long we need them	
579	to sit down and then Year One they are straight into formalised teaching.	
580	It was topsy turvy because although making friends is important in	
581	nursery the top down effect from the school meant that there were	
582	expectations of inappropriate 'schooling' for want of a better word, to fit	
583	in with the schools ethos! (palms facing inwards indicating a segment,	
584	moving to the side to indicate another segment and again)	
585	I Wow!	
586	R So to take out Nursery Schools altogether just means that there aren't	
587	enough Nursery Schools, and therefore not enough Teachers who	
588	understand Early Years. And so that's what it's gonna end up being like.	
589	It's gonna go back to what it was like 50 years ago before Early Years	
590	Education became what it is today. Nursery is the bit where you play,	
591	then we teach them to write and then you go into school. (Open palm,	
592	sideways paced motion, travelling outwards incrementally)	
593	I Ok. So I think you've answered this question actually. In the past 13 years	
594	more than 100 Nursery Schools have been closed or amalgamated	
595	nationally. Can you state, in your opinion, the impact, if any, on the loss	
596	of Nursery Schools? And I think you've just very, very ably stated what	
597	you feel about the loss.	

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598	R I'd love to be able to go into a school and ask their Nursery teachers, well	
599	I have, like I did, what's Reggio, what's your belief, what's your	
600	pedagogy? I don't even think that some Nursery class teachers	
601	understand what the word pedagogy means because... well with nursery	
602	class teachers as I have experienced.....and there is such a lack of	
603	understanding of what Nursery Schools do. (Open palms facing upwards,	
604	tight bouncing movements. Raising shoulders indicating what appears to	
605	be 'matter of fact' and acceptance of an inability to change that fact)	
606	I So is there any reason why Nursery Schools should not be enough for the	
607	Early Years Sector?	
608	R I am not a political person really so I don't know the answer to that	
609	question based on the Early years structure we have at the moment, so	
610	clearly there must be some use for the PVI sector.....maybe really for	
611	parents... but in my honest opinion, in terms of early years education....	
612	nursery schools are way out there ahead of everyone else..... way out	
613	there!! (Speaking quite quickly, voice getting louder, hands moving away	
614	from each other indicating distance. Quite emphatic!)	
615		
616	I But do you see that as a phenomenon within the Educational world or is	
617	it a far bigger than just...	
618	R It's a far bigger picture. The Government does not value Nursery	
619	education. They are constantly changing the goalposts with the Children's	
620	Centres. They haven't looked at the impact Children's Centres have had	
621	on communities. They don't understand...	
622	I What would be your ideal Early Years Strategy?	
623	R The Government are just continually cutting the funding and moving	
624	services out. But they haven't really valued the impact that good early	
625	years provision does for families and research says that Nursery Schools	
626	within an integrated setting like a Children's Centre, is best. It all goes	
627	back to the fact that the Government does not understand Early Years.	
628	The Government don't know the pedagogy, the ethos, and the research	
629	behind what's important in Early Years. And personally I don't like to get	
630	into the politics, but I think if they understood it a little bit more then	
631	perhaps we wouldn't be in the situation that we're in where Heads, like I	
632	spoke about earlier, are continually having to fight for value in their role.	
633	That's what you find as a Nursery teacher and somebody who is	
634	passionate about Early Years, that you are fighting for people to believe	
635	in what you do and you shouldn't have to. You don't fight to ask a Year	
636	Six teacher why they are so incredible or why what they do is so amazing.	
637	Why should we have to fight for people to value what we do? I'd love to	
638	see somebody come and spend a day being a Nursery teacher and doing	
639	what we do and having the energy that we have and understand the level	
640	of thinking that goes on and then tell me that it's not any good and I	
641	should just go back to being a primary school teacher because that is a	
642	better career move for me. (Alternating between enunciating and	
643	punctuating some words and then into a rush of speech, catching breath,	
644	pointing emphatically in the air)	
645	I OK, I see that you feel quite strongly about this but could you just	
646	elaborate a bit about your ideal Early Years Strategy?	
647	R I would ensure Nursery Schools are secure and that they have a role in	

Line	Transcript	Notes
648	leading early years education. That's it for me really.	
649	I Thank you very much, that was the last question and you'll be pleased to	
650	know that the interview is officially over. Thank you.	

Interviewee Personal details	Recruitment and retention	Early years pedagogy/philosophy/ethos Teaching and learning	Status/perceptions	Work/life balance	Daily routines and role responsibilities
<p>NSCT01</p> <p>Role: Nursery class teacher in a Nursery School</p> <p>Age: 26 In service: 4 yrs</p> <p>Current post: 9 months</p> <p>Qualifications: BA honours with QTS</p>	<p>I wanted to make a difference to children's lives. And because I wanted to be an early years teacher because I value that as the most important stage in a child's development. I trained to be a primary school teacher and I always thought I'd be a Year Six teacher but then in my final placement I went to a children's centre and fell in love with nursery and everything it stands for.</p> <p>I have heard of new the Early Years Teacher status and I think that is ridiculous</p> <p>I'm an Early Years Teacher and I have done a four-</p>	<p>The children will come in and we do the register with them. We greet them. We say hello. We see how they are doing. Err..... and then we go into free- flow and so they can go and choose what they want to do and we play partner and become involved in what they are doing and talk to them. They have the choice to go outside or inside and we support them in that. And then because it is a fulltime nursery we have a story session before lunch and then we have our lunch hour where we go down with the children to have dinner or go outside with them. And then in the afternoon there is free flow again apart from on a Friday and a Monday. On a Monday we sometimes have music with a music teacher who comes in, or on a Friday we have a party if it is a child's birthday or we have a celebration of some sort – whether it be.</p>	<p>Perceptions of colleagues</p> <p>I've been a part of a school that perhaps didn't value Early Years Education as much as it should be valued and you can see the effect that it has on the children and on the staff.</p> <p>That we play with children, we babysit children, we're the glorified childminders in a school and that they see.</p> <p>When I spoke to the Head she couldn't understand why I just wanted to be a Nursery Teacher. I didn't want to be a Reception Teacher, and the next year, be a Year One Teacher</p>		<p>The Nursery class budget in the school that I worked in was non-existent for three years. The Nursery class had no budget. No budget for resources or anything. It was. If you wanted to cook you had to seek approval first to buy the ingredients. If you wanted maths resources you had to go to the Maths Co-ordinator. If you wanted literacy resources you had to go to the Literacy Co-ordinator but then when you go and try to explain to these co-ordinators that you wanted a pair of tweezers because that links to sorting or with the Literacy co-ordinator because that links to fine motor they don't understand that</p>



	<p>year degree to become a teacher. I haven't had a dumbed down qualification handed to me, and so what they are trying to do is demoralise Early Years teachers by taking away that stance of being a teacher and going through those qualifications and having to do all that and to be able to mean that a TA can go through a year's training and become an Early Years teacher is just..... but then the Cathy Nutbrown report was saying that some of these Teaching Assistants don't have enough qualifications and it's the whole hair or care and then now they are bringing out something that means that those people who</p>	<p>before school we will come in and, and I will come in early and make sure the environment is set up for the children. Urm we, at the end of each day we have a reflection on what the children have been doing and what interests have occurred and any observations that we've done and what we've picked out from that. And then we talk about how we can move that on or deepen the learning and the thinking for the following day. Or if it's an interest, then it's what can we do next? And how can we develop this?</p> <p>We have briefings and meetings. We have a briefing on a Monday and a meeting on a Wednesday. And then teachers have a teaching and learning meeting on Tuesday, where again we discuss learning and development and children's progress, things like that</p> <p>It's for children it's they learn the skills and the independence and they have the intrinsic motivation to learn and to</p>	<p>because my passion was in nursery. She couldn't understand that as a Head.</p> <p>She thought that it was because I was lazy or because I thought Nursery was easy.</p> <p>Perceptions of the public I find a lot of parents believe that if they get their children into the school that has the nursery with the school that they wanna be, that they want their child to go to, it's not because it has a good Early Years ethos, it's because they'll make friends and I find that in Early Years, people don't know what an Early Years Teacher is. A lot of people underestimate what an</p>	<p>it's all interlinked. You cannot just say, that child is doing maths because they don't recognise it if they are not sitting there with numbers. They are learning about so much more than just. You know like painting. They're not just painting. You don't go to the Art Co-ordinator to request supplies because the children are just painting. They're learning to write, they're leaning to mark, they're learning colours, they're learning textures, what happens when I mix this with this? It's not just something you can just label as they are doing painting today. So budget wise that was extremely difficult.</p> <p>Not an independent budget. No. The second year</p>
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	<p>didn't want to be hairdressers and wanted to be Nursery Nurses can now then become an Early Years Teacher and can do my job..... And I'd like to see, you know, and even my TAs, I'd like to see them do.... have my..... not being big headed, but have my depth of understanding and to be able to do the planning and the observations and to be able to look at the deeper level stuff because that's not something that just comes through doing a course or through having a label it's through study and research and experience and hard work and caring.</p>	<p>explore. And it's just amazing to be a part of that everyday and watch them grow and develop. And when you have those wow moments where a child says something or does something that's truly incredible it's just indescribable so that's what Early Years Education means to me.</p> <p>it's a whole massive part of my life and what I believe in and what I see as extraordinary and you know, you, the weekend you find you are thinking about what to do next week or you see something and that becomes a motivator for you to, to do something or to buy something</p> <p>I find in Children's Centres a lot of them (teachers) are like that. They want to be there, they're part of it, they've chosen to be an Early Years Teacher. I find in..... From my experience of Primary School Early Years teachers, that they've been told that they need to go into Nursery and actually if you are put into Nursery in a primary school it's</p>	<p>Early Years Teacher does— that we have the same qualifications that every other teacher has - in fact probably more, often, because we've done the research, we've done the study visits, we've done the reading.</p> <p>the way (roles in the EYS) that was publicised made out that everybody who works in Early Years isn't very well qualified. Err .....but to a certain degree I agree with that the training to be an Early Years Teaching Assistant or Nursery Nurse needs to be more rigorous and more..... And from my experience of university I, my Primary Teaching course didn't include a lot of Early Years</p>	<p>that I was there we had a budget of £1000 for Early Years. So that was four reception classes and a 120-place Nursery class.</p> <p>In Nursery Schools the budget allotted to nursery children is invested into resources for these children not for children in Year Six</p>
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		<p>seen that you are not a very good teacher.</p> <p>Research and training and books and experience and experience.</p> <p>(The context of dialogue) those professional discussions and you can research and learn and develop and it's not something that you can just do. You can't just be a Early Years Teacher because you are doing a little bit more than just playing with children.</p> <p>observations and researching with the children as well. So it's their interests, their discussions and questioning and knowing when to observe and when to question and making those questions meaningful and not just a test. Not just what colour is that? Having those genuine conversations with the children about what they are doing, about what they are interested in and as an adult using your knowledge and your experience to push that interest further</p>	<p>But again it's that lack of understanding about what Early Years does with the child, what Early Years Teachers do. How people who understand Early Years work with children. It's not just babysitting</p> <p>Perceptions of leadership aspirants</p> <p>for me Headship is not something that I think I want.</p> <p>I think my passion lies more in working with the children. I think Nursery Heads have a lot to deal with politics and a lot to deal with staff management and issues and that detracts from the children and, and being a part of the children and everything we love about Early Years sometimes</p>		
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		<p>to engage them deeper in it so my children are really interested in space so it's about not just floating along the surface of that's a planet. We live on Earth. It's looking at gravity. It's looking at how can we get to space. What can we do? It's problem solving with them and setting up those challenges and having those provocations in the environment so that they're continually excited by something that they once said. It's sparking that interest with them and keeping that going so that they're continually engaged with the environment and with what they are doing and they wanna come to nursery and they are excited to come to Nursery and that they know that they are being appreciated and what they say is being valued and they're driving it further and you are there with them</p> <p>the EYFS is a guidance and the quality of the provision that you provide for children in Early Years is</p>	<p>can get lost in the fight and the constantly changing agenda and fighting for politics and fighting to stay aaah....., you know to stay aaah..... viable Nursery School, you know and I just – that's not my passion</p> <p>I think that it's challenging and requires special people. Very special people, Very challenging.... and you know, it's an extraordinary job and like I said, I think actually it's, it's, it's harder than, than a primary school to a certain extent because you are fighting people for them to believe that it's not just given to you. So yeah, I think Nursery Heads are extraordinary</p> <p>And I think somebody</p>		
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		<p>dramatically different across the sector. It goes back to the understanding of children not just playing and the EYFS not just being a tick chart of things that the children have to achieve. It's more about what they are gaining, what life skills they are doing, how they are developing. And within the context of the play there is so many different things going on.</p> <p>Government's plans for adult/child ratio deregulation) So that you can have two members of staff in a room, that's just, to everybody who believes and understands early years that's just ridiculous because how can one person be there helping and playing and being alongside all of those children.</p>	<p>who perhaps doesn't have that experience or passion or has ulterior motives i.e. through money that can drastically change the experience the children get. Err, private Nurseries. With the new thing that's come out that you only need - the new ratios for babies – I can't remember.</p> <p>The interests that children have in Nursery School can sometimes shape their whole career and that's just not valued.</p>		
Interviewee	Career Plans in 3-5 years	Nursery Classes	Private settings	Nursery Schools	Safeguarding
	I hope to do my Masters in the next three to five - well to have completed my	It was a four form entry Primary School. Err, and I was the Nursery teacher along side a Nursery manager err	I think that they are often business and therefore money driven so don't place	Nursery Schools, especially the ones that have Children's	

	<p>Masters in the next three to five years.</p> <p>I want to do a Masters In Early Education and I'm very interested in research and theories and pedagogy. So I would like to be on the leadership team of a school I think – possibly as the SENCO. But then I also, it sounds really high, but maybe then write a book ...Write one of these inspirational books about a certain element of Early Years. And maybe be, I don't know, a uni lecturer I don't know. Teach the students how to be an Early Years Teacher. I want to look at the advanced skills teacher's</p>	<p>and there was five or six teaching assistants in a Part time Nursery and err. And when I say the school didn't value it, the building was old, it was dark, there was no training opportunities, there was.....the staff were demoralised and they were very much used to doing things the way that they've always been done. But Early Years Education has moved on so much in people's understanding of children's development and what works, that they needed new life to be put into the learning environment</p> <p>I was met with so many barriers err and it was almost we were there to babysit the children and play with them but even teacher colleagues higher up in the school....., even, even the Early Years Co-ordinator wasn't somebody who believed in Early Years and wasn't an Early Years teacher. So that just meant that it didn't matter what I did or what we did to change, it was never gonna</p>	<p>as much emphasis on the children's learning. Err..... they often don't have teachers or people who have Early Years qualifications to a higher level behind them and so need support from Children's Centres or from Early Years Teachers in order to make sure that the quality of the experience the children get is what they deserve.</p> <p>(Government's plans for adult/child ratio deregulation) But to a private nursery it may be fantastic because it's more money saving, they don't need as many members of staff and they haven't got as many staffing costs so they, you know. The government have sold it</p>	<p>Centres attached, they're a base for a whole family not just for three and four-year-olds. Nursery Schools are Government funded ways of parents accessing childcare but not just private nursery childcare, it's quality childcare with the LEA maintained, so there are teachers, there are Head Teachers there are deputies there is a clear management structure linked to staff qualifications and experience. It's ensuring the children are getting the quality of care they deserve. And with Children's Centres attached like I said, it's a base for the whole family.....the whole community.</p>	
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	<p>role as well. because that incorporates the Children's Centre role where you can do the outreach work and you can work with private settings and schools who perhaps don't have as much of an understanding about the importance of Early Years and support them in that. And I think when I said about writing a book and thing, that's where my passion lies.</p>	<p>become embedded because it wasn't valued, because it wasn't seen as something that was important to the school.</p> <p>I think Early Years specialist Primary Teachers need to continue to research and read and dialogue about children's learning and be passionate about children's learning experiences.</p> <p>It's a whole other structure. Early years is just like bit added on in my opinion. They are far more focused on the statutory bits, from Reception onwards.</p> <p>I think that it's just the pits really. The pressure is from Year Six downwards. So there's no value to Nursery. It's seen as the bit where the children make friends for Year One. You know, there was no value anything the Nursery did. They were just part of the school.</p> <p>Three and four-year-olds were</p>	<p>that they are gonna pass on the savings to parents. And to parents it probably sounds brilliant because it's gonna bring down their childcare bill.</p>	<p>A Nursery School is a Local authority school that is focused just on early years, They need to have a head teacher and a deputy and teachers.</p> <p>In a Nursery School, with my experience of teaching in a Nursery School and Children's Centre, you have got a holistic approach. There's the emphasis on the children learning and early years being a vital stage of development. You've got family support there to support the parents. You've got colleagues who are like-minded, who you can have those professional discussions with. You've got experience and knowledge</p>	
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		<p>going to have to sit in an assembly because that's what the whole school did. Who expects a three or four-year olds to sit for an hour through something they don't understand. What's the purpose of it? What's the point? But it's that, it's that you're part of the school and this is what the school does. It was so school readiness and what children needed to do for school not what children needed to learn that would put them in their mindset for the rest of their lives.</p> <p>It was seen that giving me a class in reception was more important than me carrying on in Nursery and doing what I believed in. And part of the reason I didn't want to move into reception was because it became so formalised because the children had a set timetable and they were expected to do phonics</p>		<p>and the whole setting is driven for that stage. So I found that you feel more valued as a member of staff but also that the children's experience is a million times better.</p> <p>Whereas in a Nursery School you have money for resources, you have money for trips, you have money for cooking and you have money for food ingredients. You have money for anything to do with what you need to enhance the children's experience. It's not enough because it'll never be enough, because you can never do enough but there is a lot more money available because the money that the children</p>	
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		<p>everyday, well to be honest we had to do phonics in Nursery, but it was delivered like the children were in a Year One class! Blends and phonemes! No early years strategy, no early years approach!! The Literacy Hour, the Numeracy Hour, there was assemblies, you know, everything was timetabled about their day. And they were in Nursery!! These were my children going on to an even more regimented Reception yet she wanted me to become a Reception Teacher.</p> <p>they see Nursery as the bit where children get to play at learning and the Reception as the school readiness and then Year One they're straight into the formal teaching. And when I spoke to my school about things like the Scandinavian approach where they don't even do formal teaching till age seven, the Deputy Head,</p>		<p>get through pupil premium is invested back into the pupils and not into the Year Six children</p> <p>I am not a political person really so I don't know the answer to that question based on the Early years structure we have at the moment, so clearly there must be some use for the PVI sector.....maybe really for parents... but in my honest opinion, in terms of early years education.... nursery schools are way out there ahead of everyone else..... way out there!!</p>	
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		<p>who was the Early Years Co-ordinator looked at me as though I was mental, because she just couldn't grasp it</p> <p>When I said about Reggio, I was actually asked what book that was!!!</p> <p>And after I've left now somebody said something about Reggio and they said, 'Oh yeah ----- used to talk about that but they didn't understand anything to do with where all these pedagogies and philosophies and everything that we do in the early years comes from. It was just, you're playing with the children.</p> <p>It was topsy turvey because although making friends is important in nursery the top down effect from the school meant that there were expectations of inappropriate 'schooling' for want of a better word, to fit in with the schools ethos!</p>			
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		<p>I'd love to be able to go into a school and ask their Nursery teachers, well I have, like I did, what's Reggio? What's your belief, what's your pedagogy? I don't even think that some Nursery class teachers understand what the word pedagogy means because... well with nursery class teachers as I have experienced.....and there is such a lack of understanding of what Nursery Schools do.</p>			
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Interviewee	Training and CPD	Sustainability/Early Years Strategy	Leadership and management	Leadership style	Ofsted
	<p>if I go to my Head Teacher with something that I am interested in and if I can justify what it's gonna do for the Centre or what it's gonna do for the children in my class then it's normally something that I can access</p> <p>the training opportunities there are varied and</p>	<p>Issues Take away the Nursery Schools and just have Early Years But no, because like I said before, they're not Early Years trained. The gentleman that I worked with was a Year Six teacher the year before he became my manager as a Nursery manager. He had no experience of Early Years. He didn't even know what EYFS was. He was put there because of his management skills. He wasn't put there because he</p>	<p>I think, err..... Nursery Heads have a lot to juggle. And it's probably one of the more challenging headships.</p> <p>It's a far bigger picture. The Government does not value Nursery education. They are constantly changing the goalposts with the Children's Centres. They haven't looked at the impact Children's</p>		

	<p>wide and you don't just concentrate on education..... You get to know about the Children's Centre side of it as well and family support</p> <p>I've been on a Speech and Language four-day course, which looked at how we can support Speech and Language Therapists and develop children who have a speech and language difficulty. Err....., I've been on an Early Ed course which looked at brain development and Neurolinguistic Programming with children and how their err..... How what they do as a baby can affect their whole lives err..... and how the brain assimilates information. I've been to Pen Green, which is a centre, and</p>	<p>understood what he was doing as an early years expert. So many teachers who are in a primary school are put into Early Years as a part of the whole shift of the school. In the school that I worked in you had to move every year. When I was leaving, which was part of the reason I why I left, they were going to move me to reception because they didn't value what I did in Nursery. She saw that shift as a promotion and an indication that I was valued as being better than just a nursery class teacher!!</p> <p>So to take out Nursery Schools altogether just means that there aren't enough Nursery Schools, and therefore not enough Teachers who understand Early Years. And so that's what it's gonna end up being like. It's gonna go back to what it was like 50 years ago before Early Years Education became what it is today. Nursery is the bit where you play, then we teach them</p>	<p>Centres have had on communities.</p> <p>The Government are just continually cutting the funding and moving services out. But they haven't really valued the impact that good early years provision does for families and research says that Nursery Schools within an integrated setting like a Children's Centre, is best. It all goes back to the fact that the Government does not understand Early Years. The Government don't know the pedagogy, the ethos, and the research behind what's important in Early Years. And personally I don't like to get into the politics, but I think if they understood it a little bit more then perhaps we wouldn't be in the situation that we're in where Heads, like I spoke</p>		
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	<p>looked around the centre but also looked at Schemas and schematic play with children and again that links to brain development and how children learn.....</p> <p>Err..... I've been on some ECOS training about environment</p>	<p>to write and then you go into school.</p>	<p>about earlier, are continually having to fight for value in their role. That's what you find as a Nursery teacher and somebody who is passionate about Early Years, that you are fighting for people to believe in what you do and you shouldn't have to. You don't fight to ask a Year Six teacher why they are so incredible or why what they do is so amazing. Why should we have to fight for people to value what we do? I'd love to see somebody come and spend a day being a Nursery teacher and doing what we do and having the energy that we have and understand the level of thinking that goes on and then tell me that it's not any good and I should just go back to being a primary school teacher because that is a better career move for me.</p>		
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## **Sample – Development of themes from transcript NSCT01**

### **Early years in Primary schools –**

- lack of early years pedagogical approach – Quasi-professionalism in early years – accepted as the norm
- ‘Inappropriate schooling’ of early years children
- Regimented Reception classes
- Poor resourcing of nursery classes – very limited budget!
- Resistance to seeing early years practice as specific
- Lack of value of the role – was seen as better than a Nursery teacher and offered a role in Reception – ‘where real learning begins’

### **Qualifications –**

- Anger and resentment at the ‘dumbing down’ of qualifications

### **Experience –**

- Strong theme of early years ethos, research, philosophy coming through
- Passion, pride and enthusiasm for early years pedagogy – superior standpoint regarding this level of practice not being widespread in PVI’s and Nursery classes
- Strong CPD
- Strongly in favour of nursery schools and Children’s Centres and their holistic approach
- The ‘fight’ to be valued

### **Leadership career plans**

- Not wanting headship in early years – seen as challenging, always fighting, juggling a lot

### **Government**

- Lack of value and understanding of early years – Government’s plans seeming to benefit PVI’s
- Cutting funding – disruptive to early years

### **Nursery schools**

- Budget allotted goes on resources for early years
- Professional discussions, research, depth in teaching and learning experiences, praxis
- Like-minded colleagues, feel valued as a professional

## Appendix 6

# Early Years Leadership Questionnaire

This questionnaire is being conducted as a part of the requirement for the EdD award in Leaders and leadership in Education at the University of Birmingham. The objective is to learn about factors that are associated with a leadership role in the Early Years Sector and I would be grateful if you would complete this questionnaire which should take approximately 30 minutes of your time. All individual responses will be kept confidential. The responses provided will not be attributed to any individual because your rights as a respondent is paramount and these rights stipulate that there should be no adverse effects from taking part in this questionnaire. The completed questionnaires will only be used to gather statistical data and some personal perspectives of factors associated with headship. To ensure anonymity please return completed questionnaires in the enclosed pre-addressed envelope. A fax number and postal address can be found at the end of this questionnaire for anyone responding to the electronic version. Please ensure that you do not put your name and details of your school on your return fax or on an envelope should you choose to return by post.

A completed, returned questionnaire will be seen as consent to the statements below. I would really value and appreciate your participation in this research.

Kind regards

*Valerie Daniel*

- 1. I confirm that I have read and understand the purpose of this questionnaire.**
- 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free not to answer any questions if I so wish.**
- 3. I agree to take part in the questionnaire.**
- 4. I understand that the findings from the questionnaire will be written and shared and that my quotes may be used as part of written papers and/or books.**

## Section 1

### Background information

**1. What is your date of birth?**

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Month      Day      Year

**2. Were you born in the UK?**Yes ..... ☐No ..... ☐**3. What gender are you?**Male ..... ☐Female ..... ☐**4. What is your role in the EYS?**Nursery Manager PVI Sector ..... ☐HLTA ..... ☐EYP ..... ☐Nursery Teacher (Nursery School) ..... ☐Nursery Teacher (Nursery Class) ..... ☐Head Teacher (Nursery School) ..... ☐Head Teacher (Primary with Nursery Class) ..... ☐Other (Please state) ..... ☐**5. Your highest professional qualification?**Level 2 Early Years Qualification ..... ☐Level 3 Early years Qualification ..... ☐Level 4 Early Years Qualification ..... ☐QTS ..... ☐Bachelors' Degree ..... ☐Masters Degree ..... ☐Doctorate/PHD ..... ☐Other ..... ☐ Please specify .....**6. Any additional professional status?**EYPS ..... ☐EYTS ..... ☐NPQH ..... ☐NPQICL ..... ☐LLE ..... ☐NLE ..... ☐Other ..... ☐ Please specify .....**7. What year did you start your leadership career?**

\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Month                      Year

**8. How long have you been an Early Years leader?**

- 1-5 years..... ☐
- 6-10 years.. ..... ☐
- 11 - 15 years..... ☐
- 16 - 20 years..... ☐
- 21 years and above..... ☐

**9. How many hours do you work in a normal week?**

- Under 40 hours ..... ☐
- 41 – 50 hours ..... ☐
- 51 – 60 hours ..... ☐
- 61 hours and above ..... ☐

**10. How much time on average do you spend on management tasks during the work week? E.g. budgeting, staffing, planning, meetings**

- 0 hours ..... ☐
- 1 - 10 hours ..... ☐
- 11 - 20 hours ..... ☐
- 21 hours and above ..... ☐

**11. How much time on average do you spend on leadership tasks during the work week? E.g. development of shared vision for the school, paperwork, performance management, meetings, budgets, staffing, stakeholders**

- 0 hours ..... ☐
- 1 - 10 hours ..... ☐
- 11 - 20 hours ..... ☐
- 21 hours and above ..... ☐

**12. How much time on average do you spend working with and for children during the work week? E.g. teaching, cover duties, assemblies, observations, learning walks**

- 0 hours ..... ☐
- 1 - 10 hours ..... ☐
- 11 - 20 hours ..... ☐
- 21 hours and above ..... ☐

**Please continue on to Section Two – Attitude and perceptions**



## Section Two

### 13. Which of the following best describes your feelings about your leadership role?

- I usually enjoy my leadership role..... ☐
- I sometimes enjoy my leadership role..... ☐
- I rarely enjoy my leadership role..... ☐
- I never enjoy my leadership role..... ☐

### 14. Has the role of Leader in the Early years Sector lived up to your expectations?

- As expected..... ☐
- Better than expected..... ☐
- Worse than expected..... ☐

### 15. How has the constancy of educational reform in recent years affected you?

- I struggle with the frequency of change..... ☐
- I sometimes struggle with the frequency of change..... ☐
- I rarely struggle with the frequency of change..... ☐
- I never struggle with the frequency of change..... ☐

### 16. How important is teacher expertise to the EYS?

- Totally unimportant..... ☐
- Unimportant..... ☐
- Important..... ☐
- Very important..... ☐

### 17. Does early years education only serve the purpose of making young children ready for school?

- Definitely..... ☐
- Possibly..... ☐
- Partially..... ☐
- Not at all..... ☐

### 18. Are you hoping to continue in your role for at least the next 5 years?

- I will definitely continue..... ☐
- I will probably continue..... ☐
- I may continue ..... ☐
- I will not continue..... ☐

### 19. How likely are you to continue in your role till retirement age?

I will definitely continue.....☐

I will probably continue .....☐

I may continue .....☐

I will not continue.....☐

### 20. How much do you agree with each of the following political statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
<b>a.</b> The standard of early years provision is similar across the Early Years Sector (EYS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>b.</b> Ofsted inspections across the maintained and non-maintained EYS are exactly the same	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>c.</b> The role of Early Years Leader is understood by colleagues in other educational sectors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>d.</b> Teachers with QTS are essential to the EYS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>e.</b> Early years Professional Status and Early Years Teacher Status are more than enough for the EYS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>f.</b> Early years education policy should be developed in conjunction with early years experts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>g.</b> The complex nature of the role of Early Years Leader is appreciated by colleagues in other educational sectors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>h.</b> The complex nature of the role of Early Years Leader is appreciated by government officials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>i.</b> Private early years settings are seen as valid in the government's strategies to improve the life chances of young children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>j.</b> Nursery Schools are seen as valid in the government's strategies to improve the life chances of young children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>k.</b> Nursery classes are seen as valid in the government's strategies to improve the life chances of young children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>l.</b> Other professionals value early years education expertise.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>m.</b> Head teacher colleagues in the primary and secondary sectors have a much harder job than nursery school head teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**21. How much do you agree with each of the following personal statements?**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
<b>a.</b> I have a sense of accomplishment from my work in Early Years.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>b.</b> I have adequate administrative support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>c.</b> I have adequate Local Authority Support Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>d.</b> I am happy with my safeguarding remit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>e.</b> I have adequate training and continued professional development for my leadership role in the EYS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>f.</b> I have time available for activities that put balance in my life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>g.</b> I have highlighted succession planning as a key aspect of my sustainability plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>h.</b> My change management strategies as a leader are adequately dealing with the pace of change to the EYS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>i.</b> I am coping with budget constraints	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>j.</b> I feel the Early Years Sector is valued by the Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>k.</b> My salary is commensurate with my responsibilities as an Early Years Leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>l.</b> My salary is commensurate with the responsibilities of my headship role in the EYS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>m.</b> I can recommend the EYS headship role to headship aspirants.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Please continue on to Section Three – Comments section**

**1) Please state in your opinion if and why the PVI sector could be considered enough for the EYS?**

**If? (Yes or no)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Why?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2) Please state in your opinion if and why nursery classes in primary schools could be considered enough for the EYS? If? (Yes or no)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Why?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**3) Please state in your opinion if and why nursery schools should continue to be considered as a viable option for the EYS?**

**If? (Yes or no)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Why?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**4) Please describe why you chose a career as an Early Years Leader?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5) Please suggest how the profile of Early Years education and care could be raised in the educational sector?**

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**6) In your opinion what would be the reason why Early Years Leaders may leave their posts pre-maturely?**

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**7) Please suggest how headship roles in the EYS could be promoted as a viable career option for headship aspirants?**

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**8) Please comment on the role of the Early Years Leader in reference to the following?**

**a) Multi-agency working**

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**b) Work/life balance**

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**c) Managing change**

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**9) Please comment on these topical issues**

**a) The diverse array of early years provision**

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**b) Plans to increase the child to adult ratio in the EYS**

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**c) Could you suggest how the EYS could be better defined to aid the efficient function of the sector?**

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**d) How should Nursery Schools be defined in the context of the EYS?**

- ☐ As providing childcare for parents (An aspect of the diverse available early years provision for the purpose of getting parents back into work)
- ☐ As part of the Primary sector (A pre-reception facility for the purposes of school readiness)
- ☐ As a publicly funded educational school sector within its own right -  
(An educational sector within its own right encompassing the expert care and education of young children)

**Any other suggestions and definitions?**

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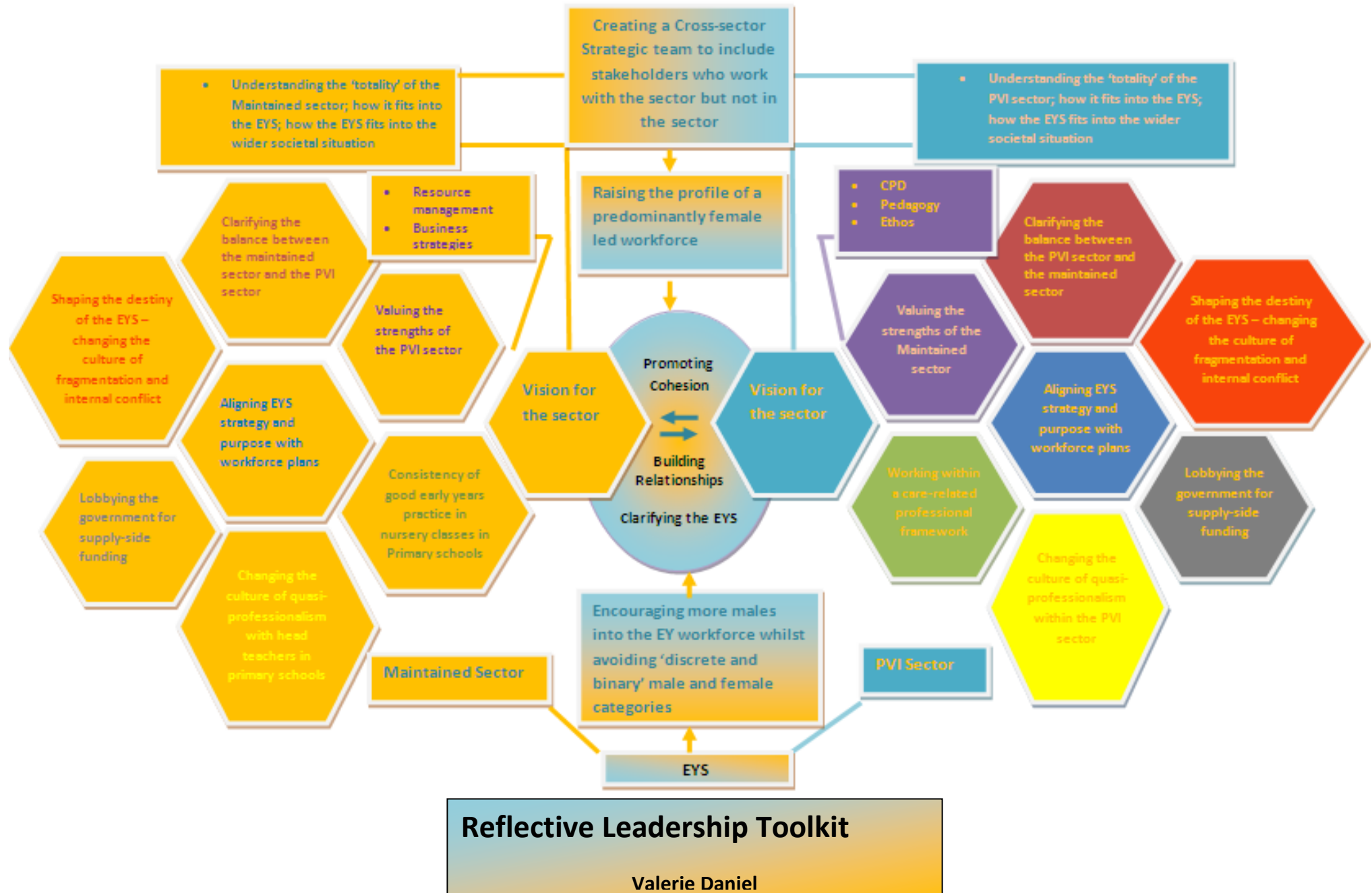
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**Thank you**

(Fax and postal address removed)

## Appendix 7



### **Explanation of the Toolkit Diagram:**

The Maintained Sector side of the diagram is a consistent orange colour representing the consistency and professional makeup of the maintained sector.

The PVI Sector side of the diagram is colourful representing the diversity of the sector and the professional make up of the sector.

The middle of the diagram is a two-colour gradient representing contextual input rather than a blended approach; the aim being to clarify and define purpose, vision and collaboration with regard to collectively working for the best possible outcomes for children and families.

The writing on the PVI Sector side is a consistent orange colour and the writing on the PVI side is colourful signifying an attempt to understand the totality of the sector.

### **Reflective EYS leadership Toolkit**

#### **Intended outcomes:**

This process introduces challenge into the EYS; challenge in that there are a series of problems to be solved as well as opportunities to be explored.

#### **The benefits of this toolkit:**

- More holistic understanding of the EYS
- An open discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of the sector
- Increased knowledge exchange between the PVI sector, the maintained sector and stakeholders
- Creating opportunities for:
  1. Cross-sector working
  2. An opportunity to recognise and deal with popular fallacies
  3. A less politically correct approach with a deeper understanding of particular issues within the sector
  4. A broader range of language to describe the EYS
  5. Use of the toolkit in local and national policy development



- The toolkit is designed to continue being a work in progress with the capacity and flexibility to add to the process as new information arises.

#### **Structure of the toolkit:**

- Intended outcomes and benefits of the toolkit
- Overview of the purpose of the toolkit
- A conceptual framework consisting of: factors of the crisis/ the culture created by the crisis and a questionnaire/observation template.

**This toolkit needs to be explored by a Cross-sector team of appropriately diverse representatives and stakeholders.**

#### **Suggested stakeholder list:**

- PVI Sector leadership representatives - reflective of the diversity of the sector (to include investors; sole traders; large chain providers, Charities, Board members)
- Maintained sector leadership representatives – MNS head teachers; Primary school head teachers; Aspirant teacher leaders; Reception teachers; School's Business Managers; Governors, Education advisers
- Children's Centre representatives; Health professionals
- Training providers, colleges and universities; Early Years Advisers; Ofsted
- Local Authority representatives; Education Directors; Service Directors; Schools Forum Chairs; LA Finance representatives; LA legal representatives; Representatives from housing and Services for Children and Families;
- Councillors
- Parents

<p><b>Factors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor design of the sector</li> <li>• Unprecedented growth of the sector</li> <li>• Lack of vision for the sector</li> <li>• Fragmentation</li> <li>• Inherent dualism within the sector</li> <li>• Deficit thinking</li> <li>• Path dependency</li> <li>• Internal conflicts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Culture:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unnecessary and unhelpful complexity within the EYS</li> <li>• Privatisation – valuing quantity over quality: No corresponding growth or investment in public sector or state EY provision</li> <li>• Dysfunctional, multi-layered and a continued bifocal system in the sector;</li> <li>• Destabilisation – The sector is difficult to describe and navigate for parents, stakeholders and people who work within the EYS</li> <li>• Incoherence and lack of congruence in: recruitment; retention; resources; qualifications; CPD; roles; remuneration; professionalism</li> <li>• A language of deficiency surrounding families in need; a propensity towards: Oppressor/Oppressed; Donor/Recipient; benefactor/beneficiary roles; poor access to high quality provision in poorer areas</li> <li>• A build-up of complex and multi-layered systems; a loss of sight of the of the original purpose of policy decisions; embedding directionless principles and policies; continued division between ‘care’ and ‘education’; anomalies; dichotomies; inconsistencies; a funding system that is built on the divided principles of ‘marketisation’ and ‘universalism’ – demand led funding with supply-side subsidies; the</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The tenuous position of EYS leadership</li> </ul>	<p>unique position of early education being delivered by the PVI sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political correctness; biases and prejudices; internal rivalry, territorial disputes; self-interest and opportunistic grabs at wealth; focalised view of the sector; unhealthy competition; insecurity: fear; jealousy; envy; resentment; lack of agency; different professional heritages; restrictive vs. expansive working environments; living in a bubble; micro-politics; lack of depth and richness in learning experiences for children in the PVI sector; lack of pedagogy, ethos and early years philosophy in the PVI sector; technicians vs. praxeologists</li> <li>• Ever expanding remit and responsibility; lack of status; varying degrees of professionalism; quasi-professionalism in the PVI and primary sector; different leadership contexts; managing change in a time of rapid and relentless policy changes; the discontinuation of the Graduate Leadership Fund; early years leadership continues to be an enigma; compromised sustainability; operating with dwindling resources and severe budget cuts; management of the perfect storm across the sector</li> </ul>
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The questionnaire is designed to be filled out at the very beginning and again at the end of a six weeks exploration process and given to course leaders for analysis. The questionnaire will then be used as a guide for discussions. Rate each question on a scale of 0 – 3; 0 = not at all/untrue and 3 = very well/true.

**The EYS is in crisis**

**Don't know                      0    1    2    3**

**Please explain:**

**The EYS is in need of transformation**

**Don't know                      0    1    2    3**

**Please explain:**

**The system design reasons for silo working are understood**

**Don't know                      0    1    2    3**

**Please explain:**

**The cultural effects of silo working are understood**

**Don't know                      0    1    2    3**

**Please explain:**

**The risks of the sector tipping unhealthily too far towards the private sector are understood**

**Don't know                      0    1    2    3**

**Please explain:**

**The risks of lack of investment in public sector/state EY provision are understood**

**Don't know                      0    1    2    3**

**Please explain:**

**Stakeholders and leaders who work in the sector, understand the totality of the EYS**

**Don't know                      0    1    2    3**

**Please explain:**

**The current funding system is understood**

**Don't know                      0    1    2    3**

**Please explain:**

**The risks of demand-led funding with supply-side subsidies are understood**

**Don't know                      0    1    2    3**

**Please explain:**

**The effects of rapid and relentless policy changes are understood**

**Don't know                      0    1    2    3**

**Please explain:**

**The reasons for rapid and relentless policy changes are understood**

**Don't know                      0    1    2    3**

**Please explain:**

**The challenges of leadership in the maintained sector are understood by PVI sector leaders**

**Don't know                      0    1    2    3**

**Please explain:**

**The challenges of leadership in the PVI sector are understood by maintained sector leaders**

**Don't know                      0    1    2    3**

**Please explain:**

**The factors regarding the perceptions of a leadership crisis in the EYS are understood**

**Don't know                      0    1    2    3**

**Please explain:**



**The culture within the EYS is understood?**

**Don't know**

**0**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**Please explain:**

**Reviewing the Ecology of the EYS from research findings is an essential aspect of understanding the current conditions impacting the ecology of the EYS. This will be conducted from the Leadership Framework depicted below on page 305. The matrix works as a part of the Reflective Leadership Toolkit to highlight and aid discussion of the current context of the EYS. The framework indicates external and internal factors affecting the EYS and how they impact on the ecology of the sector. The framework also indicates the central professional implications and key findings from the research. In conjunction with the toolkit, the aim is to develop some professional recommendations for the sector. The opinions expressed in the framework are those of research interview participants and the matrix is designed to state these opinions without interpretation despite their controversial nature. It is essential to formulate discussion guidelines at the beginning of this process to ensure that the controversial nature of stated opinions does not detract from the process of open debate and the aims of an improved EYS.**

#### **Instructions**

**Devise meeting and discussion protocols to include a board for 'sticky notes' to capture the opinions of all leaders involved in the forum.**

**Opinions can be added to the matrix but none will be taken away without an agreed consensus after doing deeper research into any controversial areas of discussion. The purpose of this exercise is to open up debate in the sector and to have an understanding of other perspectives in the EYS. This should widen the narrative surrounding the EYS.**

External		Ecological (EYS)			Internal		
<i>Policy</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>PVI</i>	<i>Maintained Sector</i>		<i>PVI</i>	<i>Maintained Sector</i>	
2 yr olds in the maintained sector	Training  Staffing ratios	Long work hours	Bureaucracy		Marketing	vs	Admissions
Staggered intakes	Loss of funding	Low wages	Nursery Schools	Primary Schools	Is it necessary to have an Early Years Maintained sector?	Does the PVI sector cater more for parents?	
			Closure and federations of nursery schools				
Loss of full time places	Safeguarding concerns	No additional funds for policy directives	Nursery Schools	Primary Schools	PVI capacity to meet sufficiency needs	Nursery Schools	Primary Schools
Loss or reduction in Children's Centre services	Concerns for children with Special Education Needs (SEN)		Nursery School operated PVI		PVI disinclination to work with children with SEND	Loss of budget	
	Sustainability		Competition with PVI's		Lack of full support for children with safeguarding needs	Lack of full support for children with safeguarding needs	Lack of full support for children with safeguarding needs
			Need to remain competitive with fees while still paying out Council rates for staff wages				

EYFS	Same curriculum but different expectations	Profit-making (sustainability)	Non-profit making		Selection	Inclusion	
					VS		
Early Years Teachers role without QTS	Less pay  Can't work in Primary school beyond Reception	Discontent in regard to lack of parity with QTS despite inferred parity with QTS	Two-tiered system in the EYS  Resentment in regard to parity with QTS		Varying domain knowledge basis for the EYS role	QTS teachers seen as expensive	
Early years Professional status	Arbitrary concept of professionalism in the EYS.  Fragmentation				Varying and generally insufficient skills for an early education remit  Varying salaries for what is promoted as the same role	Resentment regarding 'dumbing down' Early Years qualifications	
Ofsted	Different Ofsted regimes	Varying quality in the PVI	Nursery School	Primary School	Heavy focus on tasks and routines	Nursery School	Primary School
			Consistent good and outstanding quality in Nursery Schools	Unclear and inconsistent quality in Nursery classes in Primary schools	Early education taken quite literally	Focus on Early Years ethos, philosophy and pedagogy	Nursery classes in primary schools not deemed as important as the rest of the school

Budget allocations for the Early Years	Complicated demand-led with supply-side subsidies  Sustainability of the EYS	Lack of definition, purpose and target audiences resulting in simple solutions for complex issues	Nursery School  Attempts to fund equitably despite unequal workforce pay and conditions	Primary School	Not enough funding for the PVI sector for new Government initiatives	Nursery School  The need for restructures and debilitating cost saving measures to remain sustainable  Loss of staff and the threat of impaired quality	Primary School  Not enough funding from the schools budget share for nursery classes in primary schools
Local Authority Budget cuts	Loss of services  Loss of school budgets  Loss of staff/  Restructures  Struggling to balance budgets	<b>Turbulence</b>			Loss of support in training and quality assurance for the PVI sector	Loss of Local Authority support to the maintained sector.  Loss of quality HR and ER advice resulting in added expense to buy in expert advice  Threats to the viability of MNS	
Early years single formula funding	Loss of budget to the EY maintained sector	<b>Tension</b>			Budget gains for the PVI sector	Resentment and internal conflicts in the EYS. Concerns about political correctness which favours the PVI sector	

Living Wage	Negative impact on PVI's budget	For working parents	Heavy social responsibility remit – getting mothers back to work	Tensions regarding more wages for staff and the impact of offsetting increased expenditure on to parents in regard to increased fees	Nursery School Concerns about the differences between educational leadership and business management and the impact on children	Primary school Concerns about the profit imperative in the PVI sector resulting in hiring younger and less experienced staff
Anti-poverty Strategy	Widening remit Integrated working		Loss of funding for Children's Centre services	Safeguarding remit vs. Retention of clientele	Loss of funding for safeguarding remit but increased expectations for safeguarding and child protection from the maintained sector	
Non-expert elective members leading Early Years policy change	Regression of Early Years practice back to the 1950's	<div>Cross Sector</div> <div>Social care model instead of constructivist model</div>		Arbitrary and unfocussed remit which is heavily in support of a business model for the EYS	Nursery School Ongoing loss of MNS Competition with PVI and primary schools for recruiting and retaining children	Primary School Increased capacity for flexibility resulting in competition for recruiting and retaining children
Political rhetoric regarding a highly qualified workforce in the EYS	Culture of 'good enough' quality in the EYS.	Focus on Business management skills to sustain business	Highly qualified workforce Consistent high quality led by experts in Early Years education	Focus on the profit margin Tensions about doing the same at the maintained sector but not being valued in the same way.	Nursery School Strong curriculum development in MNS Concerns about curricular adherence in the PVI sector Concerns about quasi-professionalism being rife in the PVI sector and in primary school Early Years	Primary School Primary school head teachers lack of skills, knowledge and expertise in Early Years and the impact on performance management

## Questions

1. Are the opinions expressed in the matrix recognisable?
2. Are they still relevant?
3. Is there anything to add?