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An Investigation into
Distributed Leadership in Primary Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates factors that help and hinder primary schools in their distribution of leadership in England. Distributed leadership is defined as collaborative leadership within a culture of shared action and interaction. The research extends beyond teacher leadership and delegated leadership, which are limitations of previous studies, whilst contributing to the developing knowledge of distributed leadership practice in the UK- about which little has been previously written.

Ofsted reports and LA recommendations were used to select four primary schools within North East Lincolnshire. Schools selected were identified as good schools and believed to distribute leadership. Using a mixed methods approach, 53 questionnaires were analysed using SPSS, to screen two schools for further study. These schools were further investigated using a multiple case study design. Semi structured interviews were conducted with two primary headteachers, one deputy and one assistant head, two teachers and two teaching assistants, enabling the researcher to consider the interactions and analysis of leadership practice at group level, and the complexities of the situation.

A narrow research focus on four primary schools, and subsequent interviews with eight stakeholders in two schools is a very small sample size, and indicative of further study. However, the study is apposite at a time of demographic crisis in teaching in England; with 40% headteachers in primary schools over fifty and likely to retire in the next decade, the increasing numbers of part time teachers, and the increased number and extended use of teaching assistants in primary education.

The study provides a framework of thinking about distributed leadership in primary schools, which at a pragmatic level might help other schools in the development and sustainability of leadership. This framework includes: processes, school culture, structural organisation of schools, sources of leadership, and barriers to distributed leadership.

Findings show that whilst all collaborative leadership is distributed, not all distributed leadership is collaborative. Distributed leadership was found to exist alongside other forms of leadership, and although it was frequently planned, it sometimes occurred by default or through desperation. It was particularly effective where schools invested in the leadership development of all stakeholders, and in a culture of trust, support and encouragement. The Senior Management Team was particularly influential within this. Barriers that inhibited distributed leadership included traditional structures and systems- both within the schools and the local authority.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Why this study?

Barth (1998) coined the phrase 'learning community' to describe a whole school approach to learning, and during my teaching career I have been fortunate to be part of a learning community where the headteacher has facilitated learning opportunities for all stakeholders. Within the school numerous teaching and support staff have extended their learning and gone to study at college and university, gaining qualifications including degrees and higher degrees. This has had a positive impact on the school, its learning and teaching, and has reinforced an important message, that learning is for life.

Distributed leadership is one area that the school has invested in, particularly in developing the role of subject leaders. However, levels of success have been variable and more recently this success has been challenged by an increased number of part time staff. As the number of part time staff has risen, so too have the demands placed on full time staff to undertake additional curriculum areas and leadership responsibilities.

Elsewhere within the school, distributed leadership has been more effective and extended beyond teacher leadership. The school administration officer for example is developing her role as the school's bursar, enabling the head to focus on learning and teaching. Teaching assistants are also being given leadership responsibilities.

The school is continually seeking ways to sustain and extend leadership in order to improve, and this is an issue facing many schools. Ashton (2007) reports a shortage of primary school leaders and recognises that 40% of headteachers are now over or approaching 50 years of age and will soon be retiring. To address this concern, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and local authorities (LAs) are promoting job-share, and schools are even considering headship by managers who have never taught. The National College of School Leadership (NCSL) is also focusing on a 'Future Leaders' project to recruit heads from other acceptable sources.

These initiatives are controversial, largely because they are targeting leaders who do not have a background in Education, and illustrate the urgency to find solutions to sustainable school leadership. Furthermore, they do little to address school leadership beyond the headteacher. Nevertheless, schools can be creative places of learning where people find solutions and ways to resolve problems.

Within this study, the author is interested in investigating how primary schools might develop a distributed leadership perspective to enable sustainable leadership and school improvement. Rethinking leadership structures to enable teachers to focus on teaching and learning, and creating opportunities for others to lead and manage is necessary. In a climate where schools are constantly bombarded with governmental initiatives, there is concern that school leaders will 'burn out' and that leadership will remain ineffective if it is left in the hands of a few individuals. The author is interested in finding out the circumstances in which distributed is effective, so that the research can contribute to developing an understanding of the practice of distributed leadership, and ultimately how this might impact the child.

1.2 Overview

Effective leadership teams contribute to the success of a school (Hallinger and Heck (1996, 1999), and traditional models of school leadership have tended to focus on the headteacher, the deputy and in some cases, the assistant headteacher. These traditional and autocratic models of school leadership have been criticised by many people including Harris (2005) and Spillane (2006) as outdated and ineffective. However, school leadership has been slow to change, and a brief overview of the history of school leadership over the last 20 years helps to explain this.

Barth (1988) contended that schools needed more leadership than the headteacher had time for, and almost a decade later West Burnham (1997) referred to the role of headteacher as something 'historically constituted almost impossible.'

> The model of headship is one of omni competence: the skilled practitioner plus curriculum leader, plus technical expert, plus all the manifestations associated with being the figurehead. It is no wonder that

> head teachers seek early retirement or suffer a range of work related illnesses. (Ibid, 1997: 17)

During the 1990s research from the effective schools movement invariably considered leadership to be, and continued to reinforce leadership as a singular action (Hallinger, 2005). Accounts were given of heroic and charismatic leaders transforming schools, helping to reinforce and maintain the profile of singular leadership models. However, critics including West-Burnham (2003), and Hargreaves and Fink (2006), believed that in order for leadership to be sustained, and not at the expense of the leadership of other schools, singular models of leadership should be replaced with inspirational leadership and the adoption of a distributed perspective.

In 2007 there is a general consensus of opinion that sustainable leadership is an issue facing our schools. For Hargreaves (2007), sustainable leadership spreads and is dependent upon the leadership of others. Hargreaves defines sustainable leadership as:

> A shared responsibility that does not unduly deplete human or financial resources, and that cares for and avoids exerting damage on the surrounding educational and community environment. (Ibid, 2007: 8)

Southworth and his work within the NCSL also highlight the issue of sustainable leadership.

> Schools are facing a retirement 'bulge' some time in the next decade as the post-war generation of school leaders leaves the profession. 42% of England's heads and deputies are over 50, which means we should brace ourselves for a wave of retirements. This grey exodus will create a serious leadership succession problem if we don't tackle it- and tackle it soon. (Southworth, 2003: 11)

As applications for leadership posts continue to fall, there is a growing urgency for changes in school leadership and the development of a future generation of school leaders. Alternate ways of sustaining effective school leadership need to be found and one possibility is a move away from hierarchical, traditional models of leadership and to a more distributed approach. Researchers and educationalists are having to think 'outside the box' to develop creative solutions.

Distributed leadership has been targeted as a model for sustained leadership in the 21st century, receiving significant interest from the National College. Storey

(2004) warns of the danger that such a high level interest endorses this approach. Furthermore, sustainable school leadership must not be confused with sustainable school improvement. If distributed leadership is to be targeted as a solution to sustainable leadership, more research is needed to develop an understanding of leadership practice. Research into distributed leadership is variable in terms of quality and findings, and within the UK the work of Harris is largely normative-focusing on distributed leadership from a teacher's perspective. The impact of distributed leadership on school improvement remains unclear and Harris (2005) acknowledges a paucity of research evidence in the UK. Spillane (2006) is also critical of distributed leadership for its failure to consider the interactions and analysis of leadership practice at group level.

1.3 Context of Thesis

Schools are constantly changing to meet the demands of the changing world in which we live. In part, leadership change is attributed to an increased agenda and is susceptible to influence from governmental initiatives. Weindling (1990) and O'Sullivan et al. (1998) cite national and political 'utopian policies' like the national curriculum and national testing, as key catalysts for the changing face of leadership. More recent initiatives including 'Excellence and Enjoyment', 'Every Child Matters' and changes in workforce remodelling legislation, have furthered the need to reconsider models of school leadership, to enable school improvement and sustainable leadership.

It could be argued that effective school leadership is no longer the sole domain of the head and senior management team. Leadership roles are widening and being taken on by more people, to enable schools to realise their vision. But are these roles distributed or delegated? And what is the impact of this on the school and the children per se?

Delegated leadership is a hierarchical process in which little attention is paid to the interactions between leaders and followers. West-Burnham (1997) argues that this is an inappropriate model for schools, which are concerned with people and learning. By its very nature, delegated leadership does not imply ownership and a

desire to want to do the job. West- Burnham and O'Sullivan (1998), and Paterson and Coleman (2002) argue that this form of leadership is less motivational than distributed leadership- which assumes shared and collaborative responsibility and is consequently preferred. Furthermore, research from Weller (2002) and Rutherford (2002) found that under delegated leadership, tasks tend to be management oriented rather than leadership in function.

Research from Hargreaves (2004) supports this view. In a study that examined the effects of Educational change on the emotional responses of staff, findings from interviews with 50 teachers highlighted that change was perceived most negatively when it was imposed and external in nature. Conversely, where change was as a result of self-initiation, collaboration, and perceived as having direct benefits on the children, it was more positively received.

> More important than whether the source of the change is external or internal is whether it is implemented in a way that is professionally inclusive and supportive and demonstrably beneficial to students or not. (Hargreaves, 2004: 303)

It will be interesting to investigate the process of distributing leadership and how different staff perceive themselves within this.

Fullan (2002) advocates school culture and school leaders as the two most important ingredients of distributed leadership, and central to its success. Fullan suggests that school leaders need to change and become cultural change leaders if they are to be effective in the future. He believes that instructional leadership is inadequate in today's schools and recognises leaders of the future possessing five characteristics: moral purpose, understanding change, improving relationships, creating and sharing knowledge, and being able to make sense of the internal and external context of schools (coherence making). These characteristics will inform the content of questionnaire and semi-structured interview schedule design.

1.4 Purpose of Thesis

Bennett et al's (2003) extensive review of distributed leadership is overwhelmingly supportive of developing a distributed leadership perspective. However, two key issues emerge that need to be addressed when considering the development and practice of distributed leadership in our schools. Firstly, research failed to develop our understanding of leadership practice. Secondly, it did little to measure the impact of distributed leadership on pupil achievement. The purpose of this thesis therefore, is to investigate the practice of distributed leadership within two primary schools in the UK, and begin to consider its impact on the child.

Bennett et al. (2003) cite a shortage of empirical studies that show distributed leadership in action. Spillane (2006) supports this concern, observing that few studies have looked at the interactions of leaders, followers and their situation. For Bennett et al. (2003) and Spillane (2006), distributed leadership is not a blue-print of leadership but a framework of thinking, that can give us an insight into how and why leaders do things. Harris and Mujis (2002), and Harris (2005) share this view, but also report a limited research base into the distribution of leadership within the United Kingdom. This has forced researchers to look at studies from the USA, Canada and Australia in particular, in order to obtain a shared view of leadership within schools and consider its impact on the improvement of learning and teaching. Of course, this raises issues surrounding: cultural differences, transferability and generalisability of findings. In the USA for example, leadership programmes availed to teachers have grown strongly over the last ten years and are culturally accepted by researchers and fellow teachers (Smylie, 1995). The acceptance of distributed leadership in the UK however, may take an equal length of time, requiring continuous professional development and changes in understanding and acceptance of a shared leadership model. It will be interesting to determine attitudes towards the distribution of leadership and opportunities that support its implementation.

A compelling body of evidence exists to demonstrate the significant effects of school leadership on school conditions and pupil learning. However, research

caveats include findings invariably based on American studies, and limited research conceptualising student outcomes. For example, Bennett et al. (2003) criticise early studies for providing no empirical data on the effectiveness of distributed leadership and its impact on pupil achievement. The impact of distributed leadership on children is fundamental because this is what schools are about. However, leadership research per se is generally criticised for failing to measure its impact on the child (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2005), and where studies have focused on leadership effects on student outcomes, results have been mixed. The lack of leadership research that measures its impact on pupils is an issue for this research design.

1.5 Structure of Thesis

The thesis is organised into the following chapters:

- Chapter 1: Introduction;
- Chapter 2: Literature Review;
- Chapter 3: Research Methodology;
- Chapter 4: Analysis of Findings;
- Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings;
- Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations.

1.6 Summary

LA recommendations and OFSTED reports will be used to identify a target sample of successful primary schools in North East Lincolnshire, which are believed to distribute leadership. Questionnaires will be issued to staff within these schools including: headteachers, deputies, assistant heads, teachers, teaching assistants and administration staff. This will provide nominal and ordinal data about the perceived structure and organisation of leadership within the school from different sources, and inferential statistics will allow for comparative statistical analyses.

Following the quantitative approach and analysis of questionnaire responses, a qualitative approach will be used.

> Questionnaire responses only acquire meaning when there is opportunity to interrogate the data with those who supplied the information and are able to both lend it a context and point to some of the dynamic interrelationships among the individual questionnaire items.
> (Macbeath, 2005: 351)

A purposive sample including the headteacher, deputy or assistant headteacher, a class teacher and teaching assistant will be interviewed using a semi-structured interview schedule. This qualitative element to the research design will provide a rich level of data for analysis, and provide greater insight into the humanistic elements of leadership than could be achieved by quantitative methods alone. This is particularly important in the research of distributed leadership because it will enable the practice aspect of distributed leadership to be investigated; allowing the researcher to ask questions of how, why and when leaders do things.

> Knowing what leaders do is one thing, but a rich understanding of how and why, and when they do it is essential if research is to make a meaningful contribution to understanding and improving leadership practice. (Spillane and Orlina, 2005: 161)

Spillane and Orlina (2005) are critical of recent literature, arguing that interactions of leaders, followers and their situation have been under explored. However, distributed leadership is experiencing a rise in interest, which is in part funded from the NCSL and in partial response to political concerns surrounding sustainable leadership. A semi-structured interview technique will allow the researcher to probe and investigate responses to develop an understanding of a distributed perspective, as is recommended by Harris (2005) and Macbeath (2005) when research generates new ideas and hypotheses. This technique has also been chosen because of the current political climate facing our primary schools and the flurry of recent initiatives. These include: the developing role of the teaching assistant to support planning, preparation and assessment time, the creation of Higher Level Teaching Assistants, and further issues surrounding funding of teaching and learning responsibility payments, may all be impacting distributed leadership. A qualitative approach therefore, that will enable flexibility and a deeper level of questioning through probes and prompts, is recommended.

More research is needed to develop an understanding of the practice of distributed leadership. This will be achieved by asking what, why, when and how leaders do things. As Spillane (2006) states, 'studying the how as well as the what [of distributed leadership] is essential.' (Ibid: 7). These types of question will be asked through themes that have emerged within my review of literature. These include:

- Processes of distributing leadership: How are stakeholders involved in the process of distributing leadership and how are they supported? What are the quality of actions and interactions like between leaders and followers in their school? What support systems are in place?
- School culture: To what extent does a collaborative, supportive culture facilitate distributed leadership? How are staff involved in the decision making processes? What inhibits leadership from being distributed?
- Structural organisation of schools and distributed leadership: What structures facilitate/ inhibit distributed leadership? What is the role of the Headteacher/ SMT within the development of a distributed perspective?
- Sources of distributed leadership: What are the circumstances in which distributed leadership occurs? How is leadership distributed? Is it carefully planned, or does it occur through default, or by desperation... as result of crisis?
- Barriers: What are the challenges, tensions and difficulties that prevent distributed leadership?

In addition, the author will begin to investigate the impact of distributed leadership on the child, as this is an area that remains under explored (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2005; Spillane, 2006).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will begin by defining leadership, working towards the author's own definition of distributed leadership. It will consider leadership change within schools, and suggest that although traditional models of leadership remain prevalent in today's schools, they are outdated and that there needs to be a move away from traditional models of top-down leadership and headteachership, to a more collaborative approach.

The argument in favour of leadership change will be established within the context of sustainable leadership. Sustainable leadership will be thought of in terms of building a mass of leaders within schools, without compromising the development of others (Hargreaves, 2007). It will be suggested that sustainable leadership requires immediate attention, to address concerns of a pending retirement bulge of school leaders, and distributed leadership will be recommended as a means of sustainable leadership.

There will then be an overview of caveats of distributed leadership research including: a changing focus of leadership over time, concerns about the transferability and generalisability of research findings across different cultures and types of school, and warnings of the limited research base that exists to measure the impact of distributed leadership on children.

Distributed leadership research will be examined under headings that emerged through my reading. These are: the process of distributed leadership, the importance of culture in facilitating distributed leadership, structural organisation of schools and distributed leadership, sources of distributed leadership, and barriers that prevent schools from effectively distributing leadership.

The main findings of the literature review will be summarised before the chapter concludes with a framework for research, which will inform hypotheses and research design in Chapter 3.

2.2 Defining Leadership

The concept of school leadership has many definitions, and in a review of literature commissioned by the National College of School Leadership (NCSL) Southworth (2003) has identified 350. Whilst this might suggest that there is disagreement about what leadership is, analysis of various definitions reveals areas of commonality. For example, leadership is typically recognised as a social concept that concerns the social interactions between leaders and followers. Bass (1990) acknowledges the importance of this interaction and defines leadership as:

> the interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of the members. Leaders are agents of change- persons whose acts affect other people more than other people's acts affect them. Leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation or competencies of others in the group. (Ibid: 19-20)

Whilst this definition defines the relationship as a social influence, Spillane (2006) points out that one of its problems, and a limitation of definitions of this type, is their tendency to define leadership in terms of results. This restricts this definition, and others that focus on positive outcomes because there are examples of good and effective leadership throughout history where outcomes are negative.

Spillane (2006) asserts that people can perceive activities as leadership, even if they are not influenced by them, and offers a definition of leadership as:

> activities tied to the core of work of the organization that are designed by the organizational members to influence the motivation, knowledge, affect and practices of other organizational members as intended to influence their motivation, knowledge, affect and practices.
> (Spillane, 2006: 11)

This definition usefully recognises the social aspect of leadership; helping to distinguish different forms of leadership and facilitating a definition of distributed leadership per se.

2.2.1 Defining Distributed Leadership

Traditionally school leadership has been perceived as an autocratic and one-way process, invariably directed by the headteacher. However, Spillane's definition (2006) recognises that leadership can be a dynamic, two-way process of influence whereby leaders are not only able to influence other members of a school, but are also susceptible to influence from them. This idea is central to distributed leadership and is supported by Harris (2005), who states that 'within distributed leadership… leaders do not only influence followers but are influenced by them.' (Ibid, 2005: 13)

Bush and Glover (2003) report that the origins of distributed leadership stem back over 20 years. Throughout its history, definitions of distributed leadership have emerged through changes in our schools, as a result of the nature of shared leadership and to whom leadership responsibilities are distributed. Various definitions may contribute to the high levels of disagreement and confusion about what distributed leadership is. For example, in broad terms distributed leadership is perceived as a shared and collaborative activity that exists under the guidance of the headteacher. Although this broad definition helps to develop an understanding of what distributed leadership is, its broadness also fails to distinguish distributed leadership from other forms of shared leadership, including for example: teacher leadership and delegated leadership. Storey (2004) is critical of broad leadership definitions, believing that they confuse and contribute to '… the details of its meaning and implications often remain[ing] under-explored.' (Ibid, 252)

An extensive review of literature into distributed leadership by Bennett et al. (2003) illustrates this criticism. Amongst their conclusions it is reported that the majority of early research into distributed leadership is limited to studies of teacher leadership. Wasley (1991) defines teacher leadership as: 'the ability to encourage colleagues to change, to do things they wouldn't ordinarily consider without the influence of a leader.' Here, it is assumed that teachers assume leadership roles to influence their colleagues. Katzenmeyer and Moller's definition (2001) of teacher leadership as a form of distributed leadership makes this assumption explicit.

> Teachers who lead are leaders within and beyond the classroom, [they] identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influence others towards improved educational practice. (Ibid, 2001: 4)

Early definitions of distributed leadership are criticised because they are invariably restricted to the leadership of teachers and senior leaders; failing to account for the leadership potential of different stakeholders, they offer a narrow perspective of what distributed leadership might look like in today's schools. Although distributed leadership may encompass teacher leadership, it does not remain exclusive to them nor the senior management/ leadership team. For example, official government statistics on teacher recruitment show that the number of teaching assistants employed by primary schools in England has increased dramatically in the last three years. Figures have risen from 69,310 in 2002 to 95,450 in 2005 (Source: NAHT, March 2006). This is a large source of potential leaders that would be excluded from early definitions of distributed leadership.

Gronn (2000), in defining distributed leadership, characterises it as an emergent property of a group or a network of individuals. This is an improvement on earlier definitions because it accounts for the changing demographics within the primary school work force- whilst recognising distributed leadership as a group activity that requires individuals to work together as a team, combining expertise.

The notion of teamwork is also reflected in Yukl's (2002) definition, where distributed leadership is defined as:

> A shared process of enhancing the individual and collective capacity of people to accomplish their work effectively... Instead of a heroic leader who can perform all essential leadership functions, the functions are distributed among different members of a team or organization. (Yukl, 2002: 432)

Bennett et al. (2003) favour definitions that recognise distributed leadership as a combined level of expertise that is spread across many people. However, a fundamental criticism of these definitions is their failure to recognise the importance of conditions and school culture that are critical to distributed leadership. School culture is an important feature of distributed leadership, and

should be included in its definition because it can help to distinguish it (distributed leadership) from delegated leadership. Harris (2005) believes this is very important because distributed and delegated leadership frequently get confused. 'To think this way is to misunderstand what distributed leadership means and to confuse it with traditional, hierarchical notions of power.' (Harris, 2005: 9).

Delegated leadership is a hierarchical process whereby leadership tasks are given to other people, with little attention being paid to the interactions that take place between them. Although there may be occasions when leaders need to delegate tasks in order to get things done, ignoring the importance of people interactions can be negative and potentially damaging. For West-Burnham (1997), a delegated approach to distributed leadership is an inappropriate model for schools because of their raison d'etre. Schools are concerned with people and learning, and learning requires people to take risks. This happens all the time as people acquire new skills, knowledge and understanding- exposing weaknesses, ignorance and misunderstandings. The author contends that if learning and leadership are supported, people are more likely to take risks and learn new things and have the potential to become more effective leaders.

The argument that delegated leadership is ineffective is supported by research from Scoggins and Bishop (1993), Weller and Weller (2002), and Rutherford (2002). Through independent studies into the increased delegation of leadership responsibilities on deputy and assistant headteachers, it was concluded that the roles and responsibilities of deputy and assistant heads were maintenance rather than developmental or leadership in function. Although delegation appears to have got jobs done, the implications are that it (delegated leadership) does not provide good value for money, failing to realise and exploit leadership capabilities. These conclusions might explain the reluctance of headteachers to share leadership responsibilities, even to members of staff within senior management team, if the results have been disappointing.

The confusion that exists between delegated and distributed leadership highlights the need for a clear definition of distributed leadership. Various definitions

abound, that characterise distributed leadership as a shared and collaborative responsibility where staff are empowered and given authority to lead. However, to be successful distributed leadership requires a particular environment where individuals can work collaboratively to form a network of school leadership. Smith and Sharma (2002) describe this environment as 'high-alignment/ high autonomy' where 'it [is] critical for all employees, not just formal leaders, to take responsibility for shaping the organisation and its resultant performance.' (Ibid, 2002: 197).

Harris is a major contributor to research on distributed leadership, and whilst her early studies offered a normative view of distributed leadership that tended to focus on teacher leadership, more recent work offers a wider understanding. For Harris, distributed leadership is defined as 'a collective leadership responsibility rather than top down authority... constructed through shared action and interaction.' (Harris, 2005: 9).

This definition encompasses leadership responsibilities beyond the headteacher, senior management team and teachers (teacher leadership). It also compares favourably with Goleman's definition, where '[distributed leadership] resides not solely in the individual at the top, but in every person at entry level who, in one way or another, acts as a leader.' (Goleman, 2002: 14). This definition complements Spillane's work (2005a), where effective leadership is identified as shared by a number of people within an organisation rather than an individual.

As distributed leadership has evolved through its own course of history, so too have its definitions. For the purpose of this thesis, the author will combine features of various definitions to define distributed leadership as *collaborative leadership within a school, that is developed through a culture of shared action and interaction.* Collaboration is an important feature of this definition, and whilst all collaborative leadership is distributed, not all distributed leadership is collaborative. The extent to which there is collaboration will depend upon the situation (Spillane, 2006; Hargreaves 2007). This is not simply the context within which a school operates but the interaction of leaders and followers.

2.3 Leadership Change

Effective leadership is a major contributor to successful schools and evidence from Hallinger and Heck (1996, 1999), Fullan (2001) and Sergiovanni (2001) supports the argument that quality leadership promotes good teaching and learning, and motivates teachers. However, leadership is not a static concept and has evolved through time in response to educational research and through changes in educational foci.

During the 1990s leadership was invariably considered to be a singular action that was synonymous with headship. At this time the effective schools movement maintained the status of singular leadership models, and its popularity was reinforced through accounts of charismatic leaders who heroically transformed schools (Hallinger, 2005). Spillane (2006) likens the era of heroic leadership to headteachers playing centre stage, whilst everyone else had minor parts, and is critical of leadership as a singular action, believing it to be outdated and ineffective.

Schools are unique and each school has its own story to tell. Whilst leadership may be successful in one school it is not guaranteed to be successful if it is transferred elsewhere. The situation in which leadership takes place matters, and this is a particular criticism of effective schools movement research that was invariably based on schools from poor, urban settings. Barth (1988) and West-Burnham (1997) also criticise a singular approach to leadership as being inappropriate and ineffective, asserting that schools need more leadership than can be achieved by the headteacher alone.

If criticism for singular models of leadership is so great, why is leadership change so slow? Webb and Vulliamy (1996) believe that schools have struggled to change from singular leadership to distributed leadership because of legislation and top-down initiatives. For them, distributed leadership remains a 'democratic ideal'. Harris (2002) and Fullan (2005) suggest that the situation remains relatively unchanged with traditional leadership models prevailing, because we live in a climate of accountability and responsibility of outcomes for others.

> It is easier, far easier, to point a finger of accountability in the direction of one person than to acknowledge that leadership is collective, shared and distributed throughout the organisation... To cope with the unprecedented rate of change in education requires... establishing new models of leadership that locate power with the many rather than with the few. (Harris, 2002: 11)

Although the headteacher is extremely important within school leadership they are not one and the same. School leadership is too big to be left in the hands of an individual and successful leadership requires a change in structure from singular, traditional models to include other approaches. Harris (2002) for example, champions distributed leadership as a preferred model to meet the changing demands on our schools in a complex and rapidly changing world. If schools are to remain true to their social function, it is reasonable to assume that their leadership will need to change too, to meet the needs of the community they serve. Schools need to think about the future and remain sensitive to social issues including an increase in the number of single parent families and economic trends (West-Burnham and O'Sullivan, 1998). They need to remain aware of changes in technology and resources that can impact learning and teaching. This requires school leaders to be in tune with their stakeholders, so that they can provide a curriculum and learning and teaching experiences that are relevant to the world in which we live. The author contends that a change in leadership structure and a distributed approach to leadership may facilitate these changes.

Leadership in primary schools is changing. For example, during the last 5 years leadership roles have widened beyond the headteacher and deputy, to include assistant headteachers. Although this is a step forward in sharing the leadership load, it offers a narrow perception of what distributed leadership can be, remaining within the hands of the Senior Management/ Leadership Team (SMT).

For West-Burnham (2003), the purpose of the Senior Management Team is to exemplify everything that the school is about; its values and vision so that others can begin to understand how these principles are put into practice. This is a challenging remit that will remain ineffective and is inadequate if it remains the responsibility of a few individuals. Harris and Lambert (2003) support this view,

and contend that as long as school improvement remains dependent on a single person or a few people, it is destined to fail.

Perceptions of who can lead within our schools are widening in response to an increased agenda and the challenges of the 21st century. Leadership is no longer perceived as the sole domain of the head, nor the SMT and schools acknowledge that no one can do everything but everyone can do something. Leadership is developing from different levels and the leadership load is being distributed to facilitate school improvement. Macbeath (2005) recognises this and reports that: 'today there is much more talk about shared leadership, leadership teams and distributed leadership than ever before' (Ibid: 349).

Different reasons are cited to have contributed to leadership change. These include an increased leadership load that makes it increasingly difficult for leadership to be successful if it is left in the hands of an individual. This is witnessed by changes in legislation during the 1980s that reportedly increased the pressure on singular leadership and head-teachership per se. Weindling (1990) cites the introduction of the national curriculum and national testing, as key catalysts for change in school leadership. More recently Harris et al. (2003), recognises the local management of schools as a contributory factor to leadership change.

Current issues that are likely to impact the nature of school leadership include 'work-life balance', 'teaching and learning responsibility payments', new pension flexibilities and increased numbers of part time staff (Sheilds, 2004; Stewart, 2007). These issues illustrate the complex and challenging remit that schools are faced with, not forgetting the tremendous pressures educational leaders are under to succeed. Collectively these factors are contributing to the changing face of school leadership and the demise of leadership as a singular action; reported by Harris (2005) to be short lived, sporadic and unsustainable.

2.4 Sustainable Leadership

Sustainable leadership is a major issue facing our schools, and numerous statistics abound citing the pending retirement bulge of school leaders. For example, Harris (2005) cites that over 50% of headteachers are due to retire within the next decade. This mass exodus from the profession will leave a substantial gap in school leadership unless action is taken. Moreover, the problem will be exacerbated if likely successors remain unwilling to take on the role of headship. Likely candidates are often left feeling daunted by the high levels of pressure, accountability, responsibility for others and the associated high levels of stress that often come with role.

Hargreaves (2007) sees developing a breadth of leaders as a solution to the sustainable leadership problem. No one leader can control everything without help, and for Hargreaves 'sustainable leadership spreads. It sustains as well as depends on the leadership of others.' (Ibid: 29). However, the problem of sustainable leadership extends beyond headteachers. This is reflected in statistics that report that large numbers of experienced teachers with leadership responsibilities will also retire in the next ten years, leaving the profession and further gaps in school leadership. Alternative forms of leadership are being sought to address this issue and the involvement of the National College of School Leadership (NCSL) is an indicator of concern (Southworth, 2003).

In a quest for sustainable leadership there may be a remodelling of school leadership in the near future. This message is being reiterated elsewhere and interpretations of sustainable leadership are being suggested. Fullan (2005) for example observed that:

> ...the single answer to the question how to increase the chances for greater sustainability is to build a critical mass of development leaders who can mix and match, and who can surround themselves with leaders across the system as they spread the new leadership capacities of others.' (Ibid: 18)

Sustainable leadership however, is more than filling the leadership gap. I believe it is about nurturing and developing good leaders who can begin to understand and work with other people, to develop their leadership potential. This message is being heard and is filtering down to school level. School leaders are interpreting these messages and are equally keen to find solutions to sustainable leadership

that will suit the unique characteristics of their schools. In an interview with a headteacher, Davies et al. (2005) reported:

> It's all about sustainability and what you have to do- in fact leadership is about creating a culture within the school where everyone buys into the responsibility for leadership- if you look to one person to lead it means that there is no sustainability. (Ibid: 36).

Hargreaves (2007) has proposed a thermometer of distributed leadership that combines Harris' (2005) normative view of distributed leadership (2005), with the descriptive approach taken by Spillane (2006). Through a combination of these two theories, Hargreaves believes that distributed leadership can be more powerful; ranging from autocratic and traditional levels of delegation, to guided and emergent distribution where senior leaders learn to let go and encourage staff innovation, to assertive and anarchic distribution- whereby debate and criticism are professionally encouraged. However, Hargreaves' model is largely theoretical and needs to be substantiated by research evidence. Research is needed to develop an understanding of the practice of distributed leadership.

2.5 Caveats of Distributed Leadership Research

Research is generally criticised for its reliability and validity that can impact the quality and accuracy of any results, and whilst these concerns are applicable to distributed leadership, this research is more specifically criticised for its focus on theory development and hypothesis generation. Spillane (2006) criticises distributed leadership studies for focusing on identifying leaders and specifying actions, which he describes as the 'leader-plus aspect' of a distributed perspective. However, Spillane (2006) acknowledges that 'the barren empirical landscape is to be expected, given that ideas about distributed leadership are still in their infancy.' (Ibid: 30)

As a consequence, empirical knowledge on leadership practice is poor. Few studies have investigated the interactions of leaders, followers and their situation, and for Spillane (2006: 84) 'interactions are the key to leadership practice from a distributed perspective.' Clearly, more research is needed in this area.

Through my literature review I have summarised caveats of distributed leadership under three headings: a changing focus of leadership over time, concerns over transferability and generalisability of research findings across different cultures and types of school, and limited research evidence to show the impact of distributed leadership on children. These cautionary warnings will now be examined more closely and their implications considered.

2.5.1 Caveat: A Changing Focus of Leadership over Time

When a leadership style becomes fashionable there is a tendency to assume and assert its importance, rather than demonstrate it (Storey, 2004). This may be the case over the last 25 years, where between 1983-1994 for example, the emergence of the effective schools movement raised awareness and interest of instructional leadership. During this time school leadership was invariably associated with the headteacher, whilst leadership research focused on poor, urban schools that had effected substantial improvements. This arguably elevated the status and importance of singular and top down leadership models (Hallinger and Heck, 1996a, 1996b, 1999).

Hallinger (2005) is critical of leadership research during the 1980s-90s, believing it has made a limited contribution to the 'discussion of instructional leadership as a distributed characteristic or function' (Hallinger, 2005: 6). Furthermore, the validity of research findings to schools in affluent, rural and suburban areas is questionable due to the very nature of effective schools movement research. Research during this period is also criticised for focusing on individual actions. Whilst individual actions are important in developing a distributed perspective, they are only one part of the distributed leadership scenario. 'Interactions, as distinct from actions, are critical. Interactions are the key to unlocking leadership practice from a distributed perspective.' (Spillane, 2006: 84)

Since the millennium there has been a growing interest in shared leadership and distributed leadership per se. However, early studies of distributed leadership have been criticised for a narrow focus, concentrating on what Spillane and Orlina (2005) describe as the 'leader-plus aspect' of distribution. Although the notion that leadership has moved beyond the headteacher to include multiple leaders is an important one, Spillane and Orlina (2005) argue that its importance has been overplayed. Research has tended to focus on what leaders do, with little attention being made to developing an understanding of leadership practice (Hallinger and Heck, 1996, 1999; Spillane, 2006). More research is needed to develop an understanding of how leadership is distributed, so we can begin to understand the interactions of leaders, followers and their situation.

2.5.2 Caveat: Transferability and Generalisability of Research Findings across Different Cultures and Different Types of School

There are limited studies into distributed leadership within the UK, with most UK research credited to Harris. Furthermore, Harris takes a normative view of distributed leadership with a particular focus on teacher leadership. Most research evidence is based on studies from the USA, Canada and Australia, so the warning here is that research cannot simply be transferred from one country and applied to another. As schools differ and have their own culture and way of doing things, so do countries too.

Smylie (1995) recognises that in the USA, leadership programmes availed to teachers have grown strongly over the last ten years and are culturally accepted by researchers and fellow teachers. Therefore, it is not simply a question of applying distributed leadership findings from America and Australia to a UK setting. It might take the UK a similar length of time to the United States for distributed leadership to become accepted here. Furthermore, the United Kingdom may require similar support and professional development to that in America, before distributed leadership is culturally accepted and research findings can be transferred. However, even then there is a danger that these findings cannot be generalised.

Spillane (2006) recognises the need to develop leadership development opportunities for future leaders, widening this beyond headteachers and those with aspirations to be heads. This may require a change in policy and mindset, not only within schools but also at national and local authority levels, where perceptions of who is eligible to leadership training is a real barrier to developing a distributed perspective. 'It is [also] essential to create opportunities for other school leaders and other leadership teams to work together to improve leadership practice.' (Spillane, 2006: 101).

It is imprudent for research findings to be lifted and transferred from one school or culture and applied to another because of their complexity and uniqueness. Schools are complex, unique organisations. They are influenced by a myriad of factors that can affect the distribution of leadership including: the type of school (Portin et al. 2003), the size of school (Camburn et al. 2003) and the school or leadership teams stage of development (Harris, 2002; Copland, 2004). Within the same school, there are often sub-cultures that can influence leadership decisions. For example, Spillane (2005b) found that when it comes to the leadership of primary schools even the subject matters!

> Teachers appear more willing to informally take on leadership responsibilities for literacy compared with mathematics and these choices contribute to the defining leadership practice differently across school subjects in primary schools. (Spillane, 2005b: 387)

2.5.3 Caveat: The Impact of Distributed Leadership on Children

Although Bennett et al's (2003) extensive review of distributed leadership literature is supportive of distributed leadership, it is critical of the limited number of empirical studies that show distributed leadership in action. This corresponds with Storey's concern (2004) that fashionable leadership models tending to assume and assert importance rather than demonstrate it. More research is needed to assist schools so that they can become better at distributing leadership, rather than more research that merely reports that distributed leadership is a good thing.

A major weakness of distributed leadership research is that no empirical data exists to demonstrate the positive impact of distributed leadership on pupil achievement (Bennett 2003). Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) support this concern, critically reporting that only a small body of distributed leadership research conceptualises student outcomes. In the minority of cases where it has been undertaken, Leithwood and Jantzi's conclusions have been mixed. In their own research, they report that where academic achievement was the criteria of pupil outcomes:

> ...studies are mixed but lean towards the conclusion that transformational school leadership has significant effects on student achievement. Five out of eight studies (one of them the Day et al. study) report significant relationships between transformational leadership and some measure of achievement. (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2005: 18)

These findings suggest that distributed leadership does appear to have an indirect effect on pupil outcomes. However, in studies that have researched the direct effects of leadership on pupils, conclusions are even less clear. Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) identified three out of four studies that reported positive effects (Day et al 2001a, 2001b; Marks and Printy, 2003; Ross, 2004). In conclusion they state that 'no clear conclusions [can] be drawn from these results.' (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2005: 19)

More research is clearly needed to measure the impact of distributed leadership on pupils, and Spillane (2006) reminds us that 'some leadership activities connect directly through students rather than exclusively or chiefly through teachers.' (Ibid: 26)

2.6 Research Implications

Distributed leadership research is variable in quality and findings. It is currently a subject of research focus, its popularity associated with sustainable leadership (Hargreaves, 2007), and concerns of an aging leadership workforce. Southworth (2004), Harris (2005) and Macbeath (2005) have all described distributed leadership as an innovative means of school improvement. However, a trawl of literature by Bush and Glover (2003) suggests that distributed leadership is not a new phenomenon. The author contends that it would be naïve to assume that distributed leadership has been merely been repackaged to accommodate the changing demands of our schools, favouring Spillane's view that 'distributed leadership is not a case of old wine in new bottles' (2006: 20).

A number of issues emerge when considering the development of distributed leadership that contribute to furthering an understanding of how distributed leadership might be used in our schools. Broadly these are: processes of distributing leadership, school culture, characteristics of distributed leadership, and different sources of change and barriers to the distribution of leadership. Each of these will now be explored to develop an understanding of what distributed leadership is, and what questions and issues might need to be addressed to further develop our understanding.

2.6.1 A Process of Distributing Leadership

A central feature to the author's definition of distributed leadership is the collaborative process of shared actions and interactions. However, collaboration does not imply that distributed leadership is a joint leadership responsibility; leadership is not simply shared out among staff and stakeholders. *It is the process* of distributed leadership that is shared and interactive.

Yukl (2002) defines the process, in which distributed leadership is 'an intentional influence exerted by one person [or group] over the other people [or groups] to structure the activities in a group or organisation.' (Ibid, 2002: 3).

Barth (1990) advocates the importance of this process, and believes that the senior leadership team is the most influential in enabling and facilitating leadership development. Louis and Marks (1998) also support the role of the SMT in developing a 'community of learners' approach to leadership. Their research illustrates a positive relationship between pupil's academic performances and schools that promoted a professional learning community approach to leadership.

Ogawa and Bossert (1995) offer a broader picture of the process of distributed leadership than Barth (1990), believing that distributed leadership 'flows throughout an organisation, spanning levels and flowing both up and down hierarchies,' (Ibid, 1995: 225-6).

This view supports the author's definition of distributed leadership, whereby all individuals are recognised as capable of influence, regardless of their position within a school. Influence however, is not to be confused with power. It is a product of the process of sharing beliefs and ideas, which has been reported to be more effective than hierarchical standing in leadership change (Peterson et al. 1999).

Although researchers such as Leithwood et al (1999) and Yukl (2002) emphasise the importance of the process of influence in distributed leadership, research offers an inadequate explanation of what the process looks like in practice. Spillane and Orlina (2005) believe that this is due to an emphasis on the 'leader-plus aspect' of distributed leadership- the importance of sharing leadership across many people within a school both formally and informally. Albeit important, this has been at the expense of developing an understanding of the 'practice aspect' of distributed leadership. Spillane and Orlina (2005) assert this as a major criticism of distributed leadership research, a failure to investigate the process of leadership, and the quality of interactions between people and their situation.

Schools are concerned with people and learning so it is important that they develop an understanding of the practicalities of distributed leadership. A recommendation of future research would be to develop an understanding of the 'practice aspect' of distributed leadership, helping schools to understand what,

when, why and how leaders do things. Whilst leadership actions are important they need to be understood as part of the interactions within a school. Spillane (2006) is critical for research's failure to address this. He advocates the importance of the situation in which leadership occurs and the need for research to examine how tools, routines and structures of a situation enable and constrain the practice of distributed leadership.

Staff development is an important feature of the practice aspect of distributed leadership. In recent years there has been a growth in leadership development-seeing it extend beyond senior leaders to include middle management. Although these opportunities usefully extend leadership opportunities to a wider audience, such programmes do not account for leadership development needs of *all staff*. This is partially reflected in the research of Silns and Mulford (2002) that explored the impact of distributed leadership on organisational learning and pupil outcomes. In their conclusions it was observed that productive development could not be created nor sustained if these conditions do not exist for teachers. This hi-lights the need for a process that supports leadership development and involves them in the development of the school. Harris and Mujis (2002) recognise this, observing that 'school improvement is more likely when the leadership is distributed and when teachers have a vested interest in the development of the school (Gronn, 2000; Jackson, 2002).' (Harris et al., 2002: 14)

The author contends that leadership development should be extended beyond teachers to include other members of staff such as teaching assistants and administration staff too. Indeed, Bennett et al. (2003) recognise the importance of *whole staff development* to successful distributed leadership. This requires extending leadership development programmes to all staff, enabling the context of distributed leadership to become embedded in a school's culture.

> Because distributed leadership defines leadership as an emergent property existing in relationships within a community rather than actions of individuals, all members of the community must be involved in professional development related to it. (Bennett et al., 2003: 7)

Staff development is a significant part of the process of developing distributed leadership, but it is much more than sending people on courses. Training and

learning are not synonymous, and schools need to consider what support systems they have in place to maximise impact effectiveness. New knowledge and skills do not necessarily mean new and better ways. As Spillane suggests, 'leadership practice and actions of individual leaders are not one and the same.' (Spillane, 2006: 99).

This is why a school's culture is so important to distributed leadership and the proposed definition of what it is. A supportive culture might include systems that involve staff in the process of development. For example, systems that enable discussion of leaders development needs and how they might best be met, considering the impact of their learning and development on the child. Learning does not end once people have been on a course. Learning is about taking risks, and just as with children, it is important to offer support and encouragement to staff to try out new ideas and discuss matters when they arise. Perhaps this is what Bush et al. (2003) refer to as the 'nurturing aspect' of staff development, where there is an emphasis on teams and their interactions.

> Teams need to be nurtured and developed if they are to be effective vehicles for organising work and therefore consideration needs to be given to the way teams function. (Ibid: 2)

Staff development is costly and should be planned carefully to maximise its effectiveness and impact on the child. It is argued that if this process is done strategically, staff development is more effective and school improvement more likely. Strategy can help to recruit good staff and staff with leadership potential. It can help senior leaders to identify areas of improvement, to develop future leaders and a distributive perspective.

Davies (2005) sees strategic capability of staff as a core competency of the school.

> Given that the most important resource of a school is the people who work within it, then developing that key resource will build strategic capability to meet future challenges. (Davies et al., 2005: 27)

However, care must be taken that leadership is not restricted to too few individuals within our schools. Macbeath (2005) acknowledges this, identifying strategic distribution as source of distributed leadership. Macbeath (2005) also

warns that when distribution assumes strategic importance, expertise can become concentrated which in turn might weaken the school.

> If you give a particular specialism to any one individual, [that] the institution is weakened – not necessarily because of the way that the individual is fulfilling that role but the consequences of that individual, for whatever reasons, not being there next year or the year after to that. (Ibid: 359)

Strategy can facilitate effective staff development and successful distributed leadership, providing opportunities for learning through articulation, explanation, questioning and modelling. If leaders are to be effective in shaping and influencing other people, particularly those in higher positions within a school, they need the knowledge and skills to be able to do so. This requires a particular culture and this will now be discussed.

2.6.2 School Culture

The culture of a school influences the success of the pupils who learn in it. Culture is also central to distributed leadership and its importance is recognised in a lot of research. Hopkins et al. (1996) acknowledge that:

> Successful schools encourage co-ordination by creating collaborative environments which encourages involvement, professional development, mutual support and assistance in problem solving. (Ibid: 177)

Gronn (2000) emphasises the importance of culture, and reports that distributed leadership is most effective in a culture where there is a common sense of purpose and where agreed ways of working are established. Bennett et al's (2003) review of research further illustrates the importance of collaborative and supportive cultures. Their review suggests that whilst the right culture can enable distributed leadership to flourish and act positively, certain cultures can stifle a distributed perspective- having a negative influence (Bennett et al. 2003). Macbeath (2005) also supports the importance of culture, pinpointing its strength as a 'collective intelligence and collective energy.' (Ibid: 362)

The senior management/ leadership team is at the heart of a school's culture, and is arguably the most influential in shaping a 'collective intelligence and energy'. They lead the school in shaping the situation- enabling tools, routines and structures to develop a distributed perspective. This view is supported by

Southworth (1998), who asserts that team leadership is a central part of a school's culture, and should be built into the fabric of leadership from the start. Southworth identifies key catalysts for the creation of a leadership team based on the concept of distributed leadership. These include:

- Gaining a shared understanding of values;
- Providing a frame of reference for the school;
- Enabling work on the conditions for whole school improvement as well as the standards agenda to move forward;
- Addressing the need to focus on the needs of learners;
- Being more fluid and responsive in policy-making and practice;
- Sharing strengths and mediating weaknesses;
- Making school improvement happen quickly where it is needed;
- Giving power to collective action.

I believe that these catalysts are relevant to all stakeholders involved in distributed leadership, allowing people in informal and formal roles to lead.

Storey's case study (2004) illustrates the importance of creating the right school culture. It shows some problems of distributed leadership in schools where the culture is not shared. Storey identified tensions and conflict between the headteacher and head of a science department within a secondary school. Conflicting priorities, targets and time scales were reported as inhibiting factors in the effective distribution of leadership, whilst unclear boundaries of leadership and competing styles of leadership were said to compound problems. In conclusion, Storey (2004) stated:

> Multiple leaders came increasingly into conflict as their competing visions, models and ideas of success, good practice, appropriate performance measurement at whole-school, departmental and individual levels, became increasingly evident. (Ibid: 253)

Storey's research is useful because it offers a critical account of distributed leadership. I believe this challenges thinking and offers an alternate perspective to distributed leadership. However, Storey's research is limited to a specific context: being a case study of a secondary school that was described as having 'serious weaknesses' by governmental inspectors. Furthermore, its conclusions are founded on the relationship between two new members of staff in the school,

where research methodology is critically biased. Balanced perspectives of the head and the head of science were not sought. Indeed, the headteacher's perceptions were 'relatively neglected' when compared to those of the head of science.

Storey's research is an example of the caveat: transferability and generalisability of research findings across different types of school. It also gives us insight into the potential problems of distributed leadership. These problems illustrate the importance of establishing a culture conducive to distributed leadership; a culture that is founded on a shared vision and values, where professional development is an entitlement of those involved in the sharing of leadership, and can facilitate its effectiveness. Perhaps most importantly though, Storey's research emphasises the importance of asking the right questions about the practice of distributed leadership; 'studying the "how" as well as the "what" of leadership is essential.' (Spillane, 2006: 7) Only then will research begin to assist schools in the practice of developing a distributed perspective

Johnson (2004) reports that collaborative and open cultures facilitate effective distributed leadership. In a study that investigated micro-political relationships within 5 schools in southern Australia, Johnson considered the possibilities for increased participation of teachers within the decision making process. Research findings supported the distribution of leadership, but cited that micro-political knowledge and insight were critical to the development of schools. 'Positive politics' of negotiation, collaboration and conflict resolution were also recognised as a desirable alternative to controlling, top down models of leadership. In conclusion, distributed leadership worked best in a culture of openness and collaboration, where staff has an insight into micro-politics.

A biased sample population raises issues of validity surrounding Johnson's research (2004). All schools involved in the study declared an interest in action research, work force innovation and reform, and were purposefully chosen because of their positive belief in distributed leadership and 'spreading the leadership load.' It is unlikely that this sample is representative of all schools- and ignores schools with a sceptical outlook of distributed leadership.

Establishing the right culture does appear to be important to the effective distribution of leadership. Acknowledging cultural differences within research, Hargreaves' North American study (2004) examined the effects of Educational change on the emotional responses of staff. From interviews with 50 teachers, his findings highlight that change was perceived most negatively when it was imposed and external in nature. Conversely, where change was as a result of self-initiation, collaboration, and perceived as having direct benefits on the children, it was more positively received.

> More important than whether the source of the change is external or internal is whether it is implemented in a way that is professionally inclusive and supportive and demonstrably beneficial to students or not. (Hargreaves, 2004: 303)

Hargreaves' findings (2004) suggest the importance of involving staff in decision making processes, giving them opportunities to discuss school improvement issues and feeling valued in the contributions they make. This places demands on a school, to facilitate a culture where colleagues can work in collaboration, and are given time, freedom and flexibility to develop and lead. However, the advent of preparation, planning and assessment time (PPA time) and the financial challenges that have emerged through staffing restructuring and teaching and learning responsibility payments, pose new challenges for Primary leaders. The precise effects of these initiatives are emerging and schools are developing solutions that best meet their circumstances. Critically, these initiatives suggest a negative impact of top-down, externally driven initiatives on distributed leadership, and are challenging leaders to remain strong and firm in their belief of maintaining a culture of learning and leadership development (Seashore-Louis, Kruse et al., 1996, Little, 2000).

2.6.3 Structural Organisation and Distributed Leadership

The structural organisation of primary schools within the UK is invariably hierarchical, typically comprising: a head teacher, deputy headteacher and/ or assistant head, key stage co-ordinators, teachers and teaching assistants. This structure can be advantageous and support staff in the distribution of leadership, particularly if they are in higher positions within a school. Boles (1992) suggest that a hierarchical structure can facilitate effective distribution of leadership,

reporting that a lack of authority hinders a person's ability to lead. Glover et al. (1999) also recognise the benefits of a hierarchical structure. In a study of perceptions of senior management and subject leaders in secondary schools, Glover et al. (1999) concluded that teachers generally felt that leadership was more effective where subject leaders and department heads were more strongly involved in decision-making processes.

It would appear that when people are in positions of power they are more influential than those who are not. This suggests the importance of micro-political relationships within schools, as was concluded by Johnson (2004). The challenge of distributed leadership may be understandably greater for staff who are asked to lead who are lower down the hierarchical standing- an idea that will be explored in section 2.6.5 (Barriers to distributed leadership). However, there is a body of research that is critical of hierarchical structure, believing that it impedes distributed leadership (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001; Harris, 2005), and is damaging to the processes of collaboration and empowerment.

Research also exists to suggest that perspectives and motives of leaders may be more important than hierarchical standing per se (Jones, 1997; Peterson et al. 1999). Spillane, Hallett and Diamond (2003) have observed that people can be influential, even when they are not in positions of power, and have begun to investigate the practice of distributed leadership. Factors they have identified that help to influence leadership practice include: an individual's skill, knowledge and expertise (human capital), their social networks and connections (social capital), their philosophy and values (cultural capital), and their access to resources and materials (economic capital). It would appear that people are able to exert influence and lead who are in lesser positions hierarchically.

Research exists both for and against the argument that a hierarchical structure facilitates distributed leadership. However, more research is needed to develop an understanding of the practice of distributed leadership. Leaders higher up the hierarchical standing have the advantage of positional power and authority to assist them with leadership. However, as research evidence from Jones (1997), Peterson et al. (1999) and Spillane et al. (2003) suggests, irrespective of positional

standing within a school, vision and values of potential leaders are important in determining leadership success.

If people's perspectives and motives are important determinants of effective distributed leadership, a flexible leadership structure is desirable because it can facilitate broader levels of leadership, and allow schools to capitalise on individual expertise. Research to support this idea includes: MacBeath (1988), Hargreaves (1994), Day et al. (2000), and Harris and Mujis (2002).

Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) found that a flexible leadership structure facilitated distributed leadership. Where teachers were responsible for leadership and when collegial practice was placed at the heart of school improvement, positive effects were reported.

> Teacher leadership far outweigh[s] principal leadership effects before taking into account the moderating effects of family educational culture. (Leithwood et al., 2000: 60).

Hopkins (2001) also recognises the benefits of distributed leadership to school improvement, and observes that where structures are flexible, leadership can emerge with the capacity and capability of the school. This enables schools to capitalise on individual expertise, whilst affording opportunities for professional development and support networks from senior staff. Heller and Firestone (1995), and Gronn (2003), have identified that distribution can occur when leaders co-perform- working together to perform leadership routines. Heller et al. (1995) also identify distributed leadership as a division of labour. Here, multiple leaders can have different functions within their leadership but these functions often overlap. Equally, a distributed perspective can involve leaders working in parallel and without co-ordination. Spillane (2006) warns us that when leadership is distributed in this manner, leaders should be heedful of one another's actions.

> Heedfulness describes the way in which a set of behaviours is performed: groups act heedfully when they act carefully, intelligently, purposefully and attentively. (Ibid: 59)

2.6.4 Sources of Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership can arise through different circumstances but it is only recently that researchers have begun to investigate this. Perhaps unsurprisingly therefore, there is disagreement over the number of circumstances in which distributed leadership occurs. Harris (2005) has identified three situations through which distributed arises, Spillane (2005a) four ways, and Macbeath (2005) six. I believe the discrepancies over the number of ways in which distributed leadership occurs are arbitrary because close inspection reveals similarities between the characteristics of these sources. Spillane (2006) argues that it is more important to develop an understanding of leadership practice. This means developing research to investigate how schools use tools, routines and structures (situation), so that we can better understand the joint interactions of leaders and followers, to develop a distributed perspective.

Harris (2005) believes that distributed leadership can be designed, or else occurs by default or desperation. Designed distribution of leadership is characterised as a planned and deliberate activity. Leadership that arises by default is a result of necessity, for example teachers filling leadership roles in order to get things done (Hargreaves and Fink, 2005). When distributed leadership occurs through desperation, circumstances are challenging, and it is often during these times of pressure that creativity and innovation emerge.

Bennett et al. (2003) are critical of the effectiveness of distributed leadership that emerges by desperation. They observe that where distributed leadership is generated by top-down initiatives- often as a result of external pressures, it is less effective than in leadership that occurs through circumstances which involve staff collaboratively from the bottom-up. However, in reality and in a climate of accountability, circumstances might dictate the source of leadership- even when it is not always the preferred source!

Spillane (2005a) supports Harris's three sources of distributed leadership and uses identical descriptors to describe two of his four sources. The characteristics of each source of distributed leadership are similar to Harris's, but Spillane also

purports that each source is not mutually exclusive. For Spillane (2005a), distributed leadership is a result of: design, default, evolution and crisis.

Macbeath (2005) organises sources of distribution, dependent upon whether they are organised from a top-down perspective, or else are more emergent- appearing from the bottom-up. Top-down sources of distributed leadership include: formal, pragmatic, strategic, incremental distribution. Bottom-up sources are identified as: opportunistic and cultural distribution. Again, Macbeath's sources are complementary to those of Harris (2005) and Spillane (2005a); all acknowledging that this form of leadership can range from the highly structured and planned, to the emergent and reactionary.

Macbeath's research differs from that of Harris (2005) and Spillane (2005) because it proposes a model of distributed leadership. Within this model, schools can consider which source of distributed leadership might be most appropriate against their own unique set of characteristics and the circumstances. This might support schools in their development of distributed leadership by helping them to better understand sources in which distributed leadership occurs. However, the validity of this model is questionable because little research has focused on leadership practice, and how leaders act and interact within their unique situation (Spillane, 2006).

Despite this concern, the principles of Macbeath's model are based on methodologically sound research. A mixed methods approach was used including: questionnaires, shadowing leaders, and workshops with representatives from these schools. A particular strength of the research design was the use questionnaires prior to discussions. This enabled statistical analyses to identify interesting questions that emerged through the questionnaires. In turn, this allowed Macbeath to 'interrogate' responses and conclude:

> The context and individual history of the school was seen as critical in shaping teachers' views of leadership and their own role within it, while the length of time a head had been in post had a major effect on how they viewed distribution. (Macbeath, 2005: 356)

A qualitative approach to this study is desirable because it enabled analysis of interactions between leaders and followers at group level, and for Spillane (2006), this is critical to developing our understanding of a distributed perspective. Furthermore, the sequence in which Macbeath used his research tools is a feature the present research will adopt in the research design. However, it will extend the sample population beyond teachers and headteachers, to include the perceptions of teaching assistants within primary schools, to reflect their increased involvement in leadership activities.

2.6.5 Barriers to Distributed Leadership

Research has identified a myriad of challenges, tensions and difficulties that prevent schools from distributing leadership. These have included: hierarchical and rigid school structures, fear of accountability, professional development opportunities, and changes in legislation.

There is conflicting evidence to suggest that hierarchical structures facilitate distributed leadership in schools. Advocates of a hierarchical structure such as Boles (1992) and Glover et al. (1999), suggest that it helps to develop a distributed perspective. Conversely, critics including Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) and Harris (2005), believe that hierarchy is a major barrier to facilitating distributed leadership. These critics report that a hierarchical leadership structure dominates our schools and inhibits school improvement. As an alternative, they advocate a shift in leadership structure towards a distributed approach.

Spillane (2006) does not perceive distributed leadership as an alternative to top-down models of leadership. Instead, he suggests that a distributed perspective can coexist with other forms of leadership. This offers an alternative perspective to NCSL literature that is promoting distributed leadership as a centrepiece to its strategy (Revell, 2006). Perhaps one of the biggest barriers to distributed leadership therefore, is not whether structures of leadership are more or less hierarchical, but the paucity of research that develops an understanding of the practice of distributed leadership. More research is needed to develop an understanding of the interactions between leaders and followers and the situations in which they lead.

> One of the greatest challenges that education will face over the next several decades is understanding leadership practice as a basis for thinking about its improvement. (Spillane, 2006: 89)

Harris (2005) asserts that developing a distributed perspective begins with the Headteacher, whose role is seen as a 'leader of leaders'. The view of the headteacher as a leader of leaders is long-standing. Barth's analogy (1990) clearly illustrates the importance of headteacher development, to facilitate a culture of distributed leadership.

> It is interesting, in this context to consider the common instructions given by flight attendants at airline passengers: "For those of you travelling with small children, in the event of oxygen failure, first place the oxygen mask on your own face then- and only then- place the mask on your child's face." The fact of the matter is, of course that the adult must be alive in order to help the child. In schools we spend a great deal of time placing oxygen masks on other people's faces whilst we see ourselves as suffocating. Principals, preoccupied with expected outcomes desperately want teachers to breathe in new ideas, yet do not themselves engage in visible, serious learning. Teachers badly want their students to learn to perform to grade level, yet seldom reveal themselves to children as learners. (Barth, 1990: 22)

A change in leadership structure may demand new ways of thinking for many schools and their stakeholders. This may be a barrier to developing distributed leadership. For Harris 'the challenge... is to find ways of removing those organisational structures and systems.' (Ibid, 2005: 23)

Harris (2005) recognises that for some people, change can be disconcerting. Perhaps the slow rate of change and the reluctance to adopt a distributed perspective is a reflection of the enormity of this challenge. This may be particularly true for established, or more experienced staff that are more often involved in leadership roles. Distributed leadership can alter the working relationships between colleagues, and this may be perceived as a further barrier to distributed leadership. Southworth (1998) refers to this as the challenge of overcoming the expectation of 'dead man's shoes' as a reason for 'promotion' to the team.

From analysis of literature I would suggest the need for flexible systems and structures to facilitate distributed leadership. This enables 'learning communities'

where people can learn with and from one another to develop skills and offer knowledge and support in leadership and development of the school. In schools where teachers were effectively devolved in leadership, Ash and Persall (2000) found that teachers spent most of their time in their classes but were given time and structured leadership roles to transform schools into professional learning communities.

Harris (2005) advocates the use of teachers and teacher networks to lead school improvements, whilst Fullan (2005) supports the need for a flexible structure to facilitate this type of leadership. Fullan (2005) also recommends that support networks be extended to all people interested in developing leadership, and not restricted to teaching staff, as is suggested by Harris. This would reflect a wider perspective of distributed leadership, which is to be encouraged. However, it would necessitate a support package of professional development, coaching and mentoring programmes for all people involved in leadership.

The culture of a school can be a barrier to distributed leadership. Macbeath (2005) recommends a culture that enables and encourages the shared leadership of others, but this is dependent upon a culture of self-belief. Leaders need to have a personal belief in their own ability to lead and feel supported and believed in by their followers (Zinn, 1996). Through collaboration, empowerment, encouragement and support, effective leadership, creativity and innovation can then be realised, but the challenge is for schools to develop a culture and systems to enable this. This issue is equally relevant at local authority and national levels. Schools do not work in isolation but are affected by external systems and their cultural attitudes and beliefs. After all, distributed leadership is collaborative. It is influenced by the situation a school is in and shaped by the interactions of leaders and followers.

People are the most important resource in a school (Davies et al., 2005), and schools need to support staff, raising their self-esteem, motivation and affording professional development opportunities to develop their leadership potential. Liebermann et al. (2000) report that distributed leadership is most effective when staff are motivated to lead, and Macbeath (2005) reports that distributed leadership is most effective when it is pragmatic. Pragmatic distribution may be

defined as 'informed by a knowledge of staff capable of sharing the burden and judging how far individual capacity can be further squeezed.' (Macbeath, 2005: 358)

Knowing that staff are capable of leadership and /or have the capacity to lead has been linked with a head teacher's ability to relinquish control, (Little, 1995; Southworth, 1998; Macbeath, 2005). The more capable staff are and the greater their capacity to lead, the more likely the head is to distribute leadership. Perhaps this is unsurprising because heads are ultimately responsible for their schools and feel most accountable. Accountability therefore, is a further and major barrier to distributed leadership. It is not surprising that in studies that reported no prior preparation or training to staff in their leadership (Southworth, 1998; Lieberman et al. 2000), influence was less effective and often negative- inhibiting the potential for school improvement.

However, even where staff capacity and capability is high, this is no guarantee of effective leadership. Speaking at a deputy headteacher conference for example, Southworth reported that deputies spend only 15% of their time on leadership issues (Source: NAHT, 2003). This suggests ineffective leadership from a cohort of staff with high capacity and capability to lead. Therefore, effective distribution arguably requires more than a top-down directive. It requires clearly understood and agreed boundaries of responsibility, as was illustrated by Storey's study (2004). In turn, this requires careful management because distributed leadership brings with it a risk of greater confusion and fragmentation. However, our understanding of these processes and the practice of distributed leadership per se remains limited. 'Research that uses the practice aspect of the distributed framework to understand school leadership is scarce.' (Spillane, 2006: 85)

Southworth (1998) has identified multiple-roles and workload as potential inhibitors to distributed leadership. Recent changes in legislation to address the 'work-life balance' of staff within schools make this pertinent, but reports citing the negative effects of leadership suggest this is still an issue (Shaw, 2006). Distributed leadership also assumes that there are enough people in a school to undertake leadership roles, and that there is enough time and money to support

them in their duties. Changes in legislation including 'Preparation, Planning and Assessment time' (PPA time), 'Teaching and Learning Responsibility Payments' (TLR), and increased numbers of part time staff (Stewart, 2007) pose further challenges to distributed leadership in schools. Even where distributed leadership is desirable, in a culture of collaboration and support where there is high capability and capacity to lead, it may not be feasible. Financial constraints for example, may prevent awarding teaching and learning responsibility payments. Furthermore, school budgets may be been affected by PPA time that entitles teachers to 10% non-teaching time to facilitate their planning, preparation and assessment duties.

2.7 Summary

School leadership has traditionally been perceived as hierarchical and synonymous with headship. However, over the last two decades research has grown increasingly critical of traditional, instructional models of school leadership, arguing that such approaches are outdated and ineffective (Barth, 1988; West-Burnham, 1997). Lambert (2002) is equally critical of traditional leadership methods and believes that:

> The days of the lone instructional leader are over. We no longer believe that one administrator can serve as the instructional leader for the entire school without the substantial participation of other educators. (Lambert, 2002: 37)

Despite growing concerns over the effectiveness of a traditional top-down approach to leadership, research also suggests that this type of leadership remains the most popular and frequently used in our schools (Harris, 2002; Fullan, 2005). Several factors may account for this, including accountability, traditional-hierarchical structures and legislation (PPA, TLR for example). Alternative models of school leadership are being considered. Harris (2005) favours distributed leadership and the NCSL are promoting it as a centrepiece to their strategy (Revell, 2006).

Within this study the author defines distributed leadership as collaborative leadership within a school, that is developed through a culture of shared action and interaction. Its collaborative features make distributed leadership a popular

choice of leadership and something schools may wish to seriously consider, particularly if they are faced with the problems of tackling problems of sustainable leadership that are anticipated over the next ten years (Southworth, 2003; Harris, 2005). This is particularly true if sustainable leadership is described as building 'a critical mass of development leaders' (Fullan, 2005: 18). However, developing future leaders is not a quick-fix solution. Advocates of this approach are keen to point out that it should not be perceived as a panacea for the current difficulties facing school leadership.

Harris (2005) likes to think of distributed leadership as an alternative way of thinking about leadership and does not claim it to be an alternative model, nor a panacea for school reform. Similarly, Spillane (2005b: 385) describes a distributed perspective on leadership as 'best thought as a framework for thinking and analysing leadership.' (Ibid, 2005b: 385)

However, thinking and analysing leadership is pointless to schools and children unless something is done with it.

> Theories and leadership are most useful for influencing practice when they suggest new ways in which events and situations can be perceived.
> (Hughes and Busch, 1991: 103)

Whilst a framework of thinking can give us insight into how and why leaders do things, enabling us to interpret and reflect on practice, it is imperative we remember which features it highlights as important and how it highlights them (Spillane, 2006). In doing this however, Spillane (2006: 94) also warns of the dangers of 'overemphasising features of a phenomenon and artificiality.'

For Fullan (2002), distributed leadership will only be effective if many school leaders change and become cultural change leaders. Research from Johnson (2004), Storey (2004) and Hargreaves (2004) suggests that effective distributed leadership requires stakeholders to buy into the idea of a culture of collaboration, trust, openness and shared vision, where there is a focus on the child. Distributed leadership as a '...collective intelligence and collective energy' (Macbeath, 2005: 362), may require a change in philosophy and belief in some schools and authorities. This might pose the biggest barrier to its success.

There are several caveats to distributed leadership research. These include: a changing focus of leadership over time, concerns over transferability and generalisability of research findings across different cultures and types of school, and limited research to show the impact of distributed leadership on children.

Early research is criticised for being limited to studies of teacher leadership and the use of expert teachers (Barth, 1990; Lambert, 1998). I believe the potential of distributed leadership however, is wider reaching than this. Restricting leadership to these groups is narrowing and does not reflect the leadership potential and opportunities to avail leadership to different stakeholders in today's schools. Consider the leadership potential of teaching assistants, whose numbers in primary schools have increased dramatically in the last three years from 69,310 in 2002 to 95,450 in 2005 (Source: NAHT, March 2006).

More recently Rudduck and Flutter (2004), and Harris's case study (2005) into distributed leadership in primary schools in the UK, indicate the importance the student voice in primary school leadership. It would be useful therefore, to investigate if and how children are involved in leadership. According to Spillane (2006), research now needs to develop an understanding of leadership practice, so that we can begin to understand how the situation defines leadership practice and how the interactions between leaders and followers influence this.

Distributed leadership may be challenged by the rigid structure that exists in many schools. Research from Ash and Persall (2000), Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), Harris (2005) and Fullan (2005) all favour a flexible structure where support and communication are vital. Caldwell (2004) refers to these as connective and interactive networks, and argues that they are not only important within schools but across them too. This has implications for the present research, to investigate the support systems between schools and within the local authority.

School improvement is likened to a journey (Jackson, 2000; Fullan, 2002). During the journey of improvement, it is reasonable to assume that at different times, different types of leadership may be more appropriate than others, to suit the context of the school and the people who are in it. A school's context remains

crucial (Hallinger, 2005). Perhaps the headteacher's understanding of this framework of thinking in which leadership decisions are made that now provides one of the greatest challenges.

> [It] is a source of constraints, resources and opportunities that the principal must understand and address in order lead.
> (Hallinger, 2005: 28)

Distributed leadership is based on key assumptions. It assumes that participation of others will increase school effectiveness, and that this is justified by democratic principles. Within the context of school management it is assumed that leadership is potentially available to any legitimate stakeholder (Leithwood et al. 1999), and that collaborative leaders have the competencies to be effective.

> Distributed leadership calls on everyone associated with schools... to take responsibility for student achievement and to assume leadership roles in areas which they are competent and skilled.
> (Neuman and Simmons, 2000: 10)

These assumptions are big and far-reaching. In reality not everyone may want leadership responsibilities nor have the capacity or capability to lead. Distributed leadership therefore, may not be the right approach for a school or for certain people. Macbeath (2005) has proposed a model that might assist schools in their development of distributed leadership, and helping them to understand sources in which distributed leadership occurs. However, knowing when distributed leadership is effective and when to use it as a leadership tool alongside other models of leadership are key to its success. Research on the practicalities of a distributed perspective remains scarce (Spillane, 2006).

2.8 Framework for Research

Although the origins of distributed leadership reportedly stem back over 20 years (Bush and Glover, 2003), misconceptions still remain over what it is. Distributed leadership is commonly and erroneously mistaken for delegated leadership- whose processes and outcomes are fundamentally different. Weller (2002) and Rutherford (2002) conclude that under delegated leadership, tasks tend to be management oriented rather leadership in function. This contrasts with the collaborative and interactive processes of distributed leadership perspective.

Harris (2005) and Spillane (2006) contest that distributed leadership is not a blue print for leadership per se but a framework of thinking. The present review of literature has identified underlying features that are associated with its success. These features will form a framework for the present research which will use them to validate the key characteristics for effective distributed leadership in a case study of two primary schools in North East Lincolnshire (UK). Broadly, these will include:

- Processes of distributing leadership: How are stakeholders involved in the process of distributing leadership and how are they supported?
- School culture: to what extent does a collaborative, supportive culture facilitate distributed leadership?
- Structural organisation of schools and distributed leadership: What structures facilitate effective distribution of leadership?
- Sources of distributed leadership: What are the circumstances in which distributed leadership occurs? Is it carefully planned, or does it occur through default, or by desperation... as result of crisis?
- Barriers: What are the challenges and tensions that prevent distributed leadership from being effective?

Importantly, Spillane (2006) criticises distributed leadership research, arguing that it fails to consider the quality of the interactions and their unique situations (practice aspect) of leadership. As such, a qualitative element will be included in the research design so that the quality of interaction and

uniqueness of situations can be investigated. It is hoped this research will facilitate other schools in their effective distribution of leadership, to begin to develop an understanding of the complex social and cultural contexts, and how distributed leadership operates at different levels within primary schools.

This research will also contribute to developing an understanding of the practice of distributed leadership within the United Kingdom. It is important because:

> There is a relative absence of research that has explored the nature and impact of teacher leadership within the UK context. Research has focused on professionalism, collegiality, reflection and continuous professional development but has taken little account of the models of leadership required to generate and sustain teacher learning and growth.
> (Harris and Mujis, 2002: 24)

However, this study will extend beyond teacher leadership that has been a limitation of Harris's earlier work, by including an investigation into the leadership of teaching assistants.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 What is Educational Research?

Bassey (1999) defines educational research as a 'critical enquiry aimed at informing educational judgements and decisions in order to improve educational action' (Ibid: 39). Although this definition may be criticised for being value laden, failing to consider who will benefit from the research per se, its intention is praiseworthy- to develop knowledge and understanding. It also usefully emphasises 'critical enquiry' which is important for epistemological and ontological reasons.

Epistemology concerns the relationship between what we see and understand, and existing theories and knowledge of distributed leadership. Ontology however, relates to a sense of being and reality of what distributed leadership is (Coleman and Briggs, 2003). These paradigms (epistemology and ontology) are central to the purpose of educational research, providing the researcher with a rational for the way in which things are done, and remain relevant throughout the research process.

People are constantly trying to make sense of the world in which we live, but is it possible that the evidence and theories generated so far surrounding distributed leadership are wrong or no longer relevant? Are the conclusions made the right ones? Indeed, has the right question been asked and the most suitable methodology used to develop our knowledge and understanding of distributed leadership? Spillane (2006) for example, is critical of distributed leadership research for its failure to develop our understanding of leadership practice. He recognises that research does little to develop our understanding of the complex interactions of leaders, followers and their situation within distributed leadership. Therefore, if researchers are not critical of methodology, their findings may not be worth the paper onto which they are written; rubbish in equates with rubbish out!

Distributed leadership is emerging as a preferred model of sustainable school leadership in the 21st century and has received notable interest from the National College of School Leadership (NCSL). It is being promoted as the 'centrepiece to

NCSL strategy' (Revell, 2006) and its rise in interest has been associated with the changing demographics of school leaders. Southworth (2003), Harris (2005) and Ashton (2007) for example, recognise a retirement bulge over the next decade and a shortage of primary leaders.

There is a danger of identifying distributed leadership as a panacea for sustainable leadership, and the associated interest from the NCSL risks endorsing this claim. Sustainable leadership and sustainable school improvement are very different, and if these terms are used interchangeably, there is a risk of confusion. Harris (2005) and Spillane (2006) recognise this danger and prefer to think of distributed leadership as a blue print, rather than a panacea for school improvement. Recognising distributed leadership as a way of thinking can give us insight into how and why leaders do things, and it is this that will enable both sustainable leadership and school improvement.

The purpose of the present research is to develop knowledge and understanding of distributed leadership in primary schools and the processes involved. Questions will be asked to further our understanding of issues that were not addressed or else have emerged from previous studies. Spillane (2006) reports that research has tended to focus on leadership roles, structures and functions. Whilst these remain important, there is a clear need to focus on leadership practice, as evidence to develop our understanding of this aspect of a distributed framework is 'scarce' (Spillane, 2006: 85).

Previous research has been criticised for its variable quality and usefulness to schools. This research will investigate the distribution of leadership in two primary schools in North East Lincolnshire. It will consider the situation in which distributed leadership occurs. This is not simply the context in which these schools operate, but will require investigation into the interactions between leaders and followers. It will also consider the impact of distributed leadership on the child because this has been ignored in previous research (Bennett et al., 2003, Leithwood and Jantzi, 2005). Developing an understanding of the practice aspect distributed leadership will hopefully facilitate effective leadership and sustained school improvement.

Harris (2005) reports a scarcity of distributed leadership research within the UK, so this study will contribute to research in this area. However, for the present research to be worthwhile and the ensuing judgements and decisions meaningful and of use to schools, the research will need to be carefully structured and critical of the approaches and techniques that are used (Bassey, 1999). The intent is to develop an understanding of distributed leadership in primary schools so that schools can be more effective in its use. In order to do this the author will look at the influence of positivism and interpretivism on research methodology, to help justify the research design and approaches to the research project, before discussing the techniques and procedures of the study.

3.2 Research Paradigms: Positivism & Interpretivism

Coleman and Briggs (2002) refer to positivism and interpretivism as binary opposite ways of thinking about research methodology. Positivism, in its purist form, adheres to scientific method and has influenced quantitative research techniques. It recognises people as objects and human characteristics as variables, and so does not recognise people's individuality and uniqueness. Positivism relies on measurable and observable information, and theories that emerge from research of this nature are seen as true and factual.

There are issues of using a positivist approach to the study of distributed leadership. Positivism is criticised for being unsuccessful in studying human behaviour because it does not acknowledge the complexity of individuals and their interrelationships, and for its mechanistic and reductionist views.

> This point is nowhere more apparent than in the contexts of classroom and school where the problems of teaching, learning and human interaction present the positivistic researcher with a mammoth challenge. (Cohen, Manion et al., 2003: 9)

This is particularly true with distributed leadership, where literature emphasises the importance school culture and the nature of interaction between different members of staff (Spillane, 2006). As such, a positivist approach is not recommended as an exclusive means of researching distributed leadership. Consider for example, how positivists might perceive the effect of a positive and supportive school culture on distributed leadership. From the literature reviewed a

positivist would argue that a supportive culture causes distributed leadership. Conversely, interpretivists would argue that it is possible for staff not to assume distributed leadership roles in schools that exhibit a supportive culture. Instead interpretivists emphasise the importance of individual characteristics in shaping behaviour. Therefore, perhaps the best that can be hoped for from a quantitative perspective is associations and correlations.

Another concern of using positivism is how it can be used to measure and observe distributed leadership scientifically. An extensive literature search has identified variables that are believed to be important to distributed leadership and these will be included as leadership statements on a questionnaire. Pilot questionnaires will be analysed for variance using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and analysis will determine their significance. Statistical analysis therefore, is a key strength of positivism. SPSS will enable me to explore relationships and differences between variables, including different members of staff. This will inform questions for an interpretivist paradigm that will be the dominant paradigm to my research (Burke Johnson et al., 2004).

Interpretivism is an opposite paradigm to positivism. It sees people as individuals and autonomous, and so is generally favoured within educational research (Cohen, Manion et al., 2003). With interpretivism, researchers can only begin to understand distributed leadership by trying to make sense of individual's interpretations of the school. People are not seen as machines and distributed leadership would not be considered as factual and interpreted simply in black and white. Furthermore, interpretivism sees the researcher's role as influential, and able to impact and be influenced by the participants (Morrison, 2002).

Interpretivism has influenced qualitative techniques. Within this paradigm the role of the researcher is to describe what distributed leadership looks like from their perspective, thus emphasising words and discussion rather than numbers. Traditionally, interpretivism is used in longitudinal research but this is beyond the scope of this research project in terms of time and financially. However, its inclusion within this study is justified because interpretivism is concerned with processes, and the process of distributed leadership remains a main focus of this

study because this is the area that is least understood (Spillane, 2006). It will enable me to investigate the practice of distributed leadership through discussions with different stakeholders, to consider the interactions between leaders and followers, developing and understanding of the situation.

3.3 Mixed Methods Approach

Positivist and interpretivist philosophies perceive their paradigms as research ideals, and purists would support incompatibility thesis (Howe, 1988), advocating that both paradigms and methods should be neither associated nor mixed. In contrast, Howe (1992, 1998) posits a shift towards a third research paradigm- a mixed methods approach- that will be used within this study.

> Mixed methods research as a third paradigm can help bridge the schism between quantitative and qualitative research.
> (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2004: 15).

A mixed methods approach is a newer paradigm than the purist philosophies of positivism and interpretivism. It is argued that this approach results in superior research compared to research that relies on one method because it takes the strengths and reduces the weaknesses of both approaches in a single study. However, Cohen et al. (2003) warn the researcher that in choosing a mixed methods approach, it would be naïve to assume that a combination of methods will balance out the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. To be truly effective, the researcher must be reflexive and find the best approach that suits the circumstances and context of this study of distributed leadership in primary schools.

A mixed methods approach will be used to maximise the advantages of each method and provide the best data through triangulation. Table 1 outlines the main advantages of using a mixed methods typology.

Table 1: The main advantages of using a mixed methods typology.

Advantage	Explanation
Triangulation	Convergence and corroboration of findings
Complementarity	To help clarify results of distributed leadership
Initiation	To explore contradictions and allow for other questions to be asked
Development	To use findings from questionnaires to inform semi-structured interviews
Expansion	To expand the breadth and range of research

(Developed from: Burke Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004: 22)

Although I will use a mixed methods approach, there will not be an equal weighting to quantitative and qualitative components. There will be an emphasis

on qualitative methods, to develop an understanding of leadership practice, because this remains a fundamental criticism of distributed leadership research (Spillane, 2006).

> Regrettably, the empirical knowledge base on the practice aspect of distributed leadership is thin. Few have investigated how leadership takes shape in the interactions among leaders, followers and their situation. (Spillane, 2006: 57)

The sequence in which the methods are used is an important feature of the methodology. The study will start with a quantitative approach, a feature of Macbeath's study (2005) that used questionnaires prior to discussions. This will enable statistical analyses to identify interesting questions and to 'interrogate' responses from questionnaires. However, unlike Macbeath's study, purposive sampling will be used to extend the sample population beyond teachers and headteachers, to include the perceptions of teaching assistants within primary schools, to reflect their increased involvement in leadership activities.

3.3.1 Quantitative Approach

A quantitative approach has the ability to reach a potentially large number of respondents, compared with a qualitative approach that is more time-consuming and expensive. This will be useful at the start of the research design, and will help to identify interesting questions and schools, that will facilitate the effectiveness of the qualitative approach.

Quantitative approaches are reliant on data from questions alone and good research cannot be built on poorly collected data. Using questionnaires will enable statistical analyses of questionnaire items and different members of staff within primary schools. This will strengthen the validity of items included in the semi-structured interview schedule and help to identify interesting cases for a purposive sample. Within the domain of distributed leadership this is particularly important because theories are continuously emerging, leaving schools with research that is variable in terms of content and quality. Research that is methodologically robust can usefully provide schools with reliable and valid data to inform their development of distributed leadership.

The process of educational change is a complex and emergent system, and the reliance of quantitative approaches alone has been heavily criticised. Ridgway (1998) argues that a reliance on numerical data reliance oversimplifies educational change. The author contends this is particularly true of distributed leadership in primary schools, where theories and ideas are emerging and leadership roles are being availed to a wider section of staff. Using quantitative methods alone will not help develop an understanding of systems of collective leadership across many people through a culture of shared action and interaction. Tymms (1996) is particularly critical of using a quantitative approach to develop an understanding of educational change; ascertaining that the use of quantitative methods does not account for the diversity and variation that exists between schools.

3.3.2 Qualitative Approach

A qualitative approach has also been chosen to develop an understanding of distributed leadership within a changing workforce. Harris (2005) reports that leadership tasks are being shared to more people, and that this trend is likely to continue over the coming years as over 50% of headteachers and staff with leadership responsibilities get set to retire before 2015. In primary schools a changing workforce is reflected in the increased numbers of teaching assistants (TAs). Stewart (2005) recognises that TAs are not only increasing in numbers but in their roles too, to include increased leadership opportunities. This is witnessed by the creation of Higher Level Teaching Assistant status, using TAs to enable schools to achieve planning, preparation and assessment time for class teachers (from September 2005) and development opportunities through Foundation degrees into teaching. Such changes in workforce reform are leaving distributed leadership literature outdated.

A qualitative approach will enable the research to develop a better understanding of distributed leadership in primary schools and the processes involved than a quantitative approach alone. It will provide a rich level of data for analysis and discussion that will help to validate the key characteristics for effective distributed leadership in primary schools in the UK. This will be particularly useful in light of the literature review and the author's framework for research, enabling the development of an understanding of:

- Processes of distributing leadership;
- School culture;
- Structural organisation of schools and distributed leadership;
- Sources of distributed leadership;
- Barriers to distributed leadership.

3.4 Research Design: Multiple case study

The literature review has highlighted the complexities and idiosyncrasies of distributed leadership within schools. With this in mind, and within the time and financial constraints of this study, a multiple case study design has been chosen. Bassey (1999) has identified at least three different end points for multiple case studies: picture drawing, evaluative and theory seeking / testing that can be used to help justify this design. 'Picture drawing' is concerned with what distributed leadership looks like in these primary schools. 'Evaluative' is concerned with how worthwhile distributed leadership is- measuring its impact on the school and the child in particular, whilst 'theory seeking/ testing of ideas' will lead to what Bassey describes as 'fuzzy general predictions' of distributed leadership (Bassey, 2002: 111).

A multiple case study design will provide findings that are context specific and non-generalizable, which although not desirable, make for a study that is more feasible than other research designs. Multiple case studies will portray, analyse and interpret the uniqueness of real individuals and situations through accessible accounts of what distributed looks like and means to them. Its intention is to present and represent the reality of distributed leadership in two primary schools in North East Lincolnshire, helping to catch the complexity and situated ness of behaviours, that will contribute to action and intervention to facilitate effective distributed leadership (Cohen et al., 2000).

A multiple case study design will enable an in depth analysis of distributed leadership across different members of two schools in North East Lincolnshire. It is important to establish different perspectives of distributed leadership because it (distributed leadership) is a '...collective intelligence and collective energy'

(Macbeath, 2005: 362). Storey (2004) criticises previous research for its focus on teachers and teacher leadership or for an imbalance in data collection. Although previous research has contributed to our understanding of distributed leadership, the potential for distributing leadership to a wider section of staff is far greater and has been ignored. Increased numbers of Teaching Assistants (TAs) is an example of change in primary schools in recent years. It would be useful to gather their views of distributed leadership and consider how they fit into the picture. Equally useful would be an in depth analysis of the views of senior leaders and the headteacher in particular, because as Southworth (1988) suggests, these are key players in shaping a school's culture, and culture has been recognised as central to distributed leadership (Bennett et al., 2003, Macbeath, 2005). Using a multiple case study design therefore, will facilitate data collection across different staff.

The literature review has identified emerging factors that are believed to be important in facilitating distributed leadership. These factors include: processes of distribution, school culture, sources of distribution and barriers to distributed leadership. Using a multiple case study design will enable the investigation of factors and explore the situation and interactions between leaders and followers (Spillane, 2006). This design will widen the sample population beyond one school, enabling a comparison of findings and investigate trends, correlations and associations, which could not be achieved by a case study alone. However, the characteristics of a case study design will remain, enabling complex, dynamic interactions to be described and analysed, as they unfold between different members of staff.

3.5 Techniques

3.5.1 Questionnaire

LA recommendations and OFSTED reports will be used to identify successful primary schools in North East Lincolnshire that are believed to distribute leadership. Questionnaires will be issued to staff within these schools including: headteachers, deputies, assistant heads, teachers, teaching assistants and administration staff. Questions will be derived from the literature review and will largely consist of closed questions.

> By using a "closed" approach we ensure that the results of several groups can readily be compared and that all respondents have considered the same universe of content before giving their replies.
> (Oppenheim, 1966: 44)

Additional advantages of closed questions are that they are easier to answer and quicker to complete. This will increase the likelihood of a higher response rate, requiring less writing than open-ended questions. Furthermore, reducing the respondent's answers will ease the researcher's job of processing and analysing data. However, using closed questions is not without its limitations. Closed questions restrict the respondent's choice of replies, forcing them to 'pigeon-hole' their answers and provide an answer that might not be a true reflection of how they feel. Furthermore, closed questions do not allow the researcher to probe responses thereby losing a richness of data. A mixed methods approach will address this issue.

Questionnaires will provide nominal and ordinal data about the perceived structure and organisation of distributed leadership in primary schools from different sources. This will enable inferential statistics to be made, whilst allowing for comparative statistical analyses. Using this technique first will inform the qualitative approach, enabling the researcher to go beyond a statistical analysis factor, and begin to investigate why and under what circumstances distributed leadership is effective.

> Questionnaire responses only acquire meaning when there is opportunity to interrogate the data with those who supplied the information and are able to both lend it a context and point to some of the dynamic interrelationships among the individual questionnaire items.
> (Macbeath, 2005: 351)

Questionnaires have been principally chosen because of their potential to access a lot of information from a lot of people in a relatively short amount of time, and because the responses given will provide suggestive data for testing ideas about distributed leadership in successful schools through qualitative methods. Table 2 outlines the main advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires.

Table 2: The Main Advantages and Disadvantages of Questionnaire Based Research

Advantages of questionnaire	Disadvantages of questionnaire
▪ Low cost in time and money ▪ Easy to get information from a lot of people quickly ▪ Convenient for respondents to complete in their own time and without immediate pressure to reply ▪ Analysis to closed/ attitude type questions is straight forward ▪ Respondents' anonymity ▪ Lack of interviewer bias ▪ Standardisation of questions ▪ Able to provide suggestive data for testing ideas	▪ Concerns over quality of data (completeness and accuracy) ▪ Typically low response rate unless the audience is 'captive' ▪ Problems of motivating respondents to reply ▪ Questions need to brief and clear ▪ Misunderstandings cannot be rectified ▪ Information is sought only from asking questions ▪ Assumes understanding of question ▪ Restricts ability to expand ideas ▪ Difficult to check seriousness and honesty of answers

Adapted from: Gillham, B (2000: 6-8).

Questionnaires will measure a series of attitude statements about distributed leadership taken from the literature review. Measuring attitudes however is problematic because scales assume linearity; that there is a true attitude and that this attitude is relatively stable. Data provided from these scales will be ordinal, having an underlying continuum but not equal intervals. Individual perceptions will be subjective and not necessarily representative of the staff in the school. The intensity of attitudes and their meaning may also differ. For example, in response to the statement 'I am involved in the planning of my leadership tasks', one person's interpretation of *strongly agree* may be different to another's. Despite these criticisms, an attitude scale will be used because it enables a difficult concept to be measured. Oppenheim (1992) also argues that its reliability tends to be good which in part is due to the range of answers it permits respondents to make.

A rating scale will be used to help measure attitudes. Participants will be asked to rate their own leadership and respond to additional leadership statements using a 5-point Likert scale. Likert-scales that have an odd number of categories are often criticised because participants tend to fall into a mindset and tick the middle column when completing the questionnaire. To minimise the effects of this, respondents will be asked tick the box that best fits their response using the categories: always, frequently, sometimes, rarely, never. The fifth column will be 'don't know'. In addition to this measure of attitudes, participants will also be asked to circle the extent to which they agree with a series of leadership statements using a 4-point scale.

Rating scales however, are criticised for poor reliability because of their susceptibility to influence. 'Perhaps the chief danger... [is] the ease with which they can be influenced, often by variables of which the rater is unaware.' (Oppenheim, 1966:85). In an attempt to increase the stability of attitudes, participants will be asked to consider their responses generally over the last 12 months.

Spillane (2006) criticises distributed leadership research for its failure to consider the quality of the interactions and their unique situations (practice aspect) of leadership. This supports a qualitative approach to the research design, which will enable me to investigate the quality of interaction and uniqueness of situations more easily. The author will now consider how a qualitative technique to this research project will develop an understanding of the complex social and cultural contexts of distributed leadership.

3.5.2 Semi-structured Interview

Harris (2005), Macbeath (2005) and Spillane (2006) recognise a rise in interest and popularity of distributed leadership. Furthermore, Revell (2006) cites distributed leadership as the 'centrepiece to NCSL strategy', and with this is the danger of promoting distributed leadership as a panacea to sustainable leadership. Distributed leadership is at a stage in its own history where theories and models are emerging. As such more research is clearly needed to generate new ideas and

hypotheses, and to investigate the practice of distributed leadership. A semi-structured interview technique has been chosen to enable this.

Semi-structured interview will provide a rich level of data for analysis, providing greater insight into the humanistic elements of distributed leadership than could be achieved through questionnaires alone. This is particularly important because Spillane and Orlina (2005) are critical of recent literature for its failure to explore the interactions of leaders, followers and their situation. This supports a qualitative approach to my research design, enabling the practice aspect of distributed leadership to be investigated through asking questions such as how, why and when leaders do things.

> Knowing what leaders do is one thing, but a rich understanding of how and why, and when they do it is essential if research is to make a meaningful contribution to understanding and improving leadership practice. (Spillane and Orlina, 2005: 161)

Figure 1 shows the semi-structured interview schedule. This technique will allow deeper levels of questioning than can be achieved through quantitative methods. Less rigid than a structured interview, it has been chosen to include probes and prompts to enable the researcher to interrogate responses. Questions, probes and prompts have been derived from the literature review, and statistical analysis of questionnaire data using SPSS has ensured that relevant items are included on the schedule. This openness allows the interviewee to flow, maximising the richness of data for analysis and discussion.

The interview schedule seeks to develop an understanding of leadership practice, the quality of actions and interactions within the school, and how and why the structural organisation of the school facilitates distributed leadership. There are nuances between questions such as describing the actions of leaders and followers, and considering their interactions and relationships. The intention is to enable the interviewee to describe leadership practice that facilitates and possibly inhibits distributed leadership. Because this research is interested in how different members of staff perceive distributed leadership there is less of an issue for a structured and highly standardised questionnaire. However, this technique is time consuming and each interview is expected to last between 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Interviews will then be transcribed, coded and analysed. This means that the sample population using this technique will be small and limited to 8. However, by using a mixed methods approach and questionnaires per se, a larger sample will be achieved thereby increasing the generalisability of any findings.

- **Introduction**
  What is your role?
  How long have you been in your current role within the school?

- **Processes of distributed leadership (Leadership practice)**
  Who is involved in distributed leadership?
  Do they make their own decisions?
  How are they supported?
  How are stakeholders involved in the process of distributed leadership?

- **School culture (Actions & interactions)**
  Describe what your school culture is like?
  What is the culture of school leadership like?
  How do leaders and followers interact?
  What are their relationships like?
  Prompts: Encouragement, support, feeling valued: feedback, enjoyment of leadership.

- **Structural organisation of schools (Situation)**
  Are there any tools, routines and structures enable distributed leadership?
  How does the structure and organisation of the school effect distributed leadership?
  Prompts: Instructional leadership, CPD, time, impact/ involvement of the child.

- **Sources of distributed leadership (Sources)**
  How is leadership distributed?
  Prompts: Planned, default, despair, crisis

  How is distributed leadership arranged?
  Prompts: Co-performance, division of labour, heedfulness, goals and means.

- **Barriers to distributed leadership**
  Are there any challenges or tensions that prevent distributed leadership?
  What are they?

  How could distributed leadership be more effective?
  Prompts: Support, skills, time, valued, feedback, enjoyment, time.

- ***What is the impact of distributed leadership on the school?***
  Children

Figure 1: Semi -structured Interview Schedule

A stratified sampling technique will be used to interview a headteacher, deputy or assistant headteacher, a class teacher and teaching assistant using a semi-structured interview schedule. Semi-structured interview is a social interaction between the interviewer and interviewee, which exposes it to criticisms of subjectivity and interview bias. The interviewer's behaviour may influence how the interviewee responds and this is known as the response effect (Borg, 1981). The interviewer can unwittingly lead the interviewee through the types of question they ask, the emphasis they place on words and questions, and the tone they use when interviewing.

Interviewer skill therefore, is an important variable in research methodology (Bell, 1987) and how the researcher asks questions and probes responses during interview will shape the outcome. This will be practised through piloting of the interview schedule, but as Sellitz et al. (1962) point out, interviewers are 'human beings and not machines' so there will always remain issues when using this technique.

An awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of different research techniques can maximise their effectiveness and the validity of findings they yield. If research is methodologically robust it can be provide reliable and valid data that may be useful to support schools developing effective distributed leadership. Equally, it is important that questionnaires are well designed because they rely on information sought from questions alone. Good research cannot be built on poorly collected data.

3.6 Authenticity

Reliability and validity are the two main concepts of authentic research and during the 1990s educational research was criticised for poor authenticity (Coleman and Briggs, 2002). Authentic research is important because when it is reliable and valid, it is in a stronger position to influence policy and practice, and provide results that are meaningful and worthwhile (Bush, 2002).

Easterby-Smith et al. (1994) recognise reliability and validity as constructs central to quantitative research design but believe that their use and ideas within

qualitative research remain less favoured 'because they might imply acceptance of one absolute (positivist) reality.' (Ibid, 1994: 89)

Potter (1988) is also critical of the position of authenticity within qualitative approaches, whilst Hammersley (1987) recognises this 'tradition' but believes that the basic issues that surround its inclusion apply to both quantitative and qualitative research, a belief that is further supported by Brock-Utne (1996). Bassey (2002) however, asserts that reliability is an impractical concept within any case study design because case studies, by their very nature, are unique and not easily replicated.

3.6.1 Reliability of Questionnaires

Hammersley (1987) claims there is no widely accepted definition of reliability whilst Bush (2002) suggests that there is general support for the idea that reliability refers to the likelihood that repeating a method would produce similar or identical results. Reliability therefore, provides researchers with a degree of confidence that their study could be repeated with consistency *ceteris paribus* (Yin, 1994). For Bell (1987) reliability may be defined as:

> the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions... A factual question which may produce one type of answer on one occasion but a different answer on another is... unreliable. (Ibid: 50-51)

Reliability therefore, can be defined as the consistency of getting the same results repeatedly. This can be difficult to achieve when measuring attitudes towards distributed leadership because of oversimplification. A questionnaire that measures attitudes assumes that there is a true attitude and that this remains relatively stable over time. Of course, attitudes are shaped by experiences and are susceptible to change. An incident between the headteacher and another member of staff for example, might influence the attitude rating. Attempts to increase reliability will include having a set of questions or attitudes surrounding distributed leadership, rather than a single question, to determine any underlying common attitudes. Participants will also be asked to rate their attitudes over a 12-month period.

> Since attitudinal questions are more sensitive than factual questions to changes in wording, context, emphasis and so on, it becomes almost impossible to assess reliability by asking the same question in another form. (Oppenheim, 1966: 73)

This observation further highlights the importance of careful piloting of research tools. For Oppenheim, having sets of questions related to the same attitude enhances the more stable components of attitude measurement, thereby increasing their reliability. Reliability of questionnaire data will be further enhanced through SPSS. SPSS will enable inferential statistics, testing for statistical correlations, associations and differences across and within successful primary schools. Alpha scales will enable reliability analysis and items that do not have a high alpha rating will be removed from the research design following piloting and subsequent analyses.

3.6.2 Reliability of Semi-structured Interviews

Brock-Utne (1996) reports that the commonly held assumption that qualitative methods pay attention to validity and not to reliability is false. Reliability is a concept that can be applied to both the people involved in the research and to the research tool. Within this study, reliability will be checked for at the stage of question wording and piloting. Wragg (1984) suggests that reliability can be achieved within an interview situation by inviting the reader to consider two questions: will two interviewers using the same procedure and schedule getting the same result? If the interviewer did the same thing on a different occasion, would they obtain a similar picture?

Within the pilot stage of research design it is important that the sample of respondents is as similar as possible to those in the main enquiry. The semi-structured interview will be piloted on a headteacher, teacher and teaching assistant in the same primary school. This will enable the researcher to compare like with like, and make conclusions more easily generalised. Piloting will also assist with the ordering of questions in the interview schedule. The sequence of questions can influence the effectiveness of an interview by affecting the response rate, validity and reliability of any responses. By using a funnel approach to both the interviews and questionnaire design, the researcher hopes to focus

respondents. This will mean starting off with broad filter questions that will gradually become narrower in focus and more specific. For example, asking respondents how long they have been in a particular post and questions about their leadership role, before addressing distributed leadership per se.

Careful piloting will ensure that the question sequence is appropriate and the questions are such that the sample is not excluded from answering. It will also check for question wording, prompts and probes to facilitate effective data collection and minimise the danger of leading responses that may result in attitudes being given that are not their own. Piloting will also remove irrelevant questions from the interview schedule whilst providing an important check for language used in question wording, probes and prompts. It is important that questions are clear and understandable by all respondents.

Positivists might argue that all interviewees should be asked the same questions for interviews to be reliable, suggesting a structured interview approach. Using a semi-structured interview approach therefore, can be criticised for its lack of structure which 'allowing each person to respond in his [sic] unique way' (Nisbet and Watt, 1984: 82). However, within this study a semi-structured technique is justified because it can enhance validity (Oppenheim, 1966, Cohen and Manion, 1994). Brock-Utne (1996) comments on the tensions that exist between reliability and validity and believes that reliability has little value if it is not valid in the first instance. A semi-structured interview facilitates this, enabling the interviewee to be more at ease to respond to a more flexible interview schedule.

Whilst reliability may be compromised because of the intentional strategy of enabling participants to express their individuality, Kitwood (1977) and Cohen and Manion (1994) argue that a loss in reliability may enhance validity.

> In proportion to the extent to which *reliability* is enhanced... validity would decrease. For the main purpose of using an interview in research it is believed that in an interpersonal encounter people are more likely to disclose aspects of themselves, their thoughts, their feelings and values, than they would be in a less human situation. At least for some purposes, it is necessary to generate a kind of conversation in which the respondent feels at ease. In other words, the distinctively human element in an interview becomes rational, calculating, and detached, the less

> likely the interview is to be perceived as a friendly transaction, and the more calculated the response is likely to be.
> (Kitwood, 1977, cited in Cohen and Manion, 1994: 282)

3.6.3 Triangulation

Triangulation is a means of checking validity using more than on research tool and within this study triangulation will be achieved using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

> Triangulation may be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour.... The use of multiple methods, or the multiple method approach, as it is sometimes called, contrasts with the ubiquitous but generally more vulnerable single-method approach that characterises so much of the research in the social sciences... triangular techniques in the social sciences attempt to map out. Or explain more fully, the richness and the complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint.
> (Cohen and Manion, 1994: 233)

Although the above definition recognises triangulation between methods and the use of more than one technique, it does not recognise triangulation within methods and asking the same question of different respondents (McFee, 1992). Triangulation of methods will be achieved by asking headteachers, deputies, teachers and teaching assistants the same questions.

3.6.4 Validating Questionnaires

Valid research accurately describes what it intends to describe, and for Cohen et al. (2000) research is worthless if it is not valid. Sapsford and Evans define validity as 'the extent to which an indicator is a measure of what the researcher wishes to measure' (1984: 259). This definition is supported by Bell (1987) who elaborates and considers its relationship with reliability.

> Validity... tells us whether an item measures or describes what it is supposed to measure or describe. If an item is unreliable, then it must also lack validity, but a reliable item is not necessarily also valid. It could be produce the same or similar responses on all occasions, but not be measuring what it is supposed to measure. (Bell, 1987: 51)

Research data is valid only when it is honest, deep and rich. Careful piloting of questionnaires on a sample population similar to that of the research study will ensure items are relevant and measure what they are supposed to. Interpretivists

challenge the face validity of closed and attitudinal style questionnaires, believing that it forces respondents to 'pigeon-hole' their answers, diluting the richness of data collected. Critics also point out that offering participants a choice of alternative replies does not allow for responses to be probed. However, using a mixed methods approach and conducting semi-structured interviews post questionnaire analysis will address this concern.

Advocates of quantitative methods and questionnaires per se believe that a closed format yields greater validity. Piloting is an integral part of research design and will help determine the types of questions to include, how they are worded, and the best order to yield effectiveness. Oppenheim (1966: 45) reminds the researcher that 'the question is not how we can avoid loss of information, but rather at what point we can best afford to lose information.' Deciding what questions to ask may be reflected by researcher bias. Again, piloting the questionnaire will enable the researcher to be more scientifically informed about what information may be excluded. Of course, selecting what questions to include and ignore may affect the overall response rate and the effectiveness of the data it provides.

Oppenheim believes that piloting is most useful at helping to word questions and avoid ambiguities. Badly worded questions can yield a low response rate, or may be misunderstood- challenging the validity of what is being researched. Within the pilot phase of research design it is important to get the language right so that it is appropriate to the audience, so that they understand what is meant are then able to express them accurately. The question does not want to be too long and complicated because this can be confusing. Equally, it does not want to be leading because this may bias answers too. Piloting remains a 'healthy check' for validity. Any changes that are made following the pilot should be piloted again because 'when a question is reworded after pilot work... the rewording may have introduced new difficulties or biases.' (Oppenheim, 1966: 26)

3.6.5 Validating Semi-structured Interviews

Positivists argue that validating semi-structured interviews is an oxymoron. Instead they prefer the term *'trustworthiness'* (Kincheloe and McLaren, 1998; Bassey, 1999) because participant reaction and emotional involvement are central characteristics of qualitative research and semi-structured interviews per se. Semi-structured interviews are concerned with subjectivity, opinions, attitudes and perspectives, which contribute to their bias- its main source of invalidity. Cohen and Manion (1994: 282) suggest that 'bias is likely to be endemic, particularly in semi-structured interviews... and [is] difficult to eliminate.' Bias can be a result of the interviewer and the questions they ask, or from the interviewee. It can be addressed, and checks for internal validity made, by careful piloting of the semi-structured interview schedule and researcher practise at interview.

Semi-structured interview can be justified as a research technique because as Oppenheim (1966: 77) suggests, 'the most valid response is likely to be the respondent's snap answer, his first immediate reaction to a question, giving what is uppermost in his mind rather than carefully considered statement.' Semi-structured interviews arguably facilitate this, affording a loose question format where the interviewee can answer more freely and give a more accurate representation of what they are thinking. Furthermore, recording, transcribing and providing interviewees with a copy of the interview transcript to verify and amend will enhance research validity, providing an accurate account of the interview.

External validity is a term used to define how generalisable research findings can be. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) criticise its place within qualitative research believing that there is insufficient control to enable findings to be generalised outside the setting in which they occurred. To achieve external validity Yin (1994) recommends repeating the study in a 'similar setting'. Although this will be achieved to a degree by a multiple case study design, findings will not be externally valid. Findings will be context specific to the two schools. External validity is not feasible within the constraints of this research study, in terms of financial cost and time.

3.7 Sample

Distributed leadership takes place through the interactions of people and their situations, with headteachers and senior leadership team playing a vital role in creating an environment where this can occur (Harris, 2005; Spillane, 2006). Purposive sampling will be used to include the views of headteachers and members of the senior management team. However, because distributed leadership is a process that is done with as opposed to its people, it is important to get the perspectives of others within the school too. Purposive sampling therefore, will also include teachers and teaching assistants from two primary schools within North East Lincolnshire.

Spillane and Orlina (2005) identify the epistemological and methodological challenges of distributed leadership research. Research is often labour intensive, requiring costly ethnographic and structured observations. As a result, although the data may be rich in terms of leadership practice, it is invariably difficult to generalise beyond the population sample. They acknowledge the difficulties of research within this field and recommend identifying leadership practice from two perspectives, 'from the perspective of those in the formally designated leadership positions and from the perspective of followers.' (Ibid: 170)

Within this study those in designated leadership positions will be the headteacher and deputy/ assistant headteacher, whilst the 'followers' are likely to be the teachers and teaching assistants.

Spillane et al. (2005) describe distributed leadership research as 'a recipe for effective school leadership' and a 'conceptual lens for framing investigations of leadership practice.' (Ibid: 158). To develop an understanding of the processes that maximise its effectiveness, and to investigate the associations between it and success therefore, it would be prudent to observe successful schools. Two successful schools will be identified from a triangulation of data including Ofsted reports and LA recommendations.

Questionnaires were issued to four primary schools in North East Lincolnshire. The intent was that questionnaires would be completed during a staff meeting, enabling the research rationale and issues of confidentiality and anonymity to be discussed, and ensuring a high response rate. However, because questionnaires were issued during the summer term only Badger Hill had a staff meeting scheduled and was able to follow the intended methodology. At Quainton, Northwold and Saint Chads, headteachers disseminated and collected questionnaires through their internal mailing systems. Consequently, the number of returns was lower than anticipated (n=53) and in two cases, the number of returns was particularly small. This is indicative of further investigation.

Questionnaire data was analysed to provide a stratified sample for the qualitative approach. Purposely chosen, and subject to selection bias, the sample allowed data to be collected from a cross section of school staff using semi-structured interviews. This is a weakness of the research design, and as recognised by Cohen et al. (2000), the sample ' does not pretend to represent the wider population; it is deliberately and unashamedly selective and biased.'(Ibid: 104).

Semi-structures interviews are costly in terms of time and subsequent transcription analysis. A larger sample is beyond the scope of this study. As a consequence, the generalisability of findings will be restricted to the sample and no universal truths will be made.

3.8 Ethics

The origins of ethics are found within medical research but over time this has widened to include how subjects are treated within educational research (Evans et al., 1996). For Zimbard (1984),

> Ethics embody individual and communal codes of conduct based upon adherence to a set of principles which may be explicit and codified or implicit, and which may be abstract and impersonal or concrete and personal. (Zimbard, 1984, cited in Cohen et al., 2000: 58)

Pring (2000) distinguishes between ethics and morals and defines ethics as '...the philosophical enquiry into the basis of morals or moral judgements' whereas 'morals [are] concerned with what is the right or wrong thing to do.' (Ibid: 141). Within this study the question of the aim of the research is important, and that the research is justifiable because it seeks to improve leadership and management within primary schools through enhanced distributed leadership.

Key phrases have been created to protect the rights of research participants including: voluntary participation, informed consent, and risk of harm, confidentiality and anonymity. Evans and Jakupek (1996) see informed consent as the key issue in research involving humans, whilst Bogdan and Biklen (1992) believe that informed consent and protecting participants from harm are the principal concerns within qualitative research per se. In this study participants will not be put in a situation where they might be at risk of harm and informed consent will be sought prior to research using proformas from the University of Hull's ethical procedures for research and teaching in the institute for learning (see appendix 2).

Establishing informed consent requires research participants to be fully informed about procedures and risks involved in the research. This is problematic within the investigation of distributed leadership because theories and ideas are being tested and precise conclusions are not known at the beginning of the study. The notion of fully informing participants therefore remains purely theoretical (Cornett, 1990). Kiegelmann (1996) argues that research agendas should be disclosed but the detail surrounding the research intent will be sufficiently broad so it does not

deceive participants to the nature of the study whilst reducing experimenter effects.

Harris (2005) and Spillane (2006) acknowledge that within a distributed perspective some leadership activities connect through students.

> ...some leadership activities connect with teaching and learning directly through students rather than exclusively or chiefly through teachers. (Spillane, 2006: 26)

Within this study the researcher will not seek the direct responses of pupils because of the added complexity of establishing informed consent from primary aged children. However, the researcher will seek to develop an understanding of their involvement in distributed leadership and its impact on the child through questioning adults.

Confidentiality and anonymity are two standards used by researchers to protect the privacy of participants. All data collected from or about them will be held in confidence. Confidentiality will be assured by not making available identifying information to anyone other than the researcher. Ensuring participant anonymity however, will be more difficult to achieve because participants from questionnaires will need to be identifiable because they may be measured in follow up interviews. Questionnaires will be coded to enable this. Within the write-up all reasonable steps will be taken to prevent data from being published in a way that would allow participant identity to be revealed. Pseudonyms will be used so that the names of schools and staff are not easily identified. Participants will be reminded of these issues prior to data collection using both research techniques.

Research procedures will be outlined at the start of the study and research tools will be carefully piloted on a sample similar to the research population. This is important so that findings are not misleading and are more easily generalised (Bassey, 1998). Participants will be able to withdraw from the research sample at any time and permission will be sought prior to interviews, so that they can be audio taped. Tapes will be transcribed and interviewees will be given a copy of the transcript for verification. A wide margin will be left to enable interviewees to

amend transcripts where necessary. Upon completion of the study, all participants involved in the study will be given a summary of the key findings and invited access to a full copy of the thesis. This will address the issue of conflict between the rights of the individual to privacy and the public's right to know (Evans and Jakupec, 1996).

3.9 Data analysis

3.9.1 Analysing Questionnaire Data: Statistical Tests

Chi-square is a non-parametric test of difference between variables to see if they are statistically significant or caused by chance. Non-parametric tests make few or no assumptions about the wider population, and so do not assume a regular bell shaped curve of distribution. Requiring nominal and ordinal levels of data, chi-square is arguably a weaker statistical test than the parametric t-test that requires interval or ratio data. However, its weakness (requiring nominal/ ordinal data) is also its strength, enabling it to be used in a wider variety of contexts than t-tests.

Parametric t-tests require interval or ratio data. Independent t-tests measure the difference between the mean (average) scores of one sample on two separate occasions or between two samples on one occasion. Independent t-tests were carried out to test for significant differences between independent, distinct groups. Paired samples t-tests also require interval or ratio data, but compare the same group on their scores for two different variables.

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient measures the strength of the linear relationship between two variables. This parametric test assumes that data is approximately normally distributed and their joint distribution is bivariate normal. Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient requires interval or ratio data and produces values between –1.0 and +1.0. A coefficient of +1.0 indicates a perfect positive correlation between variables, 0.0 is no correlation and -1.0 is a perfect negative (inverse) correlation.

3.9.2 Analysing Semi-structured Interviews: Coding

All interviews will be recorded and transcribed, and copies given to interviewees to check for validity, before being coded using descriptors from the literature review. This will demand significant time and skill from the researcher, with problems of analysis and coding prevailing. Bell (1987: 96) suggests that '... you will have to find something in the region of ten hours for each hour recorded,' whilst Potter's estimate (1988) is double this, approximating twenty hours to transcribe a one-hour tape. A tight time schedule restricts the amount of data that can be collected and analysed, and will limit the sample size to 8 interviews.

To overcome problems of recording narrative and to enable the researcher to record body language and other non-verbal gestures that may be regarded as important during the interview, permission will be asked to audio-record all interviews. Interviews will be transcribed and analysed using codes derived from the literature review (Figure 2: the codes used in analysis).

Nominal coding will be used to analyse the content of each interview and has been chosen because it represents a mixture of deductive and inductive coding systems. Nominal coding is, in part, deductive because it is possible to have *a priori* ideas and assumptions about the interpretation of raw data, before the analysis has begun (Miles and Huberman, 1994). These ideas have been generated through the literature review, research objectives, analysis of quantitative data, and the semi-structured interview schedule. However, deductive coding must remain open to unpredicted codes that may emerge from within the raw data collection, and this is particularly relevant because my research intends to develop an understanding of distributed leadership in primary schools.

Nominal coding has also been chosen because it includes elements of inductive coding. This is fundamental to my research study that attempts to develop an understanding of a distributed perspective, where theories about leadership practice are emerging (Spillane, 2006). Nominal coding allows the researcher to remain open to, and led by the raw data, to define categories of phenomena of distributed leadership that may be important to developing our understanding.

Coding data will enable the researcher to detect frequencies and patterns in interviews, and begin to make speculative inferences. Coyle (1995: 256), is critical of this approach for its lack of 'systematicity', and suggests that despite the researchers attempts at being scientific, it is still a subjective approach whereby the researcher reads between the lines, and offers their interpretation of language. Wragg (2002) recommends that subjective content analysis and illustrative quotations will be need to be double checked where possible. Collating transcribed interviews with a wide margin and inviting interviewees to make comments and notes alongside the transcribed interview will allow the content to be validated.

The system of coding has taken headings from the framework of research in Chapter 2. Codes are grouped where they are concerned with a similar theme to create a 'domain analysis' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). Codes that refer to the culture of distributed leadership, for example, begin with C, and C/Sup means the school exhibits a supportive culture. There are nuances in coding, and as Miles and Huberman (1994) recommend, codes are closely linked to what they are describing, and have been kept as discrete as possible to facilitate analysis. C/Enc for example, refers to a culture that encourages distributed leadership, and a culture that encourages distributed leadership is different from one that supports developing a distributed perspective.

DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP- THE PROCESS	
P/who	Who is involved in leadership practice
P/HT	Headteacher leads
P/SLT	Senior leadership team leads (Deputy, Assistant)
P/T	Teacher leads
P/TA	Teaching assistant leads
P/O	Others in the school are responsible for leadership
P/pers	The importance of the personality in leadership, enthusiasm
P/lc	Process of developing a learning community
DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP- THE CULTURE	
C/Sup	Supportive culture
C/Enc	Encouraging culture
C/CPD	Learning, professional development culture
C/Flex	Flexible and fluid culture
C/Time	Culture where time is given for leadership
DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP- STRUCTURAL ORGANISATION/ SITUATION	
St/tools	Tools that enable dl, eg. Performance management
St/routines	Routines that enable dl
DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP- SOURCES	
S/des	Leadership is designed
S/strat	Leadership is strategic
S/vis	Leadership is linked to the vision
S/def	Leadership occurs by default
S/desp	Leadership occurs by despair
DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP- BARRIERS	
Bar/time	Time as a barrier
Bar/int	Internal barriers: capacity & capability of others
Bar/ext	External barriers: National curriculum, work-life balance, PPA time, teaching and learning responsibility payments, LA
Bar/outschl	Barriers outside of school, eg. family
Bar/acc	Accountability
Bar/vis	Conflicting and competing visions
DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP- IMPACT	
I/Staff	Impact of distributed leadership on staff
I/Child	Impact of distributed on child
I/O	Impact on distributed leadership on other variables

Figure 2: The codes used in analysis of the semi-structured interviews.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

4.1 Quantitative Data

4.1.1 Questionnaire Sample

Questionnaires were issued to all staff at four primary schools within North East Lincolnshire. 53 questionnaires were completed and returned. Table 3 outlines the frequency of responses and the response rate for each school.

Table 3: The frequency of responses and response rate for each school

School	Frequency of responses	Response rate
Badger Hill	25	89%
Northwold	18	90%
Quainton	6	46%
St Chads	4	25%
Total	53	68%

There was an overall response rate of 68% and the percentage of responses varied between schools. The response rate was good at Badger Hill Primary and Northwold, where 89% and 90% of questionnaires were completed and returned. This is attributed to headteachers asking their staff to complete and return questionnaires during a staff meeting. This procedure was not followed at Quainton Primary and St Chads because of the timing when questionnaires were issued. Questionnaires were distributed at the end of the summer term and staff at Quainton and St Chads did not have any more staff meetings scheduled. Although heads were optimistic that staff would complete the questionnaires, they reported difficulties chasing up responses, which resulted in a lower response rate at these schools. This is indicative of further investigation because it is unclear whether variations in response rate are due to staff interest in distributed leadership.

The four schools involved in this study all had a traditional leadership structure that included a headteacher, deputy head and senior management team (SMT). At Badger Hill, there was also an assistant headteacher. Out of the sample of 53 returns, 93% were female. The four males that completed the sample were all members of their school's senior leadership team- and three were headteachers. Almost half the sample (49%) comprised teachers, 26.4% were teaching assistants, and 25% were members from SMT (headteachers, deputy and assistant heads). 11% of the sample was administration staff (11%).

Table 4 illustrates the number of years experience staff had spent within their current role across the whole sample. 20 respondents reported to be in their current role for seven or more years, and of these, 2 were headteachers and 10 were class teachers. One headteacher and one deputy had been in their current role for less than 2 years, but these were in different schools. At Northwold Primary, the head and deputy had both been in place between 3 and 4 years.

Table 4: The number of years experience in current roles within the sample

Experience (Years) / Role	0-2 years	3-4 years	5-6 years	7+ years
Head teacher	1	1	0	2
Deputy Head	1	1	0	0
Assistant Head	0	1	0	0
Teacher	4	3	9	10
Teaching Assistant	3	5	3	3
Other	0	1	0	5
Total	9	12	12	20

An extensive review of distributed leadership literature suggests that there is no blue print for developing an effective distributed perspective (Harris, 2005; Spillane, 2006). However, underlying features have emerged that have been linked to its effectiveness. These include:

- Processes of distributing leadership: How are stakeholders involved in the process of distributing leadership and how are they supported?
- School culture: to what extent does a collaborative, supportive culture facilitate distributed leadership?
- Structural organisation of schools and distributed leadership: What structures facilitate effective distribution of leadership?
- Sources of distributed leadership: what are the circumstances in which distributed leadership occurs? Is it carefully planned, or does it occur through default, or by desperation... as result of crisis?
- Barriers: what are the challenges and tensions that prevent distributed leadership from being effective?

These features will be examined in turn against the quantitative data yielded from questionnaires. Questionnaires have been numerically coded and statistically analysed using SPSS, a statistical computer programme for social sciences.

However, quantitative analysis remains a precursor for my mixed methods approach, which according to Spillane (2006), is much needed to develop an understanding of the practice of distributed leadership.

4.1.2 Processes of Distributed Leadership

Within my analysis of the processes of distributed leadership, the research will examine the involvement, support and encouragement of teachers, teaching assistants and pupils within distributed leadership. This will begin with a look at teacher leadership.

Teacher leadership was a strong feature in all the schools surveyed. Table 5 outlines the extent to which teachers are involved in leadership in the four schools.

Table 5: Frequency and percentage agreement that teachers were involved in leadership in each school.

School	Always/ frequently	Sometimes	Rarely/ never
Badger Hill	21 *84%*	4 *16%*	0 *0*
Northwold	7 *39%*	10 *56%*	1 *6%*
Quainton	3 *50%*	3 *50%*	0 *0*
St Chads	1 *25%*	2 *50%*	1 *25%*

As can be seen in the table opposite, percentages can be misleading because the four schools each have a different number of cases. However, all subsequent analyses are speculative and exploratory. At Badger Hill 84% of the sample reported that teachers were always or frequently involved in leadership, followed by Quainton (50%).

Pearson's chi-square test was used to see if there was a difference between schools and their involvement of teachers in leadership (table 6). A highly significant difference was reported between teacher leadership in the four schools. Teacher leadership was greatest at Badger Hill and Quainton.

Table 6: Chi –square test for teacher leadership in the four schools.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance (2 tailed)
26.748	12	0.008

All schools surveyed reported good support for teacher leadership as is illustrated in table 7.

Table 7: Percentage levels of support for teacher leadership in each school.

School	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Missing Data
Badger Hill	20	72	8	0
Northwold	6	77	17	0
Quainton	50	50	0	0
St Chads	0	75	0	25

Teacher leadership was strongly supported at Badger Hill, where 92% of the sample agreed or strongly agreed that teachers were supported in leadership. At Northwold 84% agreed or strongly agreed that teachers were supported in their leadership. Despite a very small sample size at Quainton (n=6), 50% of the sample agreed and 50% strongly agreed that teachers were supported within their leadership.

Table 8: A table to show the percentage levels of agreement that teacher leadership was encouraged in the different schools.

School	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Missing Data (%)
Badger Hill	100	0	0
Northwold	89	11	0
Quainton	67	17	17
St Chads	100	0	0

Staff were asked whether teachers were encouraged to lead. Teacher leadership was strongly encouraged at Badger Hill and St Chads, where 100% of the sample agreed or strongly agreed that teachers were encouraged to lead. Encouragement was reportedly strongest at Badger Hill because out of the 100% at Badger Hill, 36% strongly agreed that teacher leadership was encouraged. At St Chads, no staff strongly agreed with this statement.

With reference to table 8, not all respondents felt that teacher leadership was encouraged. However, these percentages can be misleading, particularly at St Chads and Quainton where response rates were particularly low. At Quainton 17% represents 1 person, and at Northwold 11% equates with 2 people. This small sample size is indicative of further research. However, Chi-square reported no significant differences between schools and their encouragement of teacher leadership, results of which are shown in the table 9.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
16.517	9	0.057

Table 9: Chi-square test to show encouragement of teacher leadership in the four schools.

Distributed leadership recognises that leadership is extended beyond teachers and middle leaders to include other members of staff (Spillane, 2006). Therefore, within the questionnaire staff were asked to judge how frequently teaching assistants (TAs) were involved in leadership activities. A summary of this data is presented in table 10.

Table 10: TAs involvement in leadership activities within each school.

School	Always (%)	Frequently (%)	Sometimes (%)	Rarely (%)	Never (%)	Don't Know	Missing data
Badger Hill	12	36	24	16	12	0	0
Northwold	6	6	50	22	0	11	6
Quainton	0	67	33	0	0	0	0
St Chads	0	0	50	25	0	25	0

In percentage terms, TAs were most frequently involved in leadership at Quainton and Badger Hill. At Quainton 67% of the sample reported that teaching assistants (TAs) were frequently involved in leadership. At Badger Hill 36% of the sample reported that TAs were frequently involved, with a further 12% reporting that TAs were always involved. However, at the same school (Badger Hill) 28% of the sample reported that TAs were rarely or never involved in leadership. Within the sample from St Chads, 2 respondents reported that TAs were sometimes involved in leadership, 1 rarely and 1 person (25%) did not know whether TAs were involved in leadership. TAs were reported to be least involved in leadership at Northwold, where 11% of staff reported that TAs were always or frequently involved in leadership. Despite these variations between schools, Chi-square reported no significant difference between the levels of involvement of TA leadership in the different schools.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
24.419	18	0.142

Table 11: Chi-square test to show no significant difference between leadership of TAs in leadership in different schools.

Independent t-tests were used to compare mean values in different schools. Equal variances were assumed when Badger Hill and Northwold were compared because the response rate for these schools was good and representative of the majority of staff at these schools. However, when comparisons were made

involving Quainton and St Chads equal variances were not assumed due to the poor response rate at these schools.

Independent t-tests were used to compare schools to see if they differed in their involvement of teaching assistants in distributed leadership. Results are outlined in table 12.

Table 12: Independent t-tests to compare leadership of TAs in different schools.

School	Mean Score	t	Significance
Quainton St Chads	2.3 4.0	-2.259	0.095
Northwold Quainton	3.2 2.3	2.228	0.037*
Badger Hill St Chads	2.8 4.0	-1.604	0.189
Badger Hill Quainton	2.8 2.3	1.444	0.164
Northwold St Chads	3.2 4.0	-0.992	0.372

TAs appear to be most involved in leadership at Quainton and Badger Hill, where low mean scores suggest more frequent involvement of TA leadership. No significant differences were observed between Quainton and Badger Hill (p 0.164, equal variances not assumed). However, differences were significant between Northwold and Quainton (p. 0.037, equal variances not assumed).

Table 13: Independent t-tests to compare leadership of teachers in different schools.

School	Mean Score	t	Significance
Badger Hill Northwold	1.96 2.5	-2.415	0.02*
Badger Hill St Chads	1.96 3.25	-2.013	0.131
Badger Hill Quainton	1.96 2.16	-0.493	0.640
Northwold St Chads	2.5 3.25	-1.135	0.325
Quainton St Chads	2.16 3.25	-1.452	0.202
Northwold Quainton	2.5 2.16	0.742	0.480

Independent t-tests were also used to compare mean scores of teacher leadership in the different schools. Significant differences were observed between the frequency of teacher leadership at Badger Hill and Northwold (p. 0.02, with equal variances assumed). This data suggests that teachers were more involved in distributed leadership at Badger Hill than Northwold and St Chads.

Table 14: Percentage levels of support for teaching assistants in their leadership in each school.

School	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Missing Data
Badger Hill	20	72	8	0
Northwold	6	78	17	0
Quainton	50	50	0	0
St Chads	0	75	0	25

Staff were asked to consider how much support teaching assistants were given in their leadership. Teaching assistants appear to be most supported in their leadership at Badger Hill and Quainton. At Badger Hill 92% agreed or strongly agreed that TAs were supported in their leadership. At Quainton all respondents agreed that TAs were supported in their leadership, half the sample population strongly agreeing. At Northwold three members of staff (17%) did not feel that TAs were supported in leadership. Chi-square test was used to see if there were significant differences between these schools. These results are seen in table 15.

Table 15: Chi-square test to show support for leadership of TAs in different schools.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
20.789	9	0.014

Significant differences were observed between the support offered to TAs in their leadership in the different schools.

Table 16: Encouragement of TAs to lead in the different schools.

School	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Missing Data (%)
Badger Hill	88	8	4
Northwold	44	50	6
Quainton	100	0	0
St Chads	25	75	0

All four schools surveyed encouraged TAs to lead, but levels of encouragement were reportedly highest at Badger Hill (88%) and Quainton (100%). At Quainton, 83% agreed and 17% strongly agreed that leadership of TAs was encouraged. At Badger Hill 24% of the sample strongly agreed that TA leadership was encouraged. Conversely, half the sample from Northwold felt that TAs were not encouraged to lead, and 75% of the sample from St Chads did not feel that leadership of TAs was encouraged.

Table 17: Chi-square test to show encouragement of leadership of TAs in the four schools.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance (2 tailed)
18.465	9	0.03

Pearson's Chi square test compared the encouragement of TA leadership in these schools, and significant differences were found at the 5% level (Chi-square $p<0.05$).

Distributed leadership recognises the extended and increased opportunities to involve pupils in shaping leadership decisions (Rudduck and Flutter, 2004; Harris, 2005), which can occur through forums such as circle time and school council. Table 18 outlines how involved staff reported pupils to be in shaping leadership.

Table 18: Frequency and percentages of pupils involved in leadership within the whole sample.

Attitude Rating	Frequency	Percentage
Always	5	9.4
Frequently	12	22.6
Sometimes	28	52.8
Rarely	4	7.5
Don't Know	4	7.5
Total	53	100%

As can be seen, 4 respondents reported that pupils were rarely involved in leadership. In addition, 4 respondents did not know whether their pupils were involved in shaping leadership, and these were all TAs from the same school- Northwold. Within the whole sample, over half the population (52.8%) reported that pupils were sometimes given opportunities to be involved in leadership. Only 9.4% felt that pupils were always involved in leadership.

Table 19: Frequency and Percentages of pupil involvement in leadership.

School	Always/ Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely / Never	Don't Know
Badger Hill	10 *40%*	13 *52%*	2 *8%*	0
Northwold	2 *11%*	10 *56%*	2 *11%*	4 *22%*
Quainton	4 *67%*	2 *33%*	0	0
St Chads	1 *25%*	3 *75%*	0	0

Pupils' involvement in leadership was high at Badger Hill and Quainton. At Badger Hill, 40% reported that pupils were always or frequently involved, and 52% stated pupils were sometimes involved. At Quainton 67% of the sample reported children were always or frequently involved in leadership. Again, a

warning is made when using percentages as is illustrated in this table. A small sample can distort data and make percentage values misleading- as is evident with Quainton and St Chads in particular.

Teachers reported that pupils were more involved in school leadership than other members of staff. At St Chads the head believed that pupils were sometimes involved in shaping leadership decisions, whilst at Badger Hill and Northwold, heads reported that pupils were rarely involved in leadership. The head at Quainton reported that pupils were frequently involved in leadership, whilst her deputy believed that pupil involvement was greater, reporting that pupils were always involved in shaping school leadership. Headteachers results were analysed to compare leadership of teachers, teaching assistants (TAs) and pupils. Table 20 outlines differences between leadership of teachers, TAs and pupils as reported by headteachers.

Table 20: Paired sample t-test to compare headteachers' scores for leadership of teachers, TAs and pupils.

Leadership Group	Mean Score	T	Significance
Teachers TAs	-1.25 -1.75	-2.611 -2.782	0.08
Teachers Pupils	-1.25 -2.25	-4.700	0.018*
Pupils TAs	-2.25 -1.75	-4.700	0.018*

Teachers were more involved in leadership activities than TAs but this was not statistically significant (p=0.08, 1 tailed test). However, highly significant differences were observed between teacher and pupil leadership (p. 0.018, 2 tailed test), and TAs were involved in significantly more leadership than pupils (p=0.018, 1 tailed test).

Independent t tests compared schools to look for differences between pupil leadership, and the results are illustrated in table 21.

Table 21: Independent t-test results comparing pupil leadership in schools

School	Mean Score	T	Significance
Badger Hill Northwold	2.6 3.6667	-3.258	0.002*
Northwold Quainton	3.6667 2.0	3.417	0.004*
Badger Hill Quainton	2.6 2.0	1.516	0.174
Badger Hill St Chads	2.6 2.5	0.191	0.859
Quainton St Chads	2.0 2.5	-0.808	0.450
Northwold St Chads	3.6667 2.5	1.959	0.099

The lowest levels of pupil leadership were reported at Northwold. Here, a mean value of 3.6667 corresponded with a judgement that pupil leadership was sometimes- rarely witnessed. Independent t-tests found highly significant differences in pupil leadership between Northwold and Badger Hill (Independent t-test, $p<0.01$, equal variances assumed), and between Northwold and Quainton (Independent t-test, $p < 0.01$, equal variances not assumed). Pupil leadership was greater at Badger Hill than Northwold. Pupil leadership was reported to be most frequent at Quainton, with the lowest mean score of 2.0, but this was not significantly different to Badger Hill due to a very small sample size.

Chi-square test reported no significant difference between schools and pupil involvement in shaping leadership decisions.

Table 22: Chi-square test to show pupil involvement in leadership in the four schools.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance (2 tailed)
19.320	12	0.081

People in different roles gave different perceptions of how involved staff were in leadership. Heads reported that staff were sometimes or frequently involved in leadership, whilst deputy and assistant heads perceived staff involvement to be greater, reporting staff to be frequently or always involved. These judgements were supported by other members of staff including TAs and administration staff; 72% believing that staff were frequently or always given opportunities to lead.

Schools were compared to look for differences in the opportunities staff were given to lead. No significant differences were observed using Chi-square test.

Table 23: Chi-square test to show opportunities for leadership to staff.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
19.508	18	0.361

However, when schools were compared to find out whether staff involvement in shaping their own leadership differed, highly significant differences were reported (Chi-square test, p 0.007).

Table 24: Chi-square test to show responsibility for making their own leadership decisions.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
22.863	9	0.007

Table 25: Frequency and percentages of staff involvement in shaping their own leadership in each school.

School	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Don't know
Badger Hill	11 44%	12 48%	2 8%	0
Northwold	2 11%	4 22%	8 44%	4 22%
Quainton	3 50%	2 33%	1 17%	0
St Chads	1 25%	3 75%	0	0

As can be seen in table 25, staff were most involved in shaping their own leadership at Badger Hill, Quainton and St Chads. At Badger Hill 92% staff felt they were always or frequently involved in shaping their leadership, whilst at Quainton this figure was 100%. However, it should be warned that a very small sample size at St Chads makes these percentages potentially misleading. Staff were least involved in shaping their leadership at Northwold, where, 44% reported that they were sometimes involved and 22% said they did not know.

Independent t-tests also reported significant differences between mean scores for staff responsibility in making their own leadership decisions and these are reported in table 26.

Table 26: Independent t test for staff involvement in shaping their own leadership.

School	Mean Score	t	Significance
Badger Hill Northwold	1.64 3.22	-4.346	0.000
St Chads Northwold	1.75 3.22	1.722	0.101
Quainton Northwold	1.66 3.22	2.179	0.04

Staff at Badger Hill and Quainton were most responsible for shaping their own leadership decisions. Staff at Northwold reported least involvement in shaping their own leadership. Highly significant differences were found between Badger Hill and Northwold (equal variances assumed), and significant differences were reported between Northwold and Quainton (p= 0.04, equal variances not assumed).

Table 27: Responsibility for making their own leadership decisions.

Role	Percentage
Head/ Deputy/ Assistant Head	100
Administration	66
Teacher	35
Teaching assistants	21

From the whole sample, 100% of headteachers, deputies and assistant heads perceived they were always or frequently responsible for making their own leadership decisions. 35% teachers and 21% teaching assistants thought they were frequently responsible for their own leadership. However, 66% of administration staff felt they were always or frequently responsible, suggesting they have greater ownership in their leadership. This is indicative of further research and it will be interesting to investigate possible reasons for this through the qualitative aspect to my research design.

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was used to measure the strength of the linear relationship between leadership tasks being linked to the child, and pupil involvement in leadership decisions.

Pearson's Correlation	0.357**
Significance (2-tailed test)	0.009
Number of Cases	53

Table 28: Pearson's correlation coefficient, feeling valued within leadership and feedback of leadership.

A highly significant relationship was observed ($p < 0.01$, 2 tailed test), suggesting an association between these variables. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the more schools involve pupils in leadership, the more likely leadership tasks are to

be linked to the child. However, a warning should be made when using tests of correlation. Such tests do not infer causation between variables, but merely suggest an association between variables. To assign causality would require an investigation purposefully designed to provide this kind of inference.

4.1.3 School Culture

Within the analysis of school culture and distributed leadership, the research examined how supported respondents feel in the distribution of leadership, their enjoyment of leadership, feedback of leadership, how valued they feel in their role as leader, and their enjoyment of leadership in their school.

A collaborative and supportive culture has been associated with effective distributed leadership (Johnson, 2004; Hargreaves, 2004; Macbeath, 2005). Within this sample 35.9% of respondents believed that they were always supported in their leadership, whilst 46.2% reported that they were frequently supported. Almost half the sample (47.1%) reported that there was good support for staff that wanted to lead, which is indicative of a supportive culture in all the schools investigated. These results are shown in table 29.

Table 29: Support for staff wishing to lead.

School	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Don't know
Badger Hill	11 44%	6 24%	7 28%	1 4%
Northwold	2 11%	7 39%	4 22%	5 28%
Quainton	5 83%	1 17%	0	0
St Chads	1 25%	2 50%	0	1 25%

Staff in all four schools reported that support was always available and nobody reported that support was rarely or never available. Support was reported to be particularly good at Quainton but comes with the warning of a very small sample size. Conversely, at Northwold half the sample (50%) felt that support was not always or frequently available.

Chi-square and Independent t-tests were carried out to determine whether there was a significant difference between the support offered to leaders at these schools.

Table 30: Chi-square test to show support for staff wishing to lead.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
17.531	9	0.041

Chi-square reported a significant difference between the frequency of support offered to leaders in these schools.

Independent t-tests found highly significant differences between Northwold and Badger Hill, and Northwold and Quainton. These differences are summarised in table 31.

Table 31: Independent t-test showing support for staff wishing to lead in each school.

School	Mean score	t	Significance (2 tailed)
Badger Hill Northwold	2.0 3.22	-2.624	0.012*
Badger Hill St Chads	2.0 2.75	-0.661	0.552
Northwold Quainton	3.22 1.16	4.373	0.000*
Northwold St Chads	3.22 2.75	0.396	0.712
Quainton St Chads	1.16 2.75	-1.412	0.249

Northwold was the least supportive school in the sample and differed significantly in the support offered when compared with Badger Hill (p=0.012, equal variances assumed) and Quainton (p=0.000, equal variances not assumed). The most supportive school within the sample was Quainton, with a mean score of 1.16.

Schools were compared to see if staff differed in their enjoyment of leadership using Chi-square and Independent t-tests.

Table 32: Chi-square test to show enjoyment of leadership between schools.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
14.746	9	0.098

Using a Chi-square test, no significant differences were observed as can be seen in table 32.

Table 33: Independent t-test for enjoyment of leadership.

School	Mean score	t	Significance (2 tailed)
Badger Hill Northwold	1.84 1.16	1.975	0.055
Badger Hill Quainton	1.84 1.66	0.375	0.718
Badger Hill St Chads	1.84 1.0	1.383	0.245
Northwold Quainton	1.16 1.66	-0.961	0.358
Northwold St Chads	1.16 1.0	0.255	0.809

Similarly, Independent t-tests found no significant differences between levels of leadership enjoyment in different schools. Staff at Badger Hill reported the lowest levels of leadership enjoyment, posting the highest mean score, but leadership was still enjoyed and not significantly different from other schools studied. A score of 2 indicated that staff frequently enjoyed being able to lead, so a mean score of 1.84 fell between always and frequently enjoying leadership. Staff at St Chads reported the highest levels of leadership enjoyment, recording the lowest mean score of 1.0.

Table 34: People are able to talk about leadership issues with another person in their school.

School	Always/ Frequently	Sometimes	Never
Badger Hill	21 84%	1 4%	0
Northwold	7 39%	2 11%	0
Quainton	5 83%	0	0
St Chads	1 25%	0	1 25%

Further analysis of questionnaire data suggests that all schools in this study provide a supportive culture. Support was particularly strong at Badger Hill and Quainton, and this can be seen in table 34. The majority of staff at Badger Hill (84%) felt that there was always or frequently somebody they could go to and discuss leadership matters. This was similarly true at Quainton, where 83% of the sample reported they could always or frequently talk to somebody in their school about leadership issues.

Interestingly, when different groups of staff were compared, headteachers emerged as the least supported group, and were the only ones to report that they were unable to talk to anyone about their leadership. This can be seen in table 34, and raises several issues. Firstly is the issue of a small subject sample, affecting

the validity and generalisability. Secondly and perhaps more alarming, is the concern of sustainability. How can distributed leadership be sustained if headteachers do not feel they are being supported in their role or able to talk to anyone in their school about leadership? This issue will be further investigated through semi-structured interviews to determine levels of support for headteachers within North East Lincolnshire.

Bush et al. (2003) identify the nurturing aspect of school culture as important to effective distributed leadership. I believe feedback is an important and integral part of a nurturing culture, enabling leadership development, giving staff opportunities to reflect on performance and consider how they might improve.

Table 35: Feedback to people within leadership roles.

Attitude score	Frequency	Valid %	Cumulative %
Always	8	20.5	20.5
Frequently	12	30.8	51.3
Sometimes	9	23.1	74.4
Rarely	10	25.6	100
Total	39	100	100

With reference to table 35, it would appear that feedback of leadership performance is an area of development for all schools in this study. 25.6% of the total sample reported that they were rarely given feedback on leadership performance. Furthermore, 23.1% also reported that they only sometimes received feedback on their leadership. This suggests that frequency of feedback could be improved. Staff felt they needed more feedback; only one fifth (20.5%) of the sample reported that they always received feedback on leadership.

To further investigate the issue of feedback, schools were compared to see if feedback differed between them. Results are outlined in the table below.

School	Always/ frequently	Sometimes	Rarely
Badger Hill	9 36%	5 20%	9 36%
Northwold	7 39%	2 11%	0
Quainton	4 67%	1 17%	0
St Chads	0	1 25%	1 25%

Table 36: Feedback on leadership performance.

Feedback was reportedly low at Badger Hill and St Chads. At Badger Hill 36% (9 people) felt they were rarely given feedback. Feedback on leadership performance was highest at Quainton, where 67% of the sample felt that they

were always or frequently given feedback. Again, the validity and generalisablity of observations at St Chads and Quainton remains questionable because of an extremely small sample size.

Table 37: Chi-square test to show feedback of leadership between schools.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
23.220	12	0.026

Chi-square test reported significant differences in the feedback of leadership between the four schools, and this can be seen in table 37.

Table 38: Independent t-test showing feedback on leadership performance.

School	Mean score	t	Significance (2 tailed)
Badger Hill Northwold	2.56 1.05	3.749	0.001*
Badger Hill Quainton	2.56 1.50	2.078	0.065
Badger Hill St Chads	2.56 1.75	0.759	0.496
Northwold Quainton	1.05 1.50	-0.874	0.404
Northwold St Chads	1.05 1.75	-0.651	0.556
Quainton St Chads	1.50 1.75	-0.224	0.834

Schools were also compared to see if feedback of leadership differed using independent t-tests. Comparison of mean scores shows a highly significant difference between feedback at Badger Hill and Northwold (p=0.001, equal variances assumed). Feedback of leadership was lowest at Badger Hill. Of course, a limitation of this data and quantitative research per se is that it does not intimate the quality of feedback that is given. By using qualitative methods I will be able to further investigate different forms of feedback and their impact on distributed leadership.

It is unclear how respondents interpreted feedback and other items on the questionnaire. For example, some people may have interpreted feedback exclusively in a formalised setting- through meetings and systems such as performance management. Elsewhere this question may have been interpreted to include informal feedback.

Despite 46.2% of the whole sample reporting that they were rarely or only sometimes given feedback, the majority of staff felt valued in their leadership role.

Table 39: Feeling valued within their leadership role.

School	Always/ frequently (%)	Sometimes (%)	Rarely (%)
Badger Hill	14 (56%)	7 (28%)	2 (8%)
Northwold	6 (33%)	3 (17%)	0
Quainton	5 (83%)	0	0
St Chads	0	2 (50%)	0

At Badger Hill 56% felt they were always or frequently value in their leadership role, and only 2 people (8%) reported they were rarely valued in their leadership. At Quainton staff reported that their leadership was most valued, 83% of the sample reporting that they always or frequently felt valued in their leadership role. At St Chads, half the sample felt they were sometimes valued.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
19.422	12	0.079

Table 40: Chi-square test, feeling valued in leadership in different schools.

Chi-square test compared schools to see if there were significant differences in feeling valued in leadership. No significant differences were reported between schools and staff feeling valued in their leadership.

Table 41: Independent t-test, feeling valued in leadership within different schools.

School	Mean score	t	Significance (2 tailed)
Badger Hill Northwold	1.96 1.05	2.506	0.016*
Badger Hill Quainton	1.96 1.33	1.554	0.151
Badger Hill St Chads	1.96 1.50	0.514	0.639
Northwold Quainton	1.05 1.33	-0.633	0.538
Northwold St Chads	1.05 1.50	-0.487	0.654
Quainton St Chads	1.33 1.50	-0.180	0.866

Schools were also compared using Independent t-tests. Again, no significant differences were observed between schools with the exception of Badger Hill and Northwold. Significant differences were observed between feeling valued in leadership at Badger Hill and Northwold ($p<0.05$, equal variances assumed). Staff felt most valued in their leadership at Northwold and least valued at Badger Hill.

Data was analysed to look for differences in feeling valued between different members of staff. Chi-square test reported significant differences and this is illustrated in table 42.

Table 42: Chi-square test, feeling valued in leadership within different roles.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
37.306	20	0.011

Table 43: Independent t-test, feeling valued in leadership within different roles.

Role	Mean score	T	Significance (2 tailed)
HT Teacher	2.50 1.88	1.646	0.138
HT TA	2.50 0.85	4.124	0.002*
HT Other	2.50 1.16	2.000	0.086
HT DH	2.50 1.00	3.464	0.026*
T TA	1.88 0.857	2.831	0.008*

Independent t-tests compared the mean scores for differences groups of staff. Analysis of mean scores indicates that headteachers felt their leadership was least valued out of all the groups studied. A mean score of 2.5 corresponded with a questionnaire descriptor between sometimes and frequently feeling their leadership was valued. Within the sample, teaching assistants felt their leadership was most valued. Independent t-tests found highly significant differences between the cohort of TAs and headteachers, and also between TAs and teachers (Independent t-tests, $p<0.01$, equal variances not assumed). Deputies also felt their leadership was more valued than headteachers and these differences were significant (Independent t test, $p<0.05$, equal variances assumed). Once more, this raises concerns that headteachers feel undervalued in their quest to lead and possible issues of developing a culture that facilitates distributed leadership.

Table 44: Pearson's correlation coefficient, staff enjoyment and feedback of leadership.

Pearson's Correlation	0.710**
Significance (2 tailed test)	0.000
Number of Cases	53

Enjoyment of leadership was associated with the frequency of feedback staff were given on their leadership performance. The more feedback respondents were given on their leadership performance, the more they enjoyed their leadership.

This relationship was highly significant (Pearson's product correlation coefficient, 0.710, $p < 0.01$).

A significant association was also reported between giving leaders feedback and their feeling valued (table 45).

Table 45: Pearson's correlation coefficient, feeling valued within leadership and feedback of leadership.

Pearson's Correlation	0.834**
Significance (2 tailed test)	0.000
Number of Cases	53

A positive correlation of 0.834 suggests that leaders felt more valued when they were given more feedback. This is highly significant at the 0.01 level, and although correlation does not infer causation, these relationships suggest the importance of feedback to feeling valued and enjoying leadership.

4.1.4 Structural Organisation

Schools are complex organisations that vary considerably in their physical, social and cultural structure. As such, it is unsurprising that distributed leadership research suggests that there is no one model for effective distribution (Harris, 2005; Spillane et al. 2005). However, the researcher is interested in investigating and identifying structures that facilitate distributed leadership to enable schools to be more effective.

Within the analysis of the structural organisation of distributed leadership, the research will consider instructional leadership and the extent to which the head tells leaders what to do and directs them in their leadership, and support for staff to develop a distributed perspective- including peer support, time to fulfil leadership responsibilities and training development.

Instructional leadership varied between schools and this can be seen in table 46.

Table 46: Frequency and (percentages) Instructional leadership in each school.

School	Always/ Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely/ never
Badger Hill	2 (8%)	11 (44%)	10 (40%)
Northwold	3 (17%)	4 (22%)	2 (11%)
Quainton	0	5 (83%)	0
St Chads	0	2 (50%)	0

Across all schools studied, 5 people (9%) reported they were always or frequently told what to do when leading, whilst 12 respondents (22.6%) felt their leadership was rarely or never instructed. The majority of staff (41.5%) however, felt they were sometimes told what to do when leading. 9 people at Northwold did not respond to this questionnaire item, representing 50% of the sample population for this school.

Table 47: Chi-square test, Instructional leadership within different schools.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
23.383	15	0.076

Chi-square test found no significant differences between the frequencies of instructional leadership in each of the schools.

Table 48: Independent t-test, instructional leadership within different schools.

School	Mean score	T	Significance (2 tailed)
Badger Hill Northwold	3.08 1.44	3.829	0.000*
Badger Hill St Chads	3.08 1.5	1.756	0.164
Badger hill Quainton	3.08 2.5	1.042	0.329
Northwold Quainton	1.44 2.5	-1.693	0.118
Northwold St Chads	1.44 1.50	-0.059	0.956

Independent t-tests compared mean scores for instructional leadership within the sample of four schools.

Instructional leadership was most likely at Northwold and St Chads were mean values corresponded with responses that leaders were always/ frequently told what to do. Conversely, leadership was least instructed at Badger Hill, followed by Quainton. Independent t-tests reported highly significant differences between Badger Hill and Northwold ($p < 0.01$, equal variances assumed).

The questionnaire was designed to include subtly different questions. For example, staff were asked to judge the extent to which the headteacher tells leaders what to do, and the extent to which the head directs leadership. Telling leaders what to do is delegated leadership. Directing leadership is subtly different, and infers a two-way process of interaction. This process of interaction characterises the current definition of distributed leadership.

Table 49: Frequencies at which the headteacher told staff what to do when leading within the four schools.

School	Always/ Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely/ Never
Badger Hill	5 20%	11 44%	14 56%
Northwold	7 39%	5 27.7%	0
Quainton	5 83%	1 17%	0
St Chads	2 50%	1 25%	0

Across the sample of four schools, 19 people (36%) felt they were always or frequently told what to do when leading, and 18 people (34%) reported that they were sometimes told what to do. At Badger Hill, 14 people (56% of the sample population) felt they were rarely or never told what to do by the headteacher. This suggests that leadership is not always directed from

the top-down, and that staff in all the schools have opportunities to direct their own leadership.

Table 50: Chi-square test, the headteacher tells leaders what to do in different schools.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
23.020	18	0.190

Chi-square test compared schools and responses to the questionnaire statement, the headteacher tells leaders what to do. No significant differences were observed.

Table 51: Leadership is directed by the headteacher.

School	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
Badger Hill	3 12%	13 52%	9 38%
Northwold	3 17%	14 78%	1 6%
Quainton	4 67%	2 33%	0
St Chads	1 25%	3 75%	0

With reference to table 51, all schools agreed with statement that leadership was directed by the headteacher. This was reportedly strongest at Quainton where 67% of the sample strongly agreed that the head directed their leadership. At Badger Hill 9 people (38%) disagreed with the statement and did not feel the head directed their leadership.

Table 52: Chi-square test, leadership is directed by the headteacher.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
16.725	6	0.010*

These scores were compared using Chi-square test. Highly significant differences were observed between leadership being directed by the headteacher in different schools (Chi-square test, $p < 0.01$).

Table 53: Independent t-test, leadership directed by the headteacher within different schools.

School	Mean score	T	Significance (2 tailed)
Badger Hill Northwold	2.24 1.88	1.921	0.062
Badger Hill St Chads	2.24 1.75	1.731	0.145
Badger Hill Quainton	2.24 1.33	3.640	0.005*
Northwold Quainton	1.88 1.33	2.331	0.048*

Independent t-tests were also used to compare mean scores between schools. Despite staff at Northwold reporting their leadership was more directed by the headteacher than staff at Badger Hill, these differences were not statistically significant. Independent t-tests found highly significant differences between mean scores at Badger Hill and Quainton ($p<0.01$, equal variance not assumed), and significant differences between Northwold and Quainton ($p<0.05$, equal variances not assumed). This suggests that the headteacher was more likely to direct leadership at Quainton and St Chads, than at Badger Hill.

Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient was used to explore the relationship between various items on the questionnaire. Significant relationships were observed between certain variables, which suggest that responses to certain questionnaire items were reliable.

Table 54: Pearson's correlation coefficient, the head tells leaders what to do and leadership is directed by the headteacher.

Pearson's Correlation	0.388**
Significance (2 tailed test)	0.004
Number of Cases	53

For example, there was a highly significant relationship between leaders being told what to do by the headteacher, and leadership being directed by the head (Pearson's, $p<0.01$).

Table 55: Pearson's correlation coefficient; there is good support for all staff wishing to lead, and time is given to enable leadership responsibilities.

Pearson's Correlation	0.587**
Significance (2 tailed test)	0.000
Number of Cases	53

A strong association was also observed between support and time given to lead, as can be seen in table 55. The more time staff were given to fulfil leadership duties, the more supported they felt. Equally, and as can be seen in table 56, staff felt more supported when they were given more training in leadership (Pearson's, $p < 0.01$).

Table 56: Pearson's correlation coefficient, there is good support for all staff wishing to lead, and training is given to help staff to lead.

Pearson's Correlation	0.570**
Significance (2 tailed test)	0.000
Number of Cases	53

Analysis of tables 55 and 56 suggests that support is associated with being given time to undertake leadership and opportunities to develop professionally through training. However, support was also reported through the relationships between colleagues as is seen in table 57, where a highly significant relationship was observed.

Pearson's Correlation	0.671**
Significance (2 tailed test)	0.000
Number of Cases	53

Table 57: Pearson's correlation coefficient, there is good support for all staff wishing to lead, and staff support one another in their leadership.

Distributed leadership research has been criticised for its failure to consider the impact of such leadership on the child (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2005). This was considered within the questionnaire and results are outlined in tables 58 and 59.

Table 58: The extent to which respondent's leadership benefited the children.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always/ frequently	32	60
Sometimes	4	8
Rarely	1	2
Don't know	2	4

When asked to consider the impact of their own leadership on children in their school, the majority of respondents (32 people) felt that their leadership always or frequently benefited children, equating to 60%. One respondent from Northwold Primary felt that they did not know whether their leadership benefited the children in the school.

Table 59: The extent to which leadership is linked to the child.

The majority of respondents (68%) also felt leadership was always or frequently linked to the child. Again, only 1 person felt that leadership activities were rarely linked to the child, and this member of staff worked at Northwold.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always/ frequently	36	68
Sometimes	9	17
Rarely	1	2
Don't know	5	9

Schools were compared using Chi-square and Independent t-tests against these variables.

Table 60: Chi-square test, respondent's leadership has benefited the children in the school.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
21.852	15	0.112

Chi-square found no significant differences between schools and leadership benefiting the children.

Table 61: Chi-square test, leadership tasks are linked to the child.

No significant differences were observed between schools and leadership tasks being linked to the child.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
21.353	15	0.126

Table 62: Independent t-test, respondent's leadership has benefited the children in the school.

School	Mean score	t	Significance (2 tailed)
Badger Hill Northwold	1.68 1.38	0.659	0.514
Badger Hill Quainton	1.68 1.33	0.849	0.415
Badger Hill St Chads	1.68 1.25	0.547	0.616

As can be seen in table 62, no significant differences were reported between mean scores for each school. This means that staff in these schools, on average felt that their leadership always/ frequently benefited the children.

Table 63: Independent t-test, leadership tasks are linked to the child.

School	Mean score	t	Significance (2 tailed)
Badger Hill Northwold	1.64 3.22	-3.644	0.001*
Northwold Quainton	3.22 1.33	3.624	0.002*
Northwold St Chads	3.22 1.75	2.358	0.046*
Badger Hill Quainton	1.64 1.33	0.757	0.466

Independent t-tests reported significant differences between Northwold and the three other schools. At Northwold a mean score of 3.22 corresponded with a mean judgement that leadership tasks were only sometimes linked to the child. At the other schools, respondents felt that leadership was more frequently linked to the child. As can be seen, no significant differences were observed between Badger Hill and Quainton for this variable.

Johnson (2004) and Hargreaves (2004) have associated supportive cultures with effective distributed leadership. Within my study, this was investigated through a series of questions.

Table 64: There is good support for staff that wish to lead.

School	Always/ Frequently	Sometimes	Don't Know
Badger Hill	17 68%	7 28%	1 4%
Northwold	9 50%	4 22%	5 28%
Quainton	6 100%	0	0
St Chads	3 75%	0	1 25%

As can be seen in table 64, all schools reported good support for staff wishing to lead. At Badger Hill 68% felt there was always or frequently good support for staff wishing to lead. Support was also high at Quainton and St Chads but a small sample return for these schools limits generalisability. At Northwold over a quarter of the sample (28%) did not know whether there was good support for staff wishing to lead.

Table 65: Chi-square test, there is good support for staff that wish to lead.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
17.531	9	0.041*

Chi-square test compared schools and found a significant difference between them at the 0.05 level.

Table 66: Independent t-test, there is good support for staff wishing to lead.

School	Mean score	T	Significance (2 tailed)
Badger Hill Northwold	2.0 3.22	-2.624	0.012*
Badger Hill Quainton	2.0 1.16	2.868	0.008*
Badger Hill St Chads	2.0 2.75	-0.661	0.552
Northwold Quainton	3.22 1.16	4.373	0.000*
Northwold St Chads	3.22 2.75	0.369	0.712

This variable was also compared using independent t-tests. Staff felt least supported at Northwold with a mean score of 3.22; although they felt that there was sometimes good support for staff wishing to lead. Conversely, support was reportedly greatest at Quainton. A mean score of 1.16 suggests there was nearly always good support for staff wishing to lead, but once more, validity and generalisability of this statistic is marred by a small sample size. Highly significant differences were observed between Northwold and Quainton, and Badger Hill and Quainton (equal variances not assumed). Significant differences were reported between Badger Hill and Northwold (p=0.012, equal variances assumed).

Peer support is an example of a supportive culture. This variable was analysed to see whether staff support in leadership varied between schools. Results are shown in tables 67, 68 and 69.

Table 67: Staff support one another in their leadership.

School	Always/ Frequently	Sometimes	Don't Know
Badger Hill	23 92%	2 8%	0
Northwold	10 56%	8 44%	0
Quainton	6 100%	0	0
St Chads	1 25%	2 50%	1 25%

From table 67 it would appear that all schools offer a supportive culture, where staff help one another within leadership. At Badger Hill, 23 respondents (92%) reported that there was always or frequently good support for those wanting to lead. Staff reported less support at Northwold, where 10 people (56%) felt there was always or frequently good support for staff wishing to lead. Support was particularly high at Quainton, where 100% of respondents felt that there was always or frequently support for staff wanting to lead. Conversely, St Chads emerged least supportive, but as is true with all

statistics for Quainton and St Chads, conclusions remain tentative due to a very small sample size.

Table 68: Chi-square test, staff support one another in their leadership.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
38.478	9	0.000*

Chi-square test compared schools and found highly significant differences between the support staff offered one another in leadership.

Table 69: Independent t-test, staff support one another in their leadership.

School	Mean score	t	Significance (2 tailed)
Badger Hill Northwold	1.64 2.38	-3.874	0.000*
Northwold Quainton	2.38 1.00	9.697	0.000*
Northwold St Chads	2.38 3.5	-1.266	0.291

Badger Hill and Quainton appear to be the most supportive schools in the study as can be seen in table 69. The lower the mean score, the more likely it is that staff support one another in their leadership. Northwold emerged as the least supportive of the schools and this was highly significant when compared with Badger Hill and Quainton (Independent t-test, $p < 0.01$).

Ash and Persall (2000) report that giving staff time to lead facilitates distributed leadership, helping schools to transform into professional learning communities.

Table 70: Time is given to enable leadership responsibilities.

School	Always/ Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Don't Know
Badger Hill	11 44%	13 52%	1 4%	0
Northwold	11 61%	8 44%	1 6%	3 17%
Quainton	5 83%	1 17%	0	0
St Chads	2 50%	1 25%	0	1 25%

From the whole sample, 29 people (55%) felt they were always or frequently given time to lead. At Badger Hill over half the respondents (52%) felt they were sometimes given enough time to lead. In the other schools surveyed, most respondents felt they were always or frequently given enough time for

leadership responsibilities. Only 2 respondents felt they were rarely given enough time for leadership, and these staff came from Badger Hill and Northwold.

Table 71: Chi-square test, time is given to enable leadership.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
19.069	12	0.087

Chi-square test compared schools and found no significant difference in the response to the amount time staff were given to fulfil leadership duties. However, Independent t-tests did report significant differences between schools.

Table 72: Independent t-test, time is given to enable leadership responsibilities.

School	Mean score	t	Significance (2 tailed)
Badger Hill Quainton	2.56 1.667	2.497	0.043*
Quainton Northwold	1.667 3.1667	-3.125	0.007*
Quainton St Chads	1.667 3.00	-1.180	0.311
Badger Hill Northwold	2.56 3.166	-1.84	0.073

Differences were highly significant between the amount of time given for leadership at Quainton and Northwold ($p=0.007$, equal variances not assumed), and significant between Badger Hill and Quainton ($p<0.05$). Staff at Quainton are given more time to lead than the other three schools, but a larger sample at Quainton would enhance the validity of these findings. Although a mean score of 2.56 at Badger Hill suggests that staff are given more time to lead than staff at Northwold (mean= 3.166), the difference between these scores is not statistically significant ($p=0.073$, equal variances assumed). No significant difference was also reported between Quainton and St Chads but again, this may be due to very small sample size in both schools.

Research suggests that training and staff development are critical to learning and development of effective distributed leadership in our schools (Bennett et al., 2003; Fullan, 2005).

Table 73: Training is given to help staff to lead.

School	Always/ Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely/ Never
Badger Hill	16 64%	7 28%	2 8%
Northwold	4 22%	8 44%	3 17%
Quainton	4 67%	1 17%	0
St Chads	3 75%	1 25%	0

Within all the schools surveyed, over half the respondents (51%) reported that they were always or frequently given training to support their leadership. Opportunities for training were particularly high at Badger Hill, Quainton and St Chads. Again, a small sample size at Quainton and St Chads challenges the validity of these findings. From table 73 and the data received, it would appear that training was least available to help staff lead at Northwold.

Table 74: Chi-square test, training is given to help staff to lead.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
32.949	18	0.017*

Chi-square test was used to compare schools, and found significant differences between schools and the training opportunities they were given to help staff lead ($p < 0.05$).

Table 75: Independent t-test, training is given to help staff lead.

School	Mean score	t	Significance (2 tailed)
Northwold Quainton	3.44 1.16	4.303	0.001*
Northwold St Chads	3.44 2.00	2.702	0.027*
Badger Hill Northwold	2.28 3.44	-3.298	0.002*

Independent t-tests compared mean scores for this variable. Lower mean scores indicated that staff were given more training opportunities to help them lead. Staff reported favourable training opportunities to help lead at Quainton, St Chads and Badger Hill, and highly significant differences were observed between each of these schools and Northwold.

4.1.5 Sources of Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership occurs in different circumstances. Sometimes it is carefully planned and structured, whilst on other occasions it occurs by default. It has even been recognised to arise from situations of desperation and crisis (Harris, 2005; Macbeath, 2005; Spillane, 2005). Within the analysis of sources of distributed leadership, there will be an examination of the extent to which leadership activities are designed and planned, with consideration of the School Improvement Plan and the involvement of staff in its development.

Table 76: Their own leadership is carefully designed.

School	Always/ Frequently	Sometimes	Don't know
Badger Hill	12 48%	5 20%	2 8%
Northwold	4 22%	4 22%	0
Quainton	3 50%	0	1 17%
St Chads	2 50%	0	0

Within the sample of schools studied leadership was invariably designed. Almost half the respondents at Badger Hill and 50% of the sample from Quainton and St Chads reported that their own leadership was always or frequently carefully designed. At Northwold and Badger Hill, where the sample size was larger, staff also reported that leadership was sometimes planned. This infers that leadership may occur through other circumstances- probably by default, desperation or crisis (Spillane, 2006).

Table 77: Chi-square test, their own leadership is carefully designed.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
11.705	12	0.470

Chi-square test found no significant difference between schools and leadership being carefully designed.

Table 78: All leadership is planned.

School	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
Badger Hill	4 16%	19 76%	2 8%
Northwold	1 6%	17 94%	0
Quainton	4 67%	2 33%	0
St Chads	0	4 100%	0

Table 78 outlines the results when schools were compared, looking at the extent to which all leadership was planned. Leadership was invariably planned in all schools, and at Quainton two thirds of respondents strongly agreed that all leadership is planned. Badger Hill was the only school where respondents disagreed with this statement; 8% of the sample (2 people) did not think that all leadership was planned.

Table 79: Chi-square test, all leadership is planned.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
15.411	6	0.017*

Chi-square test compared schools and found significant differences between planned leadership across the sample of four schools.

Table 80: Independent t-test, all leadership is planned.

School	Mean score	t	Significance (2 tailed)
Badger Hill Quainton	1.92 1.33	2.520	0.038
Northwold Quainton	1.94 1.33	2.803	0.033
St Chads Quainton	2.0 1.33	3.162	0.025

At Quainton Primary staff perceived that leadership activities were most strongly planned, and Independent t-tests reported significant differences between this school and other schools in the sample ($p < 0.01$, equal variances not assumed).

Role	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree
Head, Deputy, Assistant	1 14%	6 86%	0
Teacher	5 19%	19 73%	2 8%
Teaching Assistant	1 7%	13 93%	0
Other	2 33%	4 67%	0

Table 81: All leadership is planned.

Analysis was undertaken to compare levels of planned leadership by staff role. The majority of staff agreed with the statement that all leadership is planned. With reference to table 76, the two members of staff from Badger Hill who disagreed with this statement are identified as teachers.

Table 82: Chi-square test, all leadership is planned.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
7.090	10	0.717

Chi-square test compared staff roles and the levels of planned leadership to look for significant differences. No significant differences were reported between staff roles and levels of planned leadership ($p<0.05$).

Table 83: The School Improvement Plan informs leadership decisions.

School	Always/ Frequently	Sometimes	Don't know
Badger Hill	24 96%	1 4%	0
Northwold	13 72%	5 28%	0
Quainton	5 83%	0	1 17%
St Chads	4 100%	0	0

All schools in this study recognised the School Improvement Plan (SIP) as an important document in informing leadership decisions. Across the whole sample, 46 respondents (87%) felt that the SIP always or frequently informed leadership decisions. This was notably high at St Chads, and Badger Hill- where 60% respondents felt it always informed leadership decisions, and 36% frequently.

Table 84: Chi-square test, the School Improvement Plan (SIP) informs leadership decisions.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
17.137	9	0.047

Chi-square test compared schools to see if there was a significant difference between the SIP informing leadership decisions. Differences were significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 85: Independent t-test, the School Improvement Plan informs leadership.

School	Mean score	T	Significance (2 tailed)
Badger Hill Northwold	1.44 2.0	-2.722	0.009*
St Chads Northwold	1.50 2.0	-1.46	0.195
St Chads Quainton	1.50 2.16	-0.791	0.458
Badger Hill St Chads	1.44 1.50	-0.193	0.856
Badger Hill Quainton	1.44 2.16	-0.907	0.404

Independent t-tests compared mean scores and found significant differences between Badger Hill and Northwold ($p<0.01$, equal variances assumed). At Badger Hill the School Improvement Plan was thought to inform leadership decisions more than at Northwold.

Although St Chads yielded the lowest mean score for this variable, suggesting strongest agreement that the SIP informs leadership decisions, this value was not significantly different from Northwold, Quainton and Badger Hill mean scores, due to a very small sample size.

Table 86: Staff are involved in the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

School	Strongly Agree	Agree
Badger Hill	14 56%	11 44%
Northwold	3 17%	15 83%
Quainton	2 33%	4 67%
St Chads	0	4 100%

Schools were compared to see if staff involvement in the SIP varied. In all cases, 34 respondents (64%) agreed and 19 respondents (36%) strongly agreed that staff were involved in the SIP. Strongest levels of agreement were reported at Badger Hill where 56% of the sample strongly agreed that staff were involved in the SIP process.

Table 87: Chi-square test, staff are involved in the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
9.546	3	0.023

Chi-square reported significant differences between staff involvement and these schools at and beyond the 95% level of confidence.

Table 88: Independent t-test, staff are involved in the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

School	Mean score	t	Significance (2 tailed)
Badger Hill Northwold	1.44 1.83	-2.769	0.008*
Badger Hill St Chads	1.44 2.0	-5.527	0.000*
Badger Hill Quainton	1.44 1.66	-0.969	0.363

Independent t-tests compared mean scores for each school. The lower the mean score, the stronger the level of agreement that staff were involved in the SIP. As can be seen in table 88, staff were most involved in the SIP at Badger Hill and least involved at Northwold. Highly significant differences were found between Badger Hill and Northwold ($p<0.01$, equal variances assumed), and significant differences were observed between Badger Hill and St Chads ($p<0.05$, equal variances not assumed). A small sample return from Quainton may have contributed to no significant difference being reported between this school and Badger Hill.

4.1.6 Barriers to Distributed Leadership

The author is interested in determining whether the challenges and tensions associated with distributed leadership from the literature review, prevent respondents from developing a distributed leadership perspective in their own schools. Within the analysis of this section, there will be a consideration of the extent to which leadership design, enjoyment and feeling valued in leadership, and the opportunities to support leaders through feedback and other discussion opportunities, are barriers in developing distributed leadership.

Leadership design does not appear to be a barrier to distributed leadership (reference tables 76 and 77), and analysis of questionnaire data found no significant difference between schools (Chi-square) and leadership being carefully

designed. Equally, from the data collected, enjoyment of leadership does not appear to be a barrier to distributed leadership. Independent t-tests reported no significant differences between the staff enjoyment of leadership in schools (table 33).

In contrast, feeling valued within leadership does appear to be a barrier to distributed leadership. Table 43 illustrates significant differences in how valued staff felt when their roles were compared. Teaching assistants reported their leadership to be the most valued. Teacher's leadership was less valued and headteachers felt their leadership was the least valued out of all the groups studied. Within this cohort, 5.1% headteachers felt that their leadership was not valued and 30.8% felt that it was only sometimes valued.

Chi-square reported significant differences between how valued staff felt in different roles (table 42) and this was supported by Independent t-tests (table 41), which also found a significant difference between schools mean values. Staff at Northwold reported to feel more valued within leadership than staff at Badger Hill (Independent t-test, $p < 0.05$).

Feedback of leadership performance is associated with feeling valued (table 45), and feedback appears to be the biggest barrier to establishing effective distribution of leadership in this study, and an area in where all the schools could improve.

Table 89: Feedback on leadership performance in different schools.

School	Always/ Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely
Badger Hill	9 36%	5 20%	9 36%
Northwold	7 39%	2 11%	0
Quainton	4 67%	1 17%	0
St Chads	0	1 25%	1 25%

Within the whole sample, 10 respondents (19%) felt they were rarely given feedback on their leadership, and this was greatest at Badger Hill where 9 people (36%) said they were rarely given feedback. In contrast, 20 people from the sample of 53 (38%) believed they were always or frequently given feedback on leadership. This was greatest at Quainton (67%) but the validity of this percentage is marred by a small sample return from this school.

Table 90: Chi-square test, feedback on leadership performance in different schools.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance Level
23.220	12	0.026

Chi-square test reported significant differences between schools and the feedback they received surrounding leadership. Independent t-tests also reported highly significant differences between the feedback received in Badger Hill and Northwold (table 91).

Table 91: Independent t-test, feedback on leadership performance in different schools.

School	Mean score	t	Significance (2 tailed)
Badger Hill Northwold	2.56 1.05	3.749	0.001*
Badger Hill Quainton	2.56 1.50	2.078	0.065
Badger Hill St Chads	2.56 1.75	0.759	0.469

A highly significant difference was found between the feedback of leadership at Badger Hill and Northwold ($p<0.01$, equal variances assumed). Feedback was more frequent at Northwold. A mean score of 1 means there was always feedback. A mean score of 3 means feedback was sometimes given. No significant differences were reported between feedback and the other schools. This data is limited because it does not indicate the quality and nature of feedback given.

Leadership support does appear to be a barrier to distributed leadership within these schools, despite teacher leadership being strongly supported in all schools (table 7). Teaching assistants were particularly well supported in their leadership at Badger Hill and Quainton (table 14), and Chi-square test reported significant differences between schools and support for leadership of TAs (table 15). Although the sample size for Quainton was small, it appears to have the most supportive culture of distributed leadership within the sample (table 29). Highly significant differences were reported between the support offered at Quainton and Northwold, and between Badger Hill and Northwold. Northwold appears to be the least supportive of distributed leadership, which may be a barrier to its development of a distributed perspective.

Table 92: There is someone in the school staff can talk to about leadership.

School	Always/ Frequently	Sometimes	Never
Badger Hill	21 84%	1 4%	0
Northwold	7 39%	2 11%	0
Quainton	5 83%	0	0
St Chads	1 25%	0	1 25%

All schools felt there was someone they could go to and discuss leadership matters. Peer support was greatest at Badger Hill and Quainton. At both Northwold and St Chads 50% of the sample (Northwold = 9 people and St Chads = 2 people) did not answer this question on the questionnaire. Furthermore, only one person felt they were rarely supported in their leadership role and this was the head of St Chads.

Table 93: Chi-square test, there is someone in the school staff can talk to about leadership.

Chi-square value	Degrees of freedom	Significance
25.020	12	0.015

Chi-square reported significant differences between staff perceptions that there was someone they could go to and discuss leadership matters in different schools ($p < 0.05$).

Table 94: Independent t-test, ability to talk to someone about leadership within their own school.

Role	Mean score	t	Significance (2 tailed)
Head Teaching Assistant	2.0 0.5174	2.414	0.028*
Head Teacher	2.0 1.1154	1.525	0.138
Teacher Teaching Assistant	1.1154 0.5174	2.192	0.035*

Analysis of these variables suggests that teaching assistants felt least isolated in their leadership,. and headteachers the most isolated. Significant differences were observed between mean scores for these groups (equal variances assumed). Differences were also significant between teachers and teaching assistants (equal variances not assumed).

Throughout this chapter a small sample size at Quainton and St Chads has been criticised and is indicative of further investigation. Acknowledging this criticism,

it would appear that all schools surveyed have a nurturing culture where people can discuss leadership issues with colleagues. This appears to be most evident at Badger Hill and Quainton (Table 92). A qualitative aspect to the research design will enable the research to investigate how staff are supported, and how they feel about the support they are offered.

Table 95: Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Variables	Pearson's Value	Significance (1 tailed)	Number Of cases
Supported & Enjoy leadership	0.762	0.000	53
Supported & leadership feedback	0.799	0.000	53
Supported & feeling valued	0.860	0.000	53

Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient found a strong relationship between how supported staff felt in their leadership role and several variables. There was a strong correlation between how supported people felt and their enjoyment of their leadership (0.762). The more supported staff felt, the more they enjoyed their leadership. A stronger association was reported between support and feedback of leadership (0.799), which is perhaps unsurprising because feedback is a form of support. The strongest correlation was found between support of leadership and feeling valued (0.860). These associations were all highly significant (Pearson's correlation, $p < 0.01$). Support is strongly associated with feedback and feeling valued, and the more supported people feel, the more likely they are to enjoy leading.

4.1.7 Reliability Analysis

The order in which research tools have been used is an important feature and strength of the research design. Using a quantitative approach first has allowed the use of SPSS and inferential statistics, to determine statistical significance, and to establish a degree of confidence in accepting or rejecting hypotheses about distributed leadership. SPSS has also enabled alpha reliability analysis of questionnaire items, allowing the deletion of any unrelated items from the scale, excluding them from qualitative methods and the semi structured interview schedule.

Reliability analysis determines the extent to which questionnaire items are related, giving an index of internal consistency. The questionnaire had an overall reliability coefficient of 0.825, and alpha (Cronbach) ratings were used to determine internal consistency of items. Table 96 outlines a selection of analyses of correlations between each respective item and total sum score (without the respective item), and alpha coefficients if respective items were deleted.

Table 96: Reliability Analysis of Questionnaire Items

Questionnaire Item	Item explanation	Item total correlation	Alpha rating if deleted
16*	Headteacher tells leaders what to do	.13	.87
28	Staff are involved in the SIP	.22	.74
30*	Leadership directed by head	.15	.76

*Very low item total correlations

If items with a high level of correlation were deleted, their deletion from reliability analysis would reduce the reliability coefficient by a large amount. Conversely, by deleting items with a low correlation, the overall reliability will increase. With reference to table 94, two questionnaire items (16 and 30), produced very low correlation coefficients and are not consistent with the rest of the scale. These items might be deleted from the semi-structured interview because they do not appear to be associated with distributed leadership. This is not surprising because they refer to autocratic leadership behaviours, the headteacher telling leaders what to do, and leadership being directed by the headteacher. For these items, the correlation between the respective item and the total sum score (without the respective item) are 0.13 and 0.15 respectively. The reliability of the scale would be about 0.82 if either of these two items were deleted.

Staff involvement in the School Improvement Plan (item 28) also has a low correlation coefficient and appears to be less important in developing distributed leadership than other questionnaire items including enjoyment of their own leadership, feeling supported in leadership, and feedback of own leadership. These factors appear to be important in the development of a distributed perspective and will be further explored through qualitative methods.

4.2 Qualitative Analysis

The quantitative element was to trawl four schools within North East Lincolnshire that were believed to distribute leadership, based on LA recommendations and Ofsted reports. Following quantitative analysis of these schools, two would be further investigated that demonstrated more aspects of, and an interest in distributed leadership. However, the initial research design was compromised and because of a sampling problem this became impossible. Within the qualitative analysis the researcher was forced to use Badger Hill and Quainton because of their greater representation within the sample as a whole. Using a qualitative approach allows the investigation of the quality of interactions and uniqueness of situations in which distributed leadership occurs within these two schools. Importantly, this will address a criticism of previous distributed leadership research, for its failure to consider the quality of the interactions and their unique situations (practice aspect) of leadership (Spillane, 2006). It will also assist in validating the measurement of attitudes taken from questionnaires, which is problematic because attitudes are not stable but subject to influence and change. Although some attitudes are more enduring than others and may be stable over time, a mixed methods approach will also enable a check on the reliability of responses of interviewee participants by comparing responses in the semi-structured interview with those on the questionnaire.

5 themes emerged that form the framework of study and structure the analysis of qualitative data. These are:

- Processes of distributed leadership;
- School culture;
- Structural organisation;
- Sources of distributed leadership;
- Barriers to developing a distributed perspective.

Qualitative analysis will begin with an overview of evidence (figures 3 to 7), outlining what distributed leadership means to the different members of staff at Badger Hill and Quainton. Following each figure, interview data will be further analysed by examining interview quotations and their meanings.

4.2.1 Processes of Distributed Leadership

Role (School)	Evidence
Teaching Assistant (Badger Hill)	Ownership of leadership, Networks of support from head, SLT, teachers, TAs, children, training, CPD
Higher level TA (Quainton)	Networks of support throughout the school including head, SLT, teachers, TAs, parents, governors, CPD
Teacher (Badger Hill)	Ownership in leadership decisions, leading meetings, feeding back to staff, support through Inset, CPD
Teacher (Quainton)	Ideas of others are actively sought and opportunities are given to lead
Assistant Head (Badger Hill)	Ownership in leadership decisions, partnership, 2-way conversations, being a good listener, offering continuous & steady support
Deputy Head (Quainton)	Ownership of leadership, leadership induction- gradually introduced into the role, open discussions, HLTA supports class
Head (Badger Hill)	Managing the leadership of others, giving them opportunities to lead. Letting them make their own decisions, offering support and guidance.
Head (Quainton)	Physical presence, asking their advice, listening to them, modelling good practice, formal & informal discussions, creating a culture of 'open dialogue', listening to new ideas and evaluating the impact

Figure 3: Evidence to suggest how different staff at Badger Hill and Quainton are involved and supported in the process of distributed leadership.

Within this study the author has defined distributed leadership as collaborative leadership within a school, that is developed through a culture of shared action and interaction. Distributed leadership should not be confused with delegated leadership- whereby staff are given tasks and responsibilities to do. Central to distributed leadership is its process, recognised by Spillane (2006) as one of shared action and interaction between leaders and followers.

The head at Quainton summarised the interactive process of leadership decision making as follows:

> We all share the good things we do. We share our triumphs and our disasters and we'll talk and we will decide, and then staff put their input in, and it's usually a majority rule.
> (Head, Quainton)

The process of distributed leadership is concerned with how stakeholders are involved and supported within their leadership. Barth (1990) believes that the senior leadership team is the most influential in developing a distributed perspective and the research supports this observation.

> I do think it is really important that there are clear leaders at the top, the SMT, and that people do know... at the end of the day... who is in charge. (Teacher, Badger Hill)

> You've got to have an overall leader. It's a mixture of good direction from the head and SMT, but in conjunction with listening to them [other staff]. (Assistant Head, Badger Hill)

However, whilst the senior leadership team is perhaps the most influential in facilitating distributed leadership, they are not the only staff to exert influence and lead. The research supports that of Ogawa and Bossert (1995: 225-6), who assert that 'distributed leadership flows through an organisation' at different levels. This can be seen from the following responses of different stakeholders who lead and exert influence in a two-way process:

> When you think of leadership you think of the head and deputy... you tend to think of the Senior Management Team, but then I think everybody leads, but it depends on what level you think of leadership. Obviously the class teacher will lead the TAs, and even the support staff lead groups of children in what they are doing.
> (Teacher, Quainton)

> We work as a team... people sometimes take the leadership role, then they will be the follower. We swap about. It's nice to know that if you've got something you're interested in, or you've got more knowledge about, it's nice for others to come to you, to seek advice on your areas of strength. (Teaching Assistant, Badger Hill)

The extent to which leadership has emerged from the bottom up through teaching assistants is seen in the following quote:

> Non-teaching staff have been incredibly good at providing an informal pastoral network and that hasn't come from me. [They] are supporting individual teachers but they also meet together and look at the children

> they support. They more or less designed and got that network going. (Head, Quainton)

This illustrates the involvement of staff in shaping their own leadership decisions that was reported in quantitative analysis.

Spillane (2006) acknowledges that some leadership activities connect through students. Whilst the research did not directly collect data from pupils, due to the complications of involving children within the research design and the ensuing ethical complications of consent, data shows that pupils are involved in leadership activities in both schools. This supports the data from quantitative analysis and can be seen in the support that exists between the teaching assistant and pupils at Badger Hill in their play leaders scheme.

> When I'm doing the play leader work, the children have gone out and to teach the other children how to play games. When they come back, I always ask them how did it go? They then tell me and they don't feel on a limb, because they've got me to say, well shall we try that? We want them (the children) to be empowered, so that they can take the role. We want them to have it so their leadership, the way they do it, is that they can either be a play leader or a listener.
> (Teaching Assistant, Badger Hill)

Although research emphasises the importance of the process of distributed leadership (Leithwood et al. 1999; Yukl, 2002), it has been criticised for failing to develop an understanding of leadership practice per se. Spillane (2006) is particularly critical of this, and recommends that researchers develop an understanding of leadership practice through identifying tools, routines and structures that facilitate its effectiveness. In doing so, research may have a greater impact on distributed leadership in our schools.

Staff development is a key feature in the process of developing distributed leadership and can develop a leader's skills, knowledge and expertise. Within this study it is witnessed through courses, professional development and support within and between the schools investigated. Teaching assistants and teachers reported high levels of support in the quantitative analysis, and this is reflected in the following quotes:

I help with the leadership of the school council. I help with the leadership of the play leaders outside. I help with the leadership of the listeners in the school and the sports club after school. I go on courses that have helped me within my role.
(Teaching Assistant, Badger Hill)

I went on a three-day subject leader course and I found that really useful, and the information we had on observations [and whole staff inset on developing the role of the subject leader].
(Teacher, Badger Hill)

Training and learning development opportunities were also strongly encouraged at Quainton.

> If there's something we want to do, if we think it will help or we think it is interesting, we take it to the head, and usually it's a yes!
> (Teacher, Quainton)

However, courses are not the only process of leadership development. Support within the schools from peers through mentoring and coaching was prevalent and often preferred. This is reflected in the support of the deputy head at Quainton by the head and administration officer.

> I work closely with the head and... have worked into the role gradually and am taking on more and more responsibility. There are important things that I have to be involved in and I didn't know before but [the administration officer has] been really supportive.
> (Deputy Head, Quainton)

External support was also identified as important in the process of distributed leadership. The head at Quainton recognised the importance of support from local authority partners (LAP), a cluster of schools that met on a monthly basis.

> ...the local authority and I are often at loggerheads but colleagues at the LAP give me some support. I will go to a head's meeting and think 'this is not helping me move the school forward. I will meet them either formally or informally and they will say exactly the same thing, and that gives me the assurance that what I'm doing is right. The outcome is right for the children.
> (Head, Quainton)

In contrast the head at Badger Hill felt more isolated in his role and relied on support from his deputy and assistant. He felt that feedback from the local authority (LA) was poor and had lost touch with the LAP meetings:

> As for the LAP meetings, I've lost track of that! But if they are having meetings every week, I just can't accommodate that. I can do them

> after school if they want but not during school time. It's pulling people away. (Head, Badger Hill)

This data supports the reliability of findings from quantitative data. It enables us to begin to understand why headteachers reported that they do not feel supported and valued in their role.

Professional support can be achieved both formally and informally, and this was witnessed in both schools and can be illustrated through the following responses:

> I know that if I've got a problem I can always go and talk to my former NQT mentor, and she's always got time to talk to me. I know there's that informal relationship, even though she's not my performance management person. (Teacher, Badger Hill)

> We had mentors [for the first year of teaching] but then there were other members of staff I could go to. It depended on who was available really. People were very helpful and very supportive.
> (Teacher, Quainton)

The idiosyncrasies of leadership support, and the flexibility and fluidity through which it occurs both within and between schools, illustrates the complexities of school leadership, and helps to explain why there is no blue print for its effectiveness. Furthermore, this clarifies why researchers are determined that distributed leadership should not be labelled as a panacea for leadership problems over the coming years. The author contends this is why Spillane (2006) prefers to think of distributed leadership as a framework of thinking, giving us insight into how and why leaders do things. This also helps to understand the thinking of the head at Badger Hill, in explaining his role:

> I see the role of headteacher as a manager of situations rather than a manager of the situation, because other people do other things differently and sometimes I'm not comfortable with that.
> (Head, Badger Hill)

Bennett (2003) advocates the importance of whole staff development to successful distributed leadership. This was clearly expressed by the assistant head at Badger Hill, who was also responsible for managing continuous professional development (CPD) in the school.

> The school has a learning culture, where people are learning together. The children are learning. Hopefully we are guiding them on their learning journey, but also the staff are learning. We are celebrating two TAs who have been awarded their degrees. (Assistant Head, Badger Hill)

4.2.2 School Culture

Role (School)	Evidence
Teaching Assistant (Badger Hill)	Encouragement of leadership. Supporting through: Informal discussions, monthly meetings for TAs, sharing & celebrating successes, team work, weekly meetings to discuss and to model leadership behaviour (e.g. play leaders)
Higher level TA (Quainton)	Team teaching to support staff development, team work- asking for help & sharing advice, feeling valued & appreciated
Teacher (Badger Hill)	Encouragement of leadership where leadership has a positive image. Supporting through: team work, approachable staff, formal and informal meetings (monthly TA meetings), sharing experiences, informal chats, Inset, CPD
Teacher (Quainton)	Mentoring support from more experienced members of staff, informal discussions, planning/ year group meetings, staff meetings
Assistant Head (Badger Hill)	Informal chats, learning culture (staff & children), offering CPD and financial support for staff development, Inset, social events (Pilates), school council, offering guidance, feeling valued
Deputy Head (Quainton)	Induction process whereby DH gradually introduced into the role, staff do not feel inhibited & are able to speak frankly & truthfully about matters, administration support to develop knowledge & understanding of other aspects of school life
Head (Badger Hill)	Encouragement of distributed leadership, creating a flexible culture (team teaching), supportive staff (collegiality), informal & formal meetings, observations, feedback, staff development and supporting leadership through resource provision.
Head (Quainton)	Creating a culture where it is a safe place to fail, to learn & support one another's weaknesses, staff development, using Advanced Skills Teachers to support staff development

Figure 4: Evidence to illustrate how different members of staff at Badger Hill and Quainton perceive collaborative and supportive cultures in the development of distributed leadership.

Macbeath (2005: 362) describes a school's culture as 'a collective intelligence and collective energy.' A teacher articulated the importance of a collective energy and shared understanding in the following way:

> I think the culture is of working together and having a role in the school of everyone pulling in the same direction, encouraging the children to work with each other, to work with the adults and for the adults to work together. I think it's a kind of positive ethos of working together and teamwork.
> (Teacher, Badger Hill)

Johnson (2004) reports that collaborative and open cultures facilitate effective distributed leadership. The importance of an open and supportive culture was highlighted many times in the investigation:

> You can go to anybody. I don't think there's one person I wouldn't go to into the school to ask for advice or help or anything.
> (HLTA, Quainton)

> If there are any problems or qualms or anything, we wouldn't think we couldn't say anything... people feel confident at speaking out and saying, well actually I don't agree with that.
> (HLTA, Quainton)

> We do discuss things very freely in staff meetings, and [the Head] will ask me what I think. She is very open and everyone's opinion is respected.... We are not inhibited in any way; they will speak truthfully and frankly about how they perceive things.
> (Deputy Head, Quainton)

> The culture in our school is such that I would expect everyone to talk to one another.
> (Assistant Head, Badger Hill)

> I like to think there is a culture of open dialogue.
> (Head, Quainton)

Within this investigation both Badger Hill and Quainton highlighted the importance of open dialogue to developing a distributed perspective. Furthermore, both headteachers emphasised the importance of leading by example and the powerful effects this could have.

> I think it's an example culture.
> (Head, Badger Hill)

> We know that our practice is open and we learn from each other. They see me with a sweeping brush or with the bin sacks and they think, well if they can do it we can do it. Give us the Jeyes fluid and I'll clean the loos. (Head, Quainton)

In response to the absence of a school cleaner at Quainton, and the subsequent actions of the head and deputy, the school worked collaboratively and with a collective energy to keep the school clean.

Hargreaves (2004) suggests that involving staff in decision-making processes is associated with effective distributed leadership. Within this investigation this can be seen in the following views:

> We are asked our opinion on lots of things...I do feel that we are all listened to and have our say and that it is valued...and that goes to making the decision.
> (Teacher, Quainton)

> I think they feel they have got ownership, and hopefully they feel that what they do is appreciated.
> (Head, Quainton)

However, involving staff in the decision-making process is not enough to guarantee effective distribution of leadership; personalities, enthusiasm and values matter.

> I think the type of people [involved in leadership] depends more on the personality than their role really. I think there are a lot of opportunities for people to be involved, it just depends on whether they take it upon themselves to push it further really.

> 'Enthusiasm and being passionate' facilitate distributed leadership.
> (Teacher, Badger Hill)

> I notice it [leadership success] depends on the personality type, as opposed to a structure. It's to do with the way they are. It's the people who are doing the job because they love it... somebody with enthusiasm saying, I would like to do something.
> (Head, Badger Hill)

4.2.3 Structural Organisation

Role (School)	Evidence
Teaching Assistant (Badger Hill)	Whole school ethos, shared vision, role profiles, performance management, flexible structures to allow leading and following and vice versa. Leadership through school council, play leaders, extra-curricular clubs
Higher level TA (Quainton)	HLTA status enables PPA time and teaching of French to all pupils in FS and KS 1. Parental leadership through school council, formal meetings- e.g. performance management, and informal discussions
Teacher (Badger Hill)	Strong leadership from HT & SLT. Co-ordinator roles, job descriptions/ role profiles, performance management, mentoring, leading staff meetings, designated leadership time, play leaders scheme, school council
Teacher (Quainton)	Strong support from the SLT, co-ordinator roles, mentoring support, staff meetings, TA meetings, year group meetings, CPD, performance management
Assistant Head (Badger Hill)	Shared vision, SIP, cohesive systems of support (vision, SIP, performance management, CPD), end of year reviews. Good leadership from SLT, blue-sky time, designated leadership time, observations: formal & informal, feedback, questionnaires, subject co-ordinator roles, school council, circle time
Deputy Head (Quainton)	Flexible systems and structures to accommodate leadership of different people, positioning of experienced members of staff with inexperienced staff, time to lead and reflect on leadership
Head (Badger Hill)	Leading by example: an example culture (HT), team meetings, formal support- performance management, informal support
Head (Quainton)	Flexibility to enable modelling of support from staff with expertise within the school- sharing good practice, performance management, SIP, staff meetings (planned & emergent), CPD

Figure 5: Evidence to suggest how structures at Badger Hill and Quainton facilitate distributed leadership as reported by different members of staff at these schools.

The review of literature provides evidence both in favour (Boles, 1992; Glover et al., 1999) and against (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001; Harris, 2005) the argument that hierarchical structures facilitate distributed leadership. Within this investigation both schools exhibited a traditional hierarchical structure comprising a head, deputy/ assistant head, teachers and teaching assistants. At Badger Hill there are opposing views as to whether this hierarchical facilitates distributed leadership. As can be seen, the teaching assistant did not perceive that her role restricted her ability to lead.

> If you are willing to take that role as a leader, you will be supported and you can make it work.
> (Teaching Assistant, Badger Hill)

However, the teacher at Badger Hill did find hierarchy an issue, and reported that it was more difficult to lead members of staff at the same level as her, and who had the same number of years experience and training.

> I think it's confidence and personality more than anything. If it was somebody less experienced [I was leading] it would be easier, but because you are exactly the same, it's quite difficult to stand out and be a leader because you're just thinking, I know as much as that person.
> (Teacher, Badger Hill)

This suggests that whether hierarchical standing facilitates or inhibits distributed leadership may be down to the individual, their perceptions and experiences. This idea will be further explored in section 5.3.5 (Barriers to developing a distributed perspective), and is supported by the research of Spillane et al. (2003), that human capital helps to influence leadership practice.

Although hierarchical structure may not inhibit people from leading, people can use their positional standing to enhance their leadership effectiveness. This can be explained within the context of school culture and develops the thoughts cited earlier by the assistant head of Badger Hill. The assistant head reported that a culture of openness enabled staff to learn from one another, supporting the development of a distributed leadership perspective. Developing this idea, the head at Quainton used her position and inability to be the master of all things to all people to motivate others into leadership.

> Staff like to see your weaknesses. It's important that they see you are not this wonderful leader... I support them by being around, by asking

> their advice, and by listening to what they say... I think that it's important that I'm seen to fail as well because then someone else will come out with another strategy and pick me up, and I think that is really important.
> (Head, Quainton)

This philosophy sends a powerful message to all stakeholders, a message that is at the heart of all learning cultures: that no one person can do everything but everyone can do something. This demands confidence and trust, but isn't this what teachers demand of learners all the time? Developing strengths, exposing weaknesses and encouraging learners to take risks in order to develop and learn new things.

Jones (1997), Peterson et al. (1999) and Spillane et al. (2003) report that vision and values are important determinants of leadership success, irrespective of an individual's positional standing within the school. Spillane et al. (2003) refer to this as cultural capital. The teaching assistant at Badger Hill articulated this as follows:

> Everybody has got to know what you are doing to make it work. Everybody to see that they are doing the same thing, and that they are pulling together. Sometimes you've got somebody pulling in a different direction and that stops the flow of it. So you have got to hope that everybody is pulling in the same direction, and wanting the same thing from it. (Teaching Assistant, Badger Hill)

Research from Leithwood and Jantzi (2000), Hopkins (2001) and Gronn (2003) favours a flexible structure in the development of distributed leadership. At Quainton staff recognised a flexible approach to leadership, in terms of who leads and the systems of support made available.

> We are pretty free and easy, quite relaxed about things. I know in other schools people are frightened to tread on other people's toes.
> (Deputy Head, Quainton)

> I know there are systems in place, but usually we just go for a chat [with the head or deputy], or I just say, can you advise me on this? It's that easy! (HLTA, Quainton)

However, flexibility was less evident at Badger Hill, where the teacher felt restricted in her leadership.

I think if you are going to term people as leaders, they should have greater opportunities make decisions and do things... I feel kind of hindered in a way. I know there has got to be an accountability to check things, but I think sometimes a little more freedom for people to get on and lead would help.
(Teacher, Badger Hill)

4.2.4 Sources of Distributed Leadership

Role (School)	Evidence
Teaching Assistant (Badger Hill)	None given
Higher level TA (Quainton)	Designated roles that require leadership, e.g. head, deputy, foundation stage co-ordinator, opportunities to lead areas of interest and expertise, e.g. French
Teacher (Badger Hill)	Opportunities to lead, leadership designed (whole school development), leadership incidental-opportunity emerged, leadership influenced by personality: enthusiastic, outgoing, and passionate.
Teacher (Quainton)	Enthusiasm of staff, wanting to lead, being given opportunities to demonstrate leadership, in response to new initiatives
Assistant Head (Badger Hill)	Leadership as part of strategic plan, vision.
Deputy Head (Quainton)	Designated leadership roles: SLT, subject co-ordinators, leadership points, culture that encourages discussion and promotes respect facilitates distributed leadership, school council, after school club interest
Head (Badger Hill)	Given opportunities to lead, leadership emerged (e.g. French), leadership influenced by personality: passionate, enthusiastic
Head (Quainton)	Emergent leadership of TAs in support of SEN children (emotional intelligence), staff with expertise, knowledge and an interest in areas of leadership

Figure 6: Evidence to illustrate the different circumstances in which distributed leadership occurs, as reported by different members of staff at Badger Hill and Quainton.

Ways in which leadership is distributed in schools has only recently been investigated (Harris, 2005; Macbeath, 2005; Spillane 2006), and despite researchers disagreeing over the precise number of sources or ways in which

leadership occurs, there are similarities between the characteristics of these sources.

Within this investigation, distributed leadership was recognised as occurring through design, default and desperation. Quantitative data suggests that leadership in both schools was invariably planned, and this was supported by qualitative findings. Evidence to show that leadership was designed- planned and deliberate, is reflected in the responses of staff at Quainton:

> [Leadership of French in the school] is my own doing... I enjoy it!
> (HLTA, Quainton)

> We are both very passionate [about leading the Foundation Stage] and with new changes coming into place we've both been keen, looking up and getting ready.
> (Teacher, Quainton)

The teacher at Badger Hill made an example of leadership occurring by default within her role as English coordinator. The previous English coordinator had gone part time following her maternity leave and was no longer effective in her role at leading a core subject. The 'new' subject leader had expressed an interest to the head and deputy in staff reviews at the end of the summer term. She had studied English at university and been developing the teaching of phonics throughout key stage 1.

> [Being] literacy co-ordinator is my new role since September. This is my first term so I'm just finding my feet!
> (Teacher, Badger Hill)

Bennett et al. (2003) criticise the effectiveness of distributed leadership that occurs by desperation, believing that this source of distributed leadership is invariably reactive; a response to external pressures and a knee jerk reaction from the top down. However, within this study the following example shows how a pastoral support system for children with emotional and behavioural needs emerged from teaching assistants and was benefiting the school.

> Non-teaching staff have been incredibly good at providing an informal pastoral network and that hasn't come from me. They more or less designed and got that network going.
> (Head, Quainton)

4.2.5 Barriers to Developing a Distributed Perspective

Role (School)	Evidence
Teaching Assistant (Badger Hill)	None given
Higher level TA (Quainton)	None given
Teacher (Badger Hill)	Capacity and capability (knowledge, skills), self-confidence, trust, freedom to lead, accountability, legacy/ expectation that all staff will lead, financial cost/ incentive to want to lead, time to celebrate achievements
Teacher (Quainton)	None given
Assistant Head (Badger Hill)	Feedback on leadership, quality training and support, ability to be challenged and to accept criticism, time to feedback
Deputy Head (Quainton)	Guidance and support (quality & availability), self-confidence, personalities and experience of staff
Head (Badger Hill)	Capacity & capability of staff: confidence, experience, Accountability: feel uncomfortable letting go, feeding back to the head, legacy: inspection route, conflicting styles and visions, jealousy of peers, time: to feedback, meetings, external support: LA
Head (Quainton)	Protecting staff from bureaucratic overload, poor support from LA, conflicting visions with LA, staff without skills, knowledge, expertise or interest, accountability

Figure 7: Evidence to illustrate the challenges and tensions that prevent or have a negative effect on distributed leadership at Badger Hill and Quainton, as reported by different members of staff.

Research has identified a myriad of challenges, tensions and difficulties that prevent schools from distributing leadership. Within this investigation, staff at Quainton was extremely positive and found it difficult to mention challenges or tensions that prevented or else had a negative effect on distributed leadership in their school. Staff at Badger Hill was also positive, but identified barriers to distributed leadership.

Spillane (2006) argues that one of the major challenges facing schools and school leadership over the next 20 years is developing an understanding of leadership practice. This demands new ways of thinking as schools may move away from more hierarchical and autocratic models of leadership in order to remain effective. New ways of thinking can be a barrier to developing distributed leadership, challenging heads that remain accountable for the overall leadership of a school. The head at Quainton felt that her greatest challenge of being a 'leader of leaders' was:

> I feel that I'm the one with the least experience and knowledge because I flit from one thing to another... they are doing it more than I do. It comes back to me only having a very superficial understanding.
> (Headteacher, Quainton)

New ways of thinking can also be a barrier for other stakeholders within a school. This is illustrated by the headteacher at Badger Hill who reported that the LA was short sighted in the development opportunities that were availed to staff in the school.

> The bursar and a senior TA were asked to go and represent the school on workforce remodelling, being representatives of the workforce. [Their presence] was scorned by the course directors and they were humiliated. I was angry and spoke with the director afterwards... they have seen the light and now encourage involvement of people from different areas of the work force.
> (Head, Badger Hill)

Accountability is an underlying barrier to developing a distributed perspective. Spillane et al. (2003) and Macbeath (2005) recognise that capacity and capability of leaders can prevent effective leadership, and the headteacher at Badger Hill articulated this view:

> It could depend on how prepared you are, we are as SMT, to let people do things and get them wrong, and make mistakes along the way. Of course, the accountability comes back, ultimately to me, because there are going to be mistakes and things are going to go wrong.
> (Headteacher, Badger Hill)

Storey (2004) reports that distributed leadership is effective when leaders have clearly agreed and understood boundaries of responsibility. However, this undoubtedly depends on the extent to which leadership is distributed (Hargreaves, 2007) and whether it is progressively delegated or more emergent. This itself can be a barrier, leaving the leader confused and uncertain. This was reflected by the response of the teacher at Badger Hill, who organised preparation, planning and assessment time (PPA) within the Foundation stage department:

> I did a list of non-contact times to organise PPA, and it was like, you shouldn't have done that. I was just thinking that was my role.
> (Teacher, Badger Hill)

The assistant head at Badger Hill also identified confused understanding of agreed boundaries of responsibility as a challenge to distributed leadership. This relates to an issue of feedback that emerged within the quantitative analysis for Badger Hill:

> People are prepared to lead but are unsure about the level of feedback, their role and their actions.
> (Assistant Head, Badger Hill)

When leadership is distributed it is inevitable that leadership styles and outcomes will differ, depending on the individual. This is a challenge that was reported by the head at Badger Hill, and is associated with the ability to let go, and let others lead. Paradoxically, the example given was for the leadership of art within the school, for which the school is credited with a prestigious art award:

> Things she does [art co-ordinator] don't come keen to me and I wouldn't do it that way myself. You can't chop back on that though, you've still got to give them that opportunity because if you've given someone that opportunity, then you've got to follow it through.
> (Head, Badger Hill)

Both schools recognised accountability as a major barrier to distributed leadership, and both Badger Hill and Quainton perceived the Senior Leadership Team as shield that protected staff and children from unnecessary bureaucracy, filtering out what was right for their school. The head of Quainton can illustrate this:

> As a human race we are so creative, but at the moment there are so many things that are mechanised... If it [initiatives] doesn't directly affect the children or the adults within the working environment, we [SMT] put it to one side.
> Half of my job is protecting staff from the unnecessary bureaucracy and making sure the children are the top-focus all of the time. That's where I have my issues. I don't think staff lose focus of the children.
> (Head, Quainton)

Structures and systems were both barriers and facilitators in the development of distributed leadership. The traditional structure of subject leaders/ coordinators was criticised, and in some cases ensuing leadership was believed to be ineffective:

> I think 'subject co-ordinators' is a fault of the system and that people are expected to lead when they don't want that experience. People just accept things and are perhaps ineffective, not confident or really knowing what they should be doing.
> (Teacher, Badger Hill)

From the eight interviews, only one member of staff identified financial incentives and rewards as a barrier to developing distributed leadership, although she did not believe this prevented her from wanting to lead.

> I think people have not got the monetary incentive to take things further and they think... if you are going to call people leaders there should be some kind of reward or incentive for people to do it.
> (Teacher, Badger Hill)

However, within the current climate of higher pay, new pension flexibilities and work force remodelling, the implications of financial reward look set to grow. Stewart (2007) reports that during 2006 there has been an unprecedented 15% rise in part time staff, and as pupil numbers continue to fall, the number of part time staff in our schools looks likely to increase further. In response to this heads may need to adapt leadership practice. Ultimately full time workers may end up with extra work, and unless they are rewarded financially they may be reluctant to lead.

Time was recognised as important to the effective practice of distributed leadership, and both schools reported a culture whereby staff were given time to lead.

> If people need extra time to develop a leadership role... then we are to come and ask for extra time and say what it is for.
> (Teacher, Badger Hill)

> In our school people who maybe need more leadership or management time are offered that. If they don't feel they have enough, we don't mind people coming to us, but on a priority basis.
> (Assistant Head, Badger Hill)

However, time is not infinite. This is reflected in the following response, which also shows the system of support offered to children in their role as play leaders at the school:

> Time is always a factor... just keeping the groups together and reminding them [the children] of their duties [as play leaders].
> (Teaching Assistant, Badger Hill)

A school's culture can be a barrier to distributed leadership. Southworth (1998) reported that distributed leadership could alter the working relationships between colleagues, and referred to the challenge of overcoming the expectation of 'dead man's shoes' as a reason for 'promotion' to a team. This was acknowledged by the deputy at Quainton, and believed not to be the case at this school.

> We are pretty free and easy, quite relaxed about things. I know in other schools people are frightened to tread on other people's toes.
> (Deputy Head, Quainton)

4.2.6 Impact of Distributed Leadership

The impact of distributed leadership on the child is an area that remains under explored (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2005; Spillane, 2006) and so was considered within this study. Distributed leadership has had a positive impact on the leadership of both schools, enabling them to undertake new initiatives in their development, and raise the profile and confidence of staff. This can be seen in the teaching of French for example, which has been led by teaching assistants at both Badger Hill and Quainton.

> The children enjoy doing French. They don't think of it as learning, but as just fun and games. I think they respect me more because I do take a class.
> (Higher Level Teaching Assistant, Quainton)

Hargreaves (2007) recognises that distributed leadership is a means of sustaining leadership, and in this investigation examples were given that enabled staff and children to lead areas where they might have an interest, and or expertise. At Badger Hill distributed leadership has directly impacted the children in their leadership of playground games for example.

> Children love it. It raises their self-esteem, confidence and knowledge.
> (Teaching Assistant, Badger Hill)

It has also enabled children to develop their own leadership, developing multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1999) such as interpersonal intelligence. Therefore, the effects of distributed leadership on children's levels of self-confidence and the transference of this confidence to other areas of learning is indicative of future research. Learning is about taking risks and if children have high self-esteem and confidence, theory

suggests that they are more likely to try new skills and be more resilient when faced with new challenges.

Distributed leadership is a development of the mind, and within the schools investigated its existence has had a positive impact on staff and children. This is reflected in the following responses:

> It [distributed leadership] has given me a lot more confidence, knowing I could do that.
> (Teacher, Quainton)

> The children aren't intimidated or frightened. They will talk about it all and they are confident, too confident sometimes. I think that's how it rubs off.
> (Deputy Head, Quainton)

CHAPTER 5:DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Bush and Glover (2003) contest that the origins of distributed leadership stem back over 20 years and that misconceptions still remain over what it is. An extensive review of literature suggests that there is no blue print for developing an effective distributed perspective, and for Harris (2005) and Spillane (2006), it is best thought of as a framework of thinking of leadership in our schools.

The review of literature has identified 5 underlying themes that are associated with successful distributed leadership. These are:

- Processes of distributing leadership;
- School culture;
- Structural organisation of schools and distributed leadership;
- Sources of distributed leadership;
- Barriers, challenges and tensions that prevent effective distributed leadership.

These themes formed the research framework and were integral to the design of the questionnaire and semi-structured interview schedule. They have also been used to structure this discussion, to investigate how primary schools might develop a distributed leadership perspective in the UK. The author will begin by discussing the quantitative findings, followed by qualitative findings. However, before each theme is discussed it is important to reiterate the research sample, which remains a caveat to this study.

5.1 Sample

Ofsted reports and local authority (LA) recommendations helped to identify four good schools in North East Lincolnshire that were reported to distribute leadership. These schools were included in the first part of my research design, and yielded quantitative data. 68% questionnaires were returned.

The variance in questionnaire returns is associated with differences in methodology. The initial research design was compromised and because of a sampling problem, it became impossible to trawl the four schools and select two that demonstrated more aspects of, and an interest in distributed leadership. A larger sample size at Badger

Hill and Northwold provided data that is more valid and generalisable than data from Quainton and St Chads- where a very low response rate reduced the importance of these findings. Whilst this strengthens the argument for excluding Quainton and St Chads from the main part of analysis, their inclusion is justified because the research is an investigative study into distributed leadership in primary schools.

Despite the research design being compromised, quantitative data analysis did help to screen and select two schools for the qualitative aspect to my research design, that would contribute to developing an understanding of the situational aspect of distributed leadership (Spillane, 2006). Interesting findings emerged from Badger Hill and Quainton in particular, justifying their selection for qualitative investigation.

Within the qualitative design, 8 people were interviewed, four from each school. These included the headteacher, deputy or assistant head, a class teacher and teaching assistant. This was a development on previous studies into distributed leadership, particularly within the UK that have been invariably limited to teacher leadership (Harris, 2002). Whilst it would have been desirable to interview more people, particularly administration staff, which yielded some interesting data within the quantitative analysis, this was not feasible within the time constraints of this study. This is indicative of further investigation and a future recommendation, together with re-sampling the very small sample of returns from Quainton and St Chads.

5.2 Quantitative Discussion

5.2.1 Processes of Distributing Leadership

Distributed leadership is collaborative leadership. It is shaped by the experiences of the people involved and by the situation they are in. Therefore, interactions between leaders and followers are an important element of distributed leadership.

Distributed leadership literature emphasises the importance of the Senior Management Team (SMT) in the development of a distributed perspective. Barth (1990) and Louis and Marks (1998) recognise the facilitating role SMT can have on developing this form of leadership, and Macbeath (2005) cites the importance of strategic distribution- to which senior leaders are attributed. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the SMT was most responsible for making their leadership decisions within this study. However, the second group of staff to be most responsible for making their own leadership decisions was within administration. 66% of administration staff felt that they were always or frequently responsible for their own leadership. This cohort is indicative of further research, and a future recommendation would be their inclusion within qualitative methods.

Previous distributed leadership research has focused on teacher leadership (Bennett et al., 2003), and whilst this remains important, it is a narrow perception of what distributed leadership can look like in our primary schools. Analysis of questionnaire data found a highly significant difference between teacher leadership in the four schools investigated (Chi-square test, p. 0.008). Teacher leadership was greatest at Badger Hill and Quainton, and lowest at Northwold and St Chads. Independent t-tests found significant differences between Badger Hill and Northwold (p.0.02). Despite significant differences in the extent to which teachers led in these schools, Chi-square test found no significant difference between levels of encouragement of teacher leadership in all four schools (p.0.057). Teacher leadership was strongly supported and encouraged in all schools investigated.

Over the last 5 years there has been a large increase in the number of teaching assistants within primary schools (NAHT, 2006), and opportunities to develop have increased through initiatives like Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) status for

the right person. These factors have increased the leadership potential for this group. Within this study no significant differences were reported between schools and the distributed leadership of teaching assistants, (Chi-square test, p.0.142). However, TAs were reportedly least involved in leadership activities at Northwold and most frequently involved at Badger Hill and Quainton. Furthermore, Independent t-tests that found significant differences in involvement of TAs in leadership at Northwold and Quainton (Table 11). Teaching assistants appear to be most supported in their leadership at Badger Hill and Quainton, and Chi-square test reported significant differences between levels of support offered to TAs in their leadership in the different schools (p. 0.014).

Research that investigates pupil involvement in leadership is under-explored (Spillane, 2006) and so was considered within my research. Teachers reported that pupils were more involved in leadership than any other member of staff and pupil involvement in leadership was reportedly high at Badger Hill and Quainton. However, Chi-square test found no significant difference between schools and pupil involvement in leadership (p.0.081). Interestingly, four respondents did not know whether pupils were involved in leadership and these were all TAs from the same school, Northwold.

Spillane (2006) criticises distributed leadership research for failing to develop an understanding of leadership practice. In order to develop an understanding of this there needs to be an understanding of the situation- the tools, routines, structures and systems that enable distributed leadership. In all four schools, no significant differences were observed between the opportunities given to staff to lead (Chi-square, p.0.361). However, the extent to which staff were involved in shaping their own leadership was significantly different between schools (Chi-square test, p. 0.007). Staff were most involved in shaping their own leadership at Badger Hill and Quainton, and least involved at Northwold (reference tables 23, 24).

5.2.2 School Culture

Johnson (2004), Macbeath (2005) and Hargreaves (2007) have all associated a collaborative and supportive culture with effective distributed leadership, and within this study, data suggests that all schools involved in the quantitative design were supportive of leadership. From all the questionnaires returned, almost half of them (47.1%) reported that good support was made available for staff wishing to lead. Furthermore, no staff reported that support was rarely or never available. However, schools did differ in the frequency of support they offered (Chi-square, p. 0.041). This was further explored through Independent t-tests, and Northwold emerged the least supportive school. Support for staff wishing to lead at Northwold was significantly different to support offered at Badger Hill and Quainton. At Badger Hill, 84% reported that there was always or frequently somebody they could go to and discuss leadership matters. Of course, a criticism of quantitative data is that it does not develop an understanding of the nature of support offered. This will be considered through discussion of qualitative data.

Quantitative data suggests that headteachers are the least supported group within this study, and the only cohort to report that they are unable to talk to anyone about leadership. Headteachers also emerged as the least valued group too, whilst TAs leadership was reportedly most valued. Whilst a judgment of headteachers remains limited to a small sample 4, this raises issues of concern. For example, how can a distributed leadership perspective be maintained or developed, if headteachers do not feel supported or valued in their role?

From the data analysed, enjoyment of leadership was associated with the frequency of feedback. The more feedback people were given, the more they reportedly enjoyed leadership. Whilst tests of association do not infer causation, there might come a point at which headteachers start to see the glass as half empty. At the time of data collection however, all schools showed enjoyment of leadership and no significant differences were observed between them (Chi-square test, p.0.098).

An area of development for all schools in this study is the feedback of leadership performance. This is particularly true at Badger Hill, where over a quarter of respondents (25.6%) reported that they were rarely given feedback, and only one fifth

(20.5%) felt they were always given feedback. Although Chi-square reported a significant difference between feedback and the four schools (p= 0.026), quantitative data does not intimate the quality of feedback that was given. This will be explored through discussion of qualitative data.

5.2.3 Structural Organisation of Schools and Distributed Leadership

Schools are complex organisations that vary considerably in their physical, social and cultural structure. As such it is not surprising that research surrounding distributed leadership suggests there is no one model of effectiveness; stating that at best, research can offer a framework of thinking (Harris, 2005; Spillane, 2006).

Supportive cultures have been associated with effective distributed leadership, and researchers including Gronn (2000), Storey (2004) and Macbeath (2005) emphasise the importance of having a common purpose and agreed ways of working. This collective intelligence and energy is achieved through tools, routines, structures and systems, which together facilitate effective leadership. These might include: time to undertake leadership responsibilities, opportunities to develop professionally through training and courses, and through professional support from colleagues for example.

Hargreaves (2004) reported that when leadership change was self-initiated, and where its impact on the child was clearly evident, it was motivational. In contrast with self-initiated leadership is instructional leadership, where leaders are told or instructed what to do. Chi-square test found no significant differences between levels of instructional leadership in each of the four schools. However, analysis of mean scores for this variable found that instructional leadership was least reported at Badger Hill, where 56% of respondents (14 people) felt they were rarely or never told what to do by the headteacher. This suggests that leadership is not always instructed from the top-down, and that staff have opportunities to direct their own leadership.

Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) are critical of distributed leadership research for its failure to consider its impact on the child. Within this study 60% of the sample population felt that distributed leadership always or frequently benefited the child. Both Chi-square and Independent t-tests reported no significant differences between schools. 68% of the sample (36 people) felt that leadership was always or frequently

linked to the child too. This was least evident at Northwold, where mean scores suggested that leadership tasks only sometimes linked to the child. This value was significantly different from the other schools (Independent t-tests, $p<0.05$). Ways in which distributed leadership impacted on the child were measured using qualitative methods, which was more appropriate because of the exploratory nature of this study.

Johnson (2004) reported that micro-political insight helped within the development of distributed leadership, and I was interested in the role of the head and senior leaders in scaffolding leadership support for others, directing them in their leadership. Chi-square test reported significant differences between directed leadership by the head in different schools ($p<0.05$). Leadership was strongly directed at Northwold and this difference was significant when compared with directed leadership at Badger Hill. The headteacher was also strongly involved in directing the leadership at Quainton, where four out of the six respondents strongly agreed that leadership was directed from the head.

Within this study, all schools offered a supportive culture where staff were given time to lead. Chi-square test found no significant difference between schools the amount of time staff were given to lead. 44% respondents at Badger Hill (11 people) felt they were always or frequently given enough time to lead, whilst only 4% (1 person) felt they were rarely given enough time for leadership.

Chi-square test found significant differences between schools and the training opportunities availed to staff to develop leadership. Opportunities for training and staff development were particularly high Badger Hill and Quainton. Chi-square test also compared schools and found highly significant differences between the collegial support that staff offered to one another within leadership. Once more, Badger Hill and Quainton appear to be most supportive. Importantly, training and learning are not synonymous, and people who go on training courses are not guaranteed to learn. What needs to be considered is the impact of their training on the school and the child in particular. This was difficult to measure using quantitative methods alone.

5.2.4 Sources of Distributed Leadership

Harris (2005), Macbeath (2005) and Spillane (2006) recognise that distributed leadership occurs in different circumstances, and there is parity in the ways in which leadership is shared. Sometimes it is planned and carefully structured, whilst on other occasions it occurs through default, even being recognised to emerge through situations of desperation and crisis.

Within this study leadership was invariably planned and Chi-square test reported no significant differences between schools (table 75). At Northwold and Badger Hill, where the sample size was largest, over one fifth of staff reported that leadership was sometimes planned. This supports research from Harris (2005), Macbeath (2005) and Spillane (2006), inferring that leadership may occur through other circumstances. Independent t-tests found significant differences between the extent to which leadership was planned at Quainton and the other schools (table 78). Leadership was reportedly most strongly planned at Quainton, but no significant differences were found between staff roles and planned leadership.

The School Improvement Plan (SIP) is an important document in planning leadership events and staff at Badger Hill reported it to be particularly informative. Staff attitudes towards the SIP were significantly different between Badger Hill and Northwold (Independent t-test, table 83). This may be due to levels of staff involvement in creating the SIP document because at Badger Hill over half the sample (56%) strongly agreed that all staff were involved in the SIP, whilst no staff strongly agreed with this statement at Northwold (table 84). Chi-square test also reported significant differences between schools and staff involvement in the SIP.

5.2.5 Barriers to Developing a Distributed Perspective

Research literature has identified a myriad of challenges and tensions that prevent schools from developing a distributed leadership perspective. The main barriers include: leadership design, enjoyment and feeling valued within leadership, and support within their leadership role.

Within this study, no significant differences were observed between leadership design and the schools investigated. All four schools had a traditional leadership structure that was hierarchically designed and comprised: the head, deputy/ assistant head, teachers, teaching assistants and administration staff. Hierarchical structure does not appear to be a barrier to distributed leadership, supporting previous studies of Boles (1992), Glover (1999) and Johnson (2004) for example. However, because the study is not comparative we cannot conclude that non-hierarchical structures are any more or less effective in developing a distributed leadership perspective.

All four schools reported leadership enjoyment and this does not prevent people from wanting to lead. However, levels of leadership enjoyment were lowest at Badger Hill, and are associated with feeling valued and supported within the leadership role.

Feeling valued does appear to be a barrier to distributed leadership within this study. Independent t-tests found significant differences between feeling valued within leadership in different schools (table 39), and both Chi-square (table 40) and Independent t-tests (table 41) found significant differences between feeling valued and leadership roles. Teaching assistants emerged as the most valued leaders and headteachers the least valued. When schools were compared, staff at Northwold were reportedly more valued in their leadership than staff at Badger Hill.

Feeling valued is associated with levels of feedback. The more feedback people are given, the more valued they feel within leadership. Feedback was not a barrier in all schools. Chi-square found a significant difference between schools (table 88), and Independent t-tests found a significant difference between Badger Hill and Northwold (table 89). Feedback was greater at Northwold than Badger Hill, and was particularly

good at Quainton. However, the validity of data from small samples at Quainton and St Chads is a concern and indicative of further investigation.

Feedback does appear to be a barrier to developing an effective distributed perspective. It was greatest at Quainton, and highly significant differences were observed between the feedback offered at Badger Hill and Northwold (table 89). Leadership feedback was also greater at Northwold than Badger Hill.

Despite feedback of leadership performance being a concern at Badger Hill, respondents from this school and Quainton felt their schools were very supportive, over 80% respondents reporting that there was always or frequently somebody in the school they could talk to about leadership. Within this study, teaching assistants felt the most supported group, and headteachers emerged as the most isolated group of leaders.

5.3 Qualitative Discussion

5.3.1 Processes of Distributing Leadership

Central to distributed leadership is its process, recognised by Spillane (2006) as one of shared action and interaction between leaders and followers. This is a central feature of the author's definition, where distributed leadership is defined as collaborative and developed through a culture of shared action and interaction.

Interactions were a key feature of leadership in both schools studied, where leaders not only influenced followers but were also influenced by them. Leithwood and Jantzi (2000), and Hopkins (2001) and Fullan (2005), assert that a flexible structure allows leadership to emerge with the capacity and capability of the school. The following quote illustrates a flexible interaction between the leadership of the teaching assistant leaders and followers in the after school sports club.

> We work as a team... people sometimes take the leadership role, then they will be the follower. We swap about. It's nice to know that if you've got something you're interested in, or you've got more knowledge about, it's nice for others to come to you, to seek advice on your areas of strength. (Teaching Assistant, Badger Hill)

Distributed leadership as a collaborative process was clearly seen at Quainton, where staff were encouraged to share good practice, evaluate leadership performance, and be involved making leadership decisions.

> We share our triumphs and our disasters and we'll talk and we will decide, and then staff put their input in, and it's usually a majority rule.
> (Head, Quainton)

Central to this process is discussion, and the opportunities to hold professional conversations, where leadership performance is continuously monitored, evaluated and reviewed. This supports research from Bush et al. (2003), who reported a nurturing aspect to staff development, and an emphasis on teams and their interactions.

Involving staff in the process of distributed leadership can make them feel empowered and valued, and for Hargreaves (2004) this is associated with its effectiveness. This was witnessed at Quainton, where staff had ownership in making leadership decisions and felt appreciated in what they did.

> We are asked our opinion on lots of things... I do feel that we are all listened to and have our say and that it is valued...and that goes to making the decision.
> (Teacher, Quainton)

Leaders invariably face opposition as people have different ideas and ways of doing things. Distributed leadership therefore can have negative effects as 'multiple leaders... have competing visions, models and ideas of success [and] good practice.' (Storey, 2004: 253) The following example from Badger Hill shows how the head felt uncomfortable with the leadership decisions made by the art coordinator.

> Things she does don't come keen to me and I wouldn't do it that way myself [but] if you've given someone that opportunity, then you've got to follow it through.
> (Headteacher, Badger Hill)

Macbeath (2005) recognises that competing visions and an unwillingness to relinquish control are recognised barriers to distributed leadership. They can challenge leaders and headteachers in particular, who remain accountable to leadership decisions within a school (Fullan, 2005).

Bennett et al. (2003) and Spillane (2006) criticise distributed leadership research for its failure to develop an understanding of leadership practice. Whilst much research emphasises the importance of the head and senior leadership team (SLT) within this process (Barth, 1990), it does not explain how these leaders interact. At Badger Hill and Quainton, the head and SLT were influential and provided a hierarchical structure that was important to the staff and the leadership of the school.

> You've got to have an overall leader. It's a mixture of good direction from the head and SMT, but in conjunction with listening to them [other staff]. (Assistant Head, Badger Hill)

However, the perception of these heads was far from traditional and autocratic. Both headteachers emphasised the importance of leading by example, modelling good practice and leadership behaviour; they embraced new ways of thinking and recognised a need for change. Furthermore, they were not afraid to expose their weaknesses and this sent an important message through the school. Both schools exhibited a strong learning culture where staff and children were encouraged to learn alongside and from one another.

> Staff like to see your weaknesses. It's important that they see you are not this wonderful leader... I think that it's important that I'm seen to fail as well because then someone else will come out with another strategy and pick me up, and I think that is really important.
> (Head, Quainton)

Headteachers at Badger Hill and Quainton both perceived their role as being the leader of leaders. The head at Badger Hill believed that within his leadership he was 'the manager of situations rather than a manager of the situation.' For the head at Quainton felt, her greatest challenge of being a leader of leaders was 'feel[ing] that I'm the one with the least experience and knowledge because I flit from one thing to another... they are doing it more than I do. It comes back to me only having a very superficial understanding.'

Spillane (2006) acknowledges that some leadership activities connect through students and within this investigation, tools and systems that facilitated pupil leadership included: school council, circle time and a play leaders scheme. This was most evident at Badger Hill where teaching assistants were deployed to lead these initiatives with the support of the assistant head. At Quainton pupil

leadership is in its early stages of development, and is directed by a parent volunteer who has not received training, unlike staff at Badger Hill.

Spillane (2006) asserts that tools, routines and structures are 'vehicles' through which leaders interact. Within this study, staff development was an important feature in the development of distributed leadership. Staff were encouraged to develop professionally by going on courses, and teaching assistants and teachers reported high levels of support in this area.

> I help with the leadership of the school council. I help with the leadership of the play leaders outside. I help with the leadership of the listeners in the school and the sports club after school. I go on courses that have helped me within my role.
> (Teaching Assistant, Badger Hill)

> If there's something we want to do, if we think it will help or we think it is interesting, we take it to the head, and usually it's a yes!
> (Teacher, Quainton)

In addition to external courses and professional development learning opportunities, staff reported the importance and more frequent use of support systems that existed within and between schools. These included: mentoring, coaching, performance management, staff meetings, informal chats and meetings within the LAP (local authority partners).

At Badger Hill and Quainton, formal and informal systems of support were reported to facilitate the development of a distributed perspective. Assigned mentors within the first year of teaching (NQT year) were important and lasting links for teachers in both schools. Following the NQT year, staff maintained informal links with their mentors to informally discuss matters including leadership issues.

> I know that if I've got a problem I can always go and talk to my former NQT mentor, and she's always got time to talk to me. I know there's that informal relationship, even though she's not my performance management person.
> (Teacher, Badger Hill)

Performance management systems were in place in both schools, although interpretations of these differed. Systems were less formalised at Quainton than Badger Hill, and staff at both schools felt confident that they could go to anybody in the school to ask for advice or support.

> I know there are systems in place, but usually we just go for a chat [with the head or deputy], or I just say, can you advise me on this? It's that easy! (HLTA, Quainton)

At Quainton staff meetings were recognised as an important vehicle in the development of distributed leadership, enabling staff to discuss things freely. Again, the personality of the head was an important variable in developing a distributed practice.

> [The head] is very open and everyone's opinion is respected.... We are not inhibited in any way; they will speak truthfully and frankly about how they perceive things.
> (Deputy Head, Quainton)

Quainton documented the importance of external support from local authority partners (LAP), a cluster of schools that met on a monthly basis. This helped the head with her leadership, supporting her within her role by providing an opportunity to discuss leadership matters with other heads.

> ...the local authority and I are often at loggerheads but colleagues at the LAP give me some support.
> (Head, Quainton)

Conversely, the head at Badger Hill felt more isolated in his role. He had lost touch with LAP meetings, cited poor support from the local authority per se, and relied on support from his deputy and assistant. This data supports the reliability of findings from quantitative data, helping us to understand why headteachers reported that they do not feel supported and valued in their role.

Idiosyncrasies of leadership support, and the flexibility and fluidity through which these occur both within and between schools, illustrates the complexities of school leadership, and helps to explain why there is no blue print for its effectiveness. Furthermore, this clarifies why researchers are determined that distributed leadership should not be labelled as a panacea for leadership problems over the coming years. I believe this is why Spillane (2006) prefers to think of distributed leadership as a framework of thinking- giving us insight into how and why leaders do things.

5.3.2 School Culture

For Macbeath, school culture can be described as 'a collective intelligence and collective energy' (2005: 362), and this was clearly reported by staff in both schools investigated. The head from Quainton described her school as having a culture of open dialogue, and all staff interviewed supported this.

> If there are any problems or qualms or anything, we wouldn't think we couldn't say anything... people feel confident at speaking out and saying, well actually I don't agree with that.
> (HLTA, Quainton)

> We do discuss things very freely in staff meetings, and [the head] will ask me what I think. She is very open and everyone's opinion is respected.... We are not inhibited in any way; they will speak truthfully and frankly about how they perceive things.
> (Deputy Head, Quainton)

Johnson (2004) reports that collaborative and open cultures facilitate effective distribution of leadership, and the importance of this was highlighted many times during the study. Open dialogue was also promoted at Badger Hill, the assistant head reporting that, 'the culture... is such that I would expect everyone to talk to one another.' However, a culture that encourages people to talk openly is not enough within leadership. At Badger Hill problems arose, not because staff did not talk to one another and the school's vision was not shared, but because it was not fully understood.

Jones (1997), Peterson et al. (1999) and Spillane et al. (2003) report that vision and values are important determinants of leadership success, irrespective of an individual's positional standing within the school. The teaching assistant at Badger Hill highlighted the importance of this, something that Spillane et al. (2003) refer to as cultural capital.

> Everybody has got to know what you are doing to make it work. Everybody to see that they are doing the same thing... you have got to hope that everybody is pulling in the same direction, and wanting the same thing from it.
> (Teaching Assistant, Badger Hill)

However, the class teacher at Badger Hill reported feeling confused and uncertain in her leadership at times, as was reported in her organisation of preparation, planning and assessment time for colleagues within key stage 1. This is an example of the issue of feedback at Badger Hill that emerged through quantitative

data analysis. This contrasts with Quainton, where staff reported continuous monitoring, evaluation and review of leadership performance.

Badger Hill and Quainton recognised that being a learning culture was an important factor in the success of distributed leadership. 'No one can do everything but everyone can do something' was a mantra that permeated both schools. Headteachers from Badger Hill and Quainton emphasised the importance of leading by example and the powerful effects this could have. Furthermore, the head at Quainton felt it was important to expose her weaknesses in order to encourage the leadership and development of distributed leadership. It could be argued that this is not a weakness of the head but strength; demonstrating a high level of confidence and self esteem.

The culture in both schools was such that staff would support one another, working in collaboration. This was extended within the support staff gave to one another within their leadership of activities, but also in the behaviours of the head and senior leadership team- leading by example. This can be illustrated at Quainton, where the headteacher acted as the temporary caretaker/ cleaner, who in support of the deputy, influenced other staff into helping to keep the school clean during a period of difficulty.

Evidence of a supportive, learning culture was also witnessed at Badger Hill, where an impressive record of continuous professional development extended beyond the school. At Badger Hill all staff including teachers, teaching assistants and administration staff were encouraged to pursue professional development opportunities to the highest levels. This was supported through planning systems that dovetailed professional development, performance management and school improvement planning. Furthermore, leadership opportunities were linked to the child, which for Hargreaves (2004) is 'motivational.'

5.3.3 Structural Organisation of Schools and Distributed Leadership

There was a hierarchical structure to leadership at Badger Hill and Quainton, comprising a head, deputy/ assistant head, and teachers and teaching assistants. The review of literature posits evidence both in favour of (Boles, 1992; Glover et al. 1999) and against (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001; Harris, 2005) the argument that hierarchical structures facilitate distributed leadership. At Badger Hill there are opposing views as to whether a hierarchical structure assists distributed leadership. The teaching assistant did not perceive that her role and positional standing within the school restricted her ability to lead.

> If you are willing to take that role as a leader, you will be supported and you can make it work.
> (Teaching Assistant, Badger Hill)

Conversely, the teacher at Badger Hill did find hierarchy an issue. She reported that it was more difficult to lead a member of staff who was at the same level as her, and who had the same number of years experience and training.

> I think it's confidence and personality more than anything. If it was somebody less experienced [I was leading] it would be easier, but because you are exactly the same, it's quite difficult to stand out and be a leader because you're just thinking, I know as much as that person.
> (Teacher, Badger Hill)

These findings support Spillane et al's research (2003), where human capital was recognised as influential in leadership practice. Indeed, Spillane et al. (2003) reported that individual vision and values were more important than hierarchy, in the development of distributed leadership. This suggests that whether hierarchical standing facilitates or inhibits distributed leadership may be down to the individual, their perceptions, experiences, and personality. This is reflected in the following quotes from staff at Badger Hill.

> I think the type of people involved in leadership depends more on their personality than their role really... enthusiasm and being passionate matter.
> (Teacher, Badger Hill)
>
> I notice it depends on the personality as opposed to the structure. It's to do with the way they are. It's the people who are doing the job because they love it.
> (Head, Badger Hill)

Although hierarchical structure may not inhibit people from leading, people can use their positional standing to enhance their leadership effectiveness. This can be explained within the context of school culture and develops the thoughts cited earlier by the assistant head of Badger Hill. The assistant head reported that a culture of openness enabled staff to learn from one another, supporting the development of a distributed leadership perspective. Developing this idea, the head at Quainton used her positional standing and inability to be the master of all things to all people, to motivate others into leadership.

> Staff like to see your weaknesses. It's important that they see you are not this wonderful leader... I support them by being around, by asking their advice, and by listening to what they say... I think that it's important that I'm see to fail as well because then someone else will come out with another strategy and pick me up, and I think that is really important.
> (Head, Quainton)

This philosophy sends a powerful message to all stakeholders, a message that is at the heart of all learning cultures: that no one person can do everything but everyone can do something. This demands confidence and trust, and is something teachers demand of pupils all the time; developing strengths, exposing weaknesses and encouraging learners to take risks in order to develop and learn new things.

Research from Leithwood and Jantzi (2000), Hopkins (2001) and Gronn (2003) favours a flexible structure in the development of distributed leadership. At Quainton staff recognised that a flexible approach helped distributed leadership in terms of the systems of support that were available, and the ability to harness the skills, interests and expertise within the workforce.

> I know there are systems in place, but usually we just go for a chat [with the head or deputy], or I just say, can you advise me on this? It's that easy! (HLTA, Quainton)

> We are pretty free and easy, quite relaxed about things. I know in other schools people are frightened to tread on other people's toes.
> (Deputy Head, Quainton)

Whilst there is a degree of flexibility within leadership at Quainton, staff need to remain heedful of one another's actions (Spillane, 2006). The effects of 'heedfulness' were recognised at Badger Hill, where the teacher who organised

preparation, planning and assessment time for other teachers, but without co-ordination of others leaders, was left feeling restricted in her leadership role.

> I think if you are going to term people as leaders, they should have greater opportunities make decisions and do things... I feel kind of hindered in a way. I know there has got to be an accountability to check things, but I think sometimes a little more freedom for people to get on and lead would help. (Teacher, Badger Hill)

Heedfulness was also mentioned by the headteacher at Badger Hill, who 'found it niggly [the way some people lead] because they cross over people.'

5.3.4 Sources of Distributed Leadership

Quantitative data suggests that distributed leadership was invariably planned in both schools. This is supported by analysis of qualitative findings that shows leadership as a planned and deliberate activity. For example, at Quainton the headteacher worked with the higher-level teaching assistant to develop a programme of French for children in key stage 1. The head knew the HLTA had the subject knowledge and was passionate about France and the French language, and she supported her in its implementation into the school. The HLTA has received additional support and monitoring from an advanced skills teacher within the local authority (LA), and has grown in confidence and independence. Furthermore, the head felt assured that the HLTA was doing a good job, having received external validation and 'quality assurance' from the LA.

> [Leadership of French in the school] is my own doing... I enjoy it!
> (HLTA, Quainton)

Harris (2005), Macbeath (2005) and Spillane (2006) recognise that leadership can occur by default, and this was witnessed through the successive leadership of English at Badger Hill, when the previous English coordinator went on maternity leave, and returned to work on a part time basis. The new subject leader was an English graduate, and had previously developed the teaching of phonics within key stage 1.

When leadership emerges out of despair it is often thought of as reactive, and a response to external, top down pressures. Bennett et al. (2003) report that when leadership occurs in this way it is ineffective. Hargreaves (2004) supports this idea, believing that when leadership change is self-initiated rather than imposed

and reactive, it is motivational. However, within this study there is evidence of leadership occurring through despair that is self-initiated.

At Quainton teaching assistants created and now lead a pastoral support system for children with emotional and behavioural needs. In addition to supporting individual teachers, they meet together and look at the children they support. This is addressing the emotional needs of the child (Goleman et al., 2002) and is benefiting the school.

> Through their observations of certain children we changed the gent's loo into a 'Time Out' room. This wasn't a priority because we are all female staff, so we got it carpeted and now it is a very quiet, green pastoral room for children who need a bit of quality. You can see those children in the morning who are going to kick off big time.
> (Head, Quainton)

5.3.5 Barriers to Developing a Distributed Perspective

For Spillane (2006) a major challenge facing schools and school leadership over the next 20 years is developing an understanding of leadership practice. This may require new ways of thinking as schools may move away from hierarchical and autocratic models of leadership to a more distributed perspective in order to sustain leadership and remain effective.

Within this study both schools were open to change and new ideas. The head at Quainton felt that her greatest challenge of being a 'leader of leaders' was having a superficial understanding of leadership practice.

> I feel that I'm the one with the least experience and knowledge because I flit from one thing to another... they are doing it more than I do. It comes back to me only having a very superficial understanding.
> (Headteacher, Quainton)

The head at Badger Hill felt that his greatest challenge to developing a distributed perspective was accountability and the fear of letting go.

> It could depend on how prepared you are, we are as SMT, to let people do things and get them wrong, and make mistakes along the way. Of course, the accountability comes back, ultimately to me, because there are going to be mistakes and things are going to go wrong.
> (Headteacher, Badger Hill)

Sometimes the challenge to distributed leadership can be finding the right person for the job, with the right skills, vision and values. This is a view favoured by Spillane et al. (2003) and Macbeath (2005) who recognise that capacity and capability of leaders can prevent distributed leadership from being effective.

Associated with the challenges of accountability and establishing new ways of thinking is the structure of schools. The head at Badger Hill recognised that 'the very nature of the structure of schools and the inspection route' could be a barrier in the development of distributed leadership. Both Badger Hill and Quainton were trying to develop a culture of support from within, where staff did not feel threatened from systems of monitoring, evaluation and review, within their formative development. The traditional structure of subject leaders/ coordinators was also criticised, and in some cases ensuing leadership was believed to be ineffective:

> I think 'subject co-ordinators' is a fault of the system and that people are expected to lead when they don't want that experience. People just accept things and are perhaps ineffective, not confident or really knowing what they should be doing.
> (Teacher, Badger Hill)

Bureaucracy was recognised as a barrier to distributed leadership, and a strong SMT was believed to be important in the prevention of initiative overload, where schools felt bombarded by an endless stream of governmental initiatives. The SMT played an integral part in forming and maintaining a strong sense of identity. Both schools knew what they were about, where they were and where they wanted to be.

> If it [initiatives] doesn't directly affect the children or the adults within the working environment, we [SMT] put it to one side.
>
> Half of my job is protecting staff from the unnecessary bureaucracy and making sure the children are the top-focus all of the time. That's where I have my issues. I don't think staff lose focus of the children.
> (Headteacher, Quainton)

The local authority (LA) appears to be challenged by some of the new ways of thinking about distributed leadership at Badger Hill and Quainton. Both schools were critical of the LA, and a recommendation for further research would be to include the LA paradigm within the development of a distributed leadership perspective. However, the head at Quainton reported that 'the LA and I are often at loggerheads'; whilst the head at Badger Hill thought the LA was short sighted in the development opportunities that were availed to staff in the school. Staff were excluded from local authority training sessions because the head and LA disagreed over the suitability of staff to attend certain events.

> The bursar and a senior TA were asked to go and represent the school on workforce remodelling, being representatives of the workforce. [Their presence] was scorned by the course directors and they were humiliated. I was angry and spoke with the director afterwards... they have seen the light and now encourage involvement of people from different areas of the work force.
> (Head, Badger Hill)

When leadership is distributed, roles within a school change and so too do the relationships between colleagues. At Badger Hill the head felt that the informal support and mentoring he offered to staff could be misconstrued, affecting the relationships between staff.

> People accuse you of favouritism because I suppose it's the perception that somebody is not actually involving you in discussions. That is the danger of informal discussions and meetings.
> (Head, Badger Hill)

Southworth (1998) refers to the challenge of overcoming the expectation of 'dead man's shoes' as a reason for 'promotion' to a team. The deputy at Quainton acknowledged this, but did not believe this to be the case at Quainton.

> We are pretty free and easy, quite relaxed about things. I know in other schools people are frightened to tread on other people's toes.
> (Deputy Head, Quainton)

Hargreaves (2007) suggests that the nature of distributed leadership can range from progressively delegated, where there are high levels of leadership support- to the more emergent, where staff have greater freedom and flexibility within their leadership decisions. However, for distributed leadership to be effective staff require clearly agreed and understood boundaries, regardless of the nature of distributed leadership. This supports the work of Storey (2004) and is witnessed in the response of the teacher at Badger Hill, who organised preparation, planning and assessment time (PPA) within the key stage 1.

> I did a list of non-contact times to organise PPA, and it was like, you shouldn't have done that. I was just thinking that was my role.
> (Teacher, Badger Hill)

This requires feedback, and is an issue at Badger Hill, having emerged in quantitative and qualitative findings.

Financial incentives do not appear to be a barrier to developing distributed leadership, and staff reported feeling rewarded in other ways. At Badger Hill and Quainton rewards included praise and recognition for leadership achievements. Staff were also given time to lead, and encouraged to pursue professional development- receiving financial assistance. However, within the current climate of higher pay, new pension flexibilities and work force remodelling, the implications of financial reward look set to grow. Stewart (2007) reports that during 2006 there has been an unprecedented 15% rise in part time staff, and as pupil numbers continue to fall, the number of part time staff in our schools looks likely to increase further. In response to this heads may need to adapt leadership

practice. Ultimately full time workers may end up with extra work, and unless they are rewarded financially they may be reluctant to lead.

5.3.6 Impact of Distributed Leadership

A major weakness of distributed leadership research is that no empirical data exists to demonstrate the positive impact of distributed leadership on pupil achievement (Bennett et al. 2003). Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) support this concern, and report that only a small body of distributed leadership research conceptualises student outcomes. Their findings suggest that distributed leadership does appear to have an indirect effect on pupil outcomes, and this is supported within this study.

Distributed leadership has had a positive impact on the leadership at Badger Hill and Quainton, enabling staff to undertake new initiatives in their development, whilst raising the profile, skills and confidence of staff. This can be seen in the teaching of French for example, which has been led by teaching assistants at both Badger Hill and Quainton. Indirectly this has benefited the pupils by allowing them to learn French. However, the direct impact of distributed leadership on pupils is less evident, and more research is clearly needed to measure the impact of this. In studies that have researched the direct effects of leadership on pupil outcomes, conclusions are unclear. Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) report that three out of four studies identified reported positive effects (Day et al., 2001a, 2001b; Marks and Printy, 2003; Ross, 2004), and they concluded that no clear conclusions could be drawn from these results. The direct impact of distributed leadership on pupil outcomes is indicative of future research.

Spillane (2006) reports that '...some leadership activities connect... directly through students rather than exclusively or chiefly through teachers.' (Ibid: 26) This was evident at Badger Hill, where the leadership of teaching assistants facilitated pupil leadership. Pupils became leaders through school council and the play leaders scheme for example, and were able to develop skills like teamwork. Distributed leadership can enable children to develop multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1999), raising self-esteem and confidence. It had this effect on staff at Badger Hill, and it is possible that these findings could be transferred to children

too. This area is indicative of future research because learning is about taking risks and if children have high self-esteem and confidence, theory suggests that they are more likely to try new skills and be more resilient when faced with new challenges.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary of the Principal Features

Traditionally, school leadership has been perceived as an autocratic and one-way process, invariably directed by the headteacher. Harris (2005) and Spillane (2006) are critical of traditional leadership models in today's schools and believe they are ineffective and outdated. Through a growth in research interest, notably from Southworth and the National College of School Leadership, alternative models of school leadership are being considered, and distributed leadership is emerging as a likely solution to the sustainable leadership problem. Hargreaves (2007) supports this and promotes distributed leadership within his model of sustainable school leadership.

Storey (2004) warns us that when a leadership style becomes fashionable, there is a tendency to assume and assert its importance, rather than demonstrate it. This is a caveat of distributed leadership research per se, and researchers including Hallinger and Heck (1996, 1999), Spillane and Orlina (2005), and Spillane (2006) have all criticised studies for tending to focus on what leaders do, rather than develop an understanding of leadership practice. The purpose of this research therefore, has been to investigate distributed leadership in two primary schools in the UK, to begin to understand the interactions between leaders, followers and their situation in helping other primary schools to develop a distributed leadership perspective.

Various definitions of distributed leadership have been combined through consideration of the evolving nature of distributed leadership and the development of distributed leadership over time. For the purpose of this thesis, the author has defined distributed leadership as *collaborative leadership that is developed through a culture of shared action and interaction.* This definition recognises the normative view of distributed leadership (teacher leadership), and the leadership of the senior management team. However, it also acknowledges the wider opportunities for developing a distributed perspective, to include the leadership of teaching assistants and pupils for example.

A mixed methods approach was used to investigate the distribution of leadership in two successful primary schools in North East Lincolnshire. This approach has been chosen because it was used in recent distributed leadership research, notably Macbeath (2005). As in Macbeath's study, questionnaires were used to screen schools prior to qualitative methods, which investigated the interactions between leaders and followers, to develop an understanding of leadership practice (Spillane, 2006).

6.2 Key Findings

A number of issues emerged when considering the development of distributed leadership that contribute to furthering an understanding of how distributed leadership might be used in our schools. These will be presented under the headings that formed the framework of study throughout this investigation.

6.2.1 Processes of Distributed Leadership

Yukl (2002) describes the process of distributed leadership as shared and interactive, and within my definition the process is described as collaborative. However, whilst all collaborative leadership is distributed, not all distributed leadership is collaborative. This study suggests that the nature of distributed leadership is variable, both within and between leaders, and the schools in which they operate. Sometimes distributed leadership was delegated in function, whilst on other occasions leaders were more responsible for their own decisions. Factors that determined the nature of leadership included: leader's experience and skills, context, time and relationships between leaders and followers. These findings support the work of Hargreaves (2007) that sees distributed leadership as variable in function.

Within the review of literature Barth (1990), and Louis and Marks (1998) highlighted the importance of the Senior Management Team (SMT) in the process of distributed leadership. This was supported by quantitative data; in all four schools the SMT was the most responsible for making leadership decisions. Qualitative data further supported this, and headteachers and senior leaders were recognised as important at leading by example, modelling good leadership practice and behaviour.

Headteachers at Badger Hill and Quainton embraced new ways of thinking and perceived their role as a leader of leaders. They recognised and accommodated the need for leadership change, and were pivotal in developing a culture of encouragement and respect. At Quainton the head was confident at exposing her weaknesses and felt this was important in the development of distributed leadership, encouraging new leaders to have a go within a supportive environment.

Within this study schools varied in the nature of distributed leadership, for example, highly significant differences were observed in levels of teacher leadership. However, an underlying feature of all schools (that was important to the process of distributed leadership) was the strong encouragement and support in the development of distributed leadership. Once more, heads and senior leaders were identified as important in providing good support and direction. This challenges thinking following the research of Peterson et al. (1999), where the process of distributed leadership was reportedly more important than hierarchy. In this study a hierarchical leadership structure facilitated distributed leadership. Therefore, the interrelationship between these variables might be more important than any either or comparisons.

Supportive networks were important in the process of distributed leadership, and at both schools there was evidence of formal and informal systems. Support systems were more formalised at Badger Hill than Quainton, but in both schools these included: mentoring, coaching, performance management, staff meetings, Local Authority Partnership (LAP) meetings and informal chats. These systems were important in nurturing staff development (Bush et al. 2003) and within them the opportunities for professional discussion of leadership performance.

Silns and Milford (2002) reported the need for teachers to develop in order to sustain school improvement. Bennett et al. (2003) reiterated this but extended the provision of professional development to include all members of staff. Within this study, professional development and support was an integral aspect to the development of distributed leadership. This was promoted by the headteacher, and supports previous research by Gronn (2000), Jackson (2002) and Harris and Mujis

(2002). However, within this study leadership was extended beyond the development of staff to include children too. This illustrates the widening nature of distributed leadership in schools as is acknowledged by Spillane (2006).

Spillane (2006) recognised that some leadership connects through pupils. In this study children were reported to be most involved in leadership at Badger Hill and Quainton, though the ways in which children were supported differed between these schools. At Quainton parents were involved in managing the process, whereas at Badger Hill teachers and teaching assistants managed and supported children in their leadership. Furthermore, children at Badger Hill were also given training and supported in the development of their skills as play leaders. In both schools, school council and circle time were identified tools that enabled children to become involved in school leadership and decision-making processes. Within this process, leadership performance was regularly monitored, evaluated and reviewed, and opportunities created to share good leadership practice.

At Badger Hill and Quainton the strategic capability of staff was considered in order to allocate leadership responsibilities, supporting the work of Davies et al. (2005). For example, at Badger Hill leadership succession within English was carefully planned by the SMT, whilst at Quainton a teaching assistant was promoted to Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) status to develop her leadership of French within the primary curriculum. Although strategic planning can help in the effective deployment of distributed leaders, Macbeath (2005) warns of the risk of weakening the leadership structure by concentrating areas of staff expertise. At Badger Hill and Quainton a broad base of development was promoted, and staff were encouraged to pursue their interests and supported in their professional development to minimise the effects of this.

6.2.2 School Culture

To what extent does a collaborative, supportive culture facilitate distributed leadership? How are staff involved in the decision-making processes? What inhibits leadership from being distributed?

This study supports research from Bennett et al. (2003), Johnson (2004) and Hargreaves (2004) that collaborative, supportive and open cultures facilitate distributed leadership. At Quainton the headteacher encouraged 'a culture of open dialogue' where opinions were respected and people were encouraged to speak openly. Both schools acknowledged the advantages of an open culture: enabling staff to be involved in leadership, empowering them and motivating them in leadership activities. However, it also meant that staff and senior leaders in particular, had to be prepared to listen to criticisms and ideas that challenged their thinking. Whilst headteachers expected this and believed this was an inherent feature of a learning culture, they occasionally found it difficult (see barriers to distributed leadership).

At Badger Hill the assistant head believed distributed leadership was successful because the school culture was such that people talked openly to one another. The teaching assistant at Badger Hill also referred to the importance of establishing a 'shared vision', which enabled staff to know what their school was about and where it wanted to be. This evidence supports the work of Gronn (2000), who reported distributed leadership to be most effective in a culture where there is a common sense of purpose and where there are agreed ways of working. However, at Badger Hill conflicting evidence also emerged. For example, at times the class teacher reported feeling confused and uncertain within her leadership. This suggests a lack of clarity in her role, and that the culture may not be as shared or fully understood as the senior leadership team believed. Within Storey's research (2004), when the culture was not shared there were conflicting priorities, time scales, unclear boundaries, and competing styles of leadership between leaders. These had a negative effect on distributed leadership success, and are indicative of further investigation within this study.

A strong characteristic of both schools was their commitment to learning through the development of a learning culture. This was partly characterised by strong relationships between staff, who trusted, encouraged and supported one another in the development of collaborative leadership, and by giving staff time to lead. Both schools had systems and tools that facilitated distributed leadership, though the precise nature of these differed between them. For example, at Badger Hill the School Improvement Plan clearly dovetailed performance management systems and continuous professional development opportunities. At Quainton, although systems were less structured and more informal, staff also felt supported and encouraged. The senior management team was at the heart of a collaborative and supportive culture, favouring research from Southworth (1998). At Quainton for example, staff were involved in the decision-making process during meetings. This motivated and empowered them to lead other areas within school improvement, and is supported by the motivational claims of self-initiated change by Hargreaves (2004), and the notion of collective energy and intelligence (Macbeath, 2005).

6.2.3 Structural Organisation of Schools and Distributed Leadership

What structures facilitate/ inhibit distributed leadership? What is the role of the head teacher/ SMT within the development of a distributed perspective?

Within this study, all schools operated under a traditionally hierarchical leadership structure, and within this there was evidence of good distributed leadership. The professional relationships between the headteacher, senior leadership team and staff were important in the development of distributed leadership. Within both schools there was good support from senior leaders, though the headteacher at Quainton gave more instructional leadership than the head at Badger Hill.

Although Hargreaves (2004) suggests that self-initiated change is more motivational than imposed change, there was a high level of leadership enjoyment in both schools. This may be because over half the leadership reported (60%) was seen to impact on the child. Furthermore, although a higher level of instructional leadership was reported at Quainton than Badger Hill, the interactions between leaders and followers were such that instructional leadership was not simply

directed. For example, both heads acted as a mentor and guide in developing the leadership of others, and the amount of direction and support they gave was dependent upon the individual and the circumstances.

Within the literature review, there is conflicting evidence both in favour and against hierarchical standing helping schools in their development of a distributed perspective. Boles (1999), Glover et al. (1999) and Johnson (2004) for example, assert that hierarchy and micro-political insight contributes to the development of distributed leadership, and there is evidence within this study to support this view. At Badger Hill for example, the teacher felt that her experience and perception as being a class teacher, restricted her ability to lead people with the same experience or those of higher hierarchical standing. Conversely, other staff at Badger Hill felt that involving people in leadership and political standing per se was not enough.

Within this study, no staff identified hierarchy as damaging to collaboration and empowerment, as was reported by Harris (2005). However, leadership personalities were deemed to be more important for some individuals. For the headteacher and teaching assistant at Badger Hill, an individual's enthusiasm, values and passion were more important than positional standing. This favours research from Spillane et al. (2003) who also concluded that individual motives were more important than hierarchical standing within a school.

These conclusions support latest research from Harris (2005) and Spillane (2006), which suggest that distributed leadership research is best thought of as a framework of thinking about leadership. Schools are complex organisations, varying socially, culturally, structurally and physically, and assigning a 'blue-print' of distributed leadership would be an oversimplification.

6.2.4 Sources of Distributed Leadership

What are the circumstances in which distributed leadership occurs? How is leadership distributed? Is it carefully planned, or does *it* occur through default, or by desperation... as result of crisis?

Within this study there was evidence to suggest that distributed leadership was planned, or else occurred through default or desperation, supporting findings from Harris (2005), Spillane (2005) and Macbeath (2005). The circumstances through which distributed leadership occurred however, do not appear to be mutually exclusive, and although the majority of leadership activities were planned, schools investigated acknowledged the need for flexibility. This enabled leadership to emerge with the capacity and capability of the school. Schools also recognised the importance of planning for sustainable leadership, but were aware of the dangers of concentrating leadership expertise on a few individuals. By developing a broad leadership base, the leadership of English at Badger Hill was sustained following the departure of the previous English subject leader.

No significant differences were reported between schools and levels of planned leadership. At Badger Hill and Quainton for example, over 20% of leadership activities were planned. When staff were involved in the process of planning leadership and contributed to the school improvement plan (SIP), their attitudes were more favourable than when they were not involved. This supports research from Bennett et al. (2003) and Hargreaves (2004) who found that leadership was most motivational when change was internally driven and self-initiated.

This study suggests that when distributed leadership occurs through despair, circumstances are not always hierarchically imposed, as is suggested by Bennett (2003). This is witnessed by the pastoral support system that takes place at Quainton, where teaching assistants designed and lead a support programme for children with behavioural and emotional difficulties.

6.2.5 Barriers to Developing a Distributed Perspective

What are the challenges, tensions and difficulties that prevent distributed leadership?

Distributed leadership research including Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) and Harris (2005) is critical of hierarchical leadership structures, believing that they inhibit school improvement and the development of distributed leadership. However, within this investigation leadership design was traditionally hierarchical and schools illustrated good distributed leadership. This favours research from Spillane (2006) who reported that distributed leadership does coexist alongside other forms of leadership.

Literature suggests that organisational structures and systems are a principal barrier to developing distributed leadership approach. Indeed, Harris (2005) recommends the removal of organisational structures and systems, and whilst this might be desirable in some circumstances, it is unlikely in a climate of accountability. Within this study both schools worked within and around systems and structures, finding approaches and solutions that were right for them. For example, Badger Hill and Quainton found creative solutions to accommodate changes in legislation to preparation planning and assessment (PPA) time. Although solutions were different due to the unique circumstances of each school, distributed leadership facilitated school improvement and management issues. Similarly, distributed leadership enabled Badger Hill to cope with the increased number of part time staff (Stewart, 2007), availing leadership responsibilities to a broader selection of people.

Some structures and systems were recognised as impeding distributed leadership; including traditional subject co-ordinator roles and the inspection route to monitoring teaching and learning. At Badger Hill, the traditional subject leader (coordinator) route was identified as ineffective leadership within some cases, and personality, leadership values and passion were cited as more useful determinants of successful subject leadership (Spillane et al., 2003). The inspection route was also identified as a barrier to distributed leadership. Although both schools encouraged a culture of support and practised developmental leadership through

systems of monitoring, evaluation and review (MER), a fear of being judged still remained. This was particularly evident at Badger Hill. A further recommendation would be to investigate systems of MER because differences were observed between schools. Staff at Quainton for example reported very good levels of informal feedback, whereas at Badger Hill feedback was reportedly low.

Governmental legislation and initiatives are further barriers identified by both schools. However, the schools investigated accepted the need for accountability and felt that part of the role of the headteacher and senior leadership team was to protect staff from unnecessary bureaucracy. In spite of this, accountability was a recognised barrier to developing distributed leadership. A challenge for the head at Badger Hill was finding the right people for the job, and letting go of leadership responsibilities. This complements studies of Spillane et al. (2003) and Macbeath (2005) who reported that the ability to distribute leadership was partially determined by the capacity and capability of the staff.

For Spillane (2006), distributed leadership begins with the head and the senior management team and evidence from this study firmly supports this. In both schools positive attitudes from senior leaders and the headteachers in particular facilitated distributed leadership. Headteachers were extremely positive and open to leadership change. They facilitated supportive networks, and invested in professional development opportunities at all levels to develop a broad leadership base, enabling schools to cope with change (Harris, 2005). However, both schools investigated cited the attitudes and support within the local authority as a barrier. At Badger Hill for example, professional development opportunities provided by the local authority (LA) were not always availed to teaching assistants and administration staff because they were not perceived to be suitable for that cohort. This supports research from Smylie (1995), and warnings of cultural acceptance and leadership change. Perhaps the LA is not culturally ready for distributed leadership. A future recommendation would be to investigate the role of the LA within the development of distributed leadership, perhaps including them in the sample population, because their views were not considered within the research design.

6.2.6 Impact of Distributed Leadership

A major criticism of distributed leadership research is its failure to explore its impact on the child (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2005; Spillane, 2006). Providing empirical data to demonstrate the impact of distributed leadership on pupil achievement is beyond the scope of this study and is a future recommendation. However, indirect effects of distributed leadership on the child were considered. Pupils were able to undertake new initiatives and learning experiences including French because of distributed leadership. Furthermore, pupils involved in school council and the play leader scheme at Badger Hill were directly affected by a collaborative approach to leadership. Likely effects of empowering leadership on the children might include enhanced self-esteem, and the development of interpersonal and emotional intelligences (Gardner, 1999). This whole area is indicative of further investigation.

6.3 Implications

This study has enabled me to develop as a professional practitioner and researcher. I have developed an understanding of research methodology and skills, and how methodological issues inform research into school leadership. I have experienced the constraints and difficulties of educational research within a small-scale study, and the challenge of balancing full time work with doctoral studies. This has made me realise how important it was to choose a topic that could sustain and interest me over a long period of time.

In my thesis proposal I was interested in developing distributed leadership research in the UK within a primary school context, to provide a model that would help schools in their development of distributed leadership. I soon realised the importance of keeping a tight research focus, and began to understand that what was desirable was not always feasible. Within the literature review Harris (2005) and Spillane (2006) reported that there was no blue-print for distributed leadership and that it was best thought of as a framework of thinking. It soon became apparent that at best, the research would provide a structure to this framework that would emerge through an investigation into the practice of distributed leadership, alongside previous studies and the literature review.

This investigation has taught me to be selective in appropriate research techniques, including questionnaire design, analysis of quantitative data and interpretation of statistical findings through the use of SPSS. A strength of my research has been the methodology, which was adapted from Macbeath's study (2005). A mixed methods approach enabled me to screen and select two primary schools for further investigation that were believed to distribute leadership, based on LA recommendations. During the study the intended research design changed and this resulted in a small sample return from Quainton and St Chads. This is something I would change, and a future recommendation would be to resample these schools. However, because the research was investigative and two schools emerged from quantitative analysis that favoured a distributed leadership perspective, the study was able to continue.

During this study I have developed a critical and analytical thinking of distributed leadership research, the choice of methodologies and the contributions these findings have made to educational leadership and management practice. Whilst quantitative methods help to screen and filter schools for the qualitative research design, it did little to develop an understanding of the practice of distributed leadership, and the quality of interactions betweens leaders, followers and their situation. According to Spillane (2006) this is a major criticism of distributed leadership research per se. A future recommendation therefore, would be to extend the use of qualitative methods to a wider sample population but this was beyond the scope of small-scale research project.

Qualitative methodology has been an important feature of the research design. It has enabled me to develop an understanding of the importance of interactions between people and the importance of the situation, affording the opportunity to visit good primary schools in North East Lincolnshire. I particularly enjoyed meeting some excellent and inspiring leaders, and being able to engage them in the communication of complex ideas about leadership practice and change.

This thesis has allowed me to develop skills of interviewing, and subsequent analysis and interpretation of qualitative data. Despite traditional, autocratic models of school leadership being criticised by researchers including Harris

(2005) and Spillane (2006) as outdated and effective, this study suggests that an autocratic approach to school leadership may sometimes be necessary. It would appear that distributed leadership can exist alongside other forms of leadership, as was recognised by Spillane (2006). Furthermore, within this study distributed leadership ranged from the autocratic and delegated, to the more emergent, supporting work of Hargreaves (2007). The process of interaction between leaders and followers is variable and influenced by a myriad of variables including: experience, skills, context, timing and relationship between leaders and followers.

Although this research study recognises the widening opportunities for distributed leadership, to including teaching assistants within the research design, the practice of distributed leadership appears to be much wider than this. A future recommendation would be to extend the sample to include other stakeholders; namely administration staff, children and representatives from the local authority. However, due to constraints of small-scale research, the design was limited to semi-structured interviews with eight members of staff from two schools.

Administration staff were included in the quantitative methodology, and analysis of their data suggests they were largely involved in their own leadership, but excluded from qualitative methods. It would be interesting to further investigate this cohort, particularly at Badger Hill, where the senior administration officer has since enrolled on a bursar degree course, is further developing her leadership role within the school, and through her professional development, has been approached by the National College to share her experiences.

Throughout this investigation a major criticism of distributed leadership research has been the failure to measure its impact on the child. Although this study began to consider how children were involved in the process of distributed leadership and the indirect effects of this, this area is indicative of further investigation. The review of literature suggests little empirical evidence to measure the impact of distributed leadership on children. Whilst it would be desirable to investigate the impact of distributed leadership on pupils, methodological issues abound. For example, for ethical reasons it would be difficult to measure the effects of distributed leadership on pupil performance. Furthermore, there would be

difficulty in controlling many extraneous variables that could also impact pupil performance. Nevertheless, this study does suggest that involving children within leadership has increased their self-confidence. Therefore, a future recommendation would be to investigate the effects of distributed leadership on the child per se and their learning/ performance.

Throughout this study I have been able to engage in professional conversations with co-researchers, tutors and with colleagues from my own and other schools. This has further developed critical and analytical thinking of my own leadership practice and that of people in the school where I work. As a result, and during a period of sustained reflection, I have developed my own leadership- specifically within the practice of distributed leadership.

Within this case study design the two schools each had their unique approach to developing a distributed perspective. Although there were similarities between the schools including: a strong and supportive senior leadership team, encouraging and supportive environments, where people were given opportunities to lead, there were many differences both within and between schools. This supports research from Harris (2005) and Spillane (2006), and leads to my framework of thinking about distributed leadership, that can give insight into how and why leaders do things.

6.4 Distributed Leadership: A Proposed Framework of Thinking

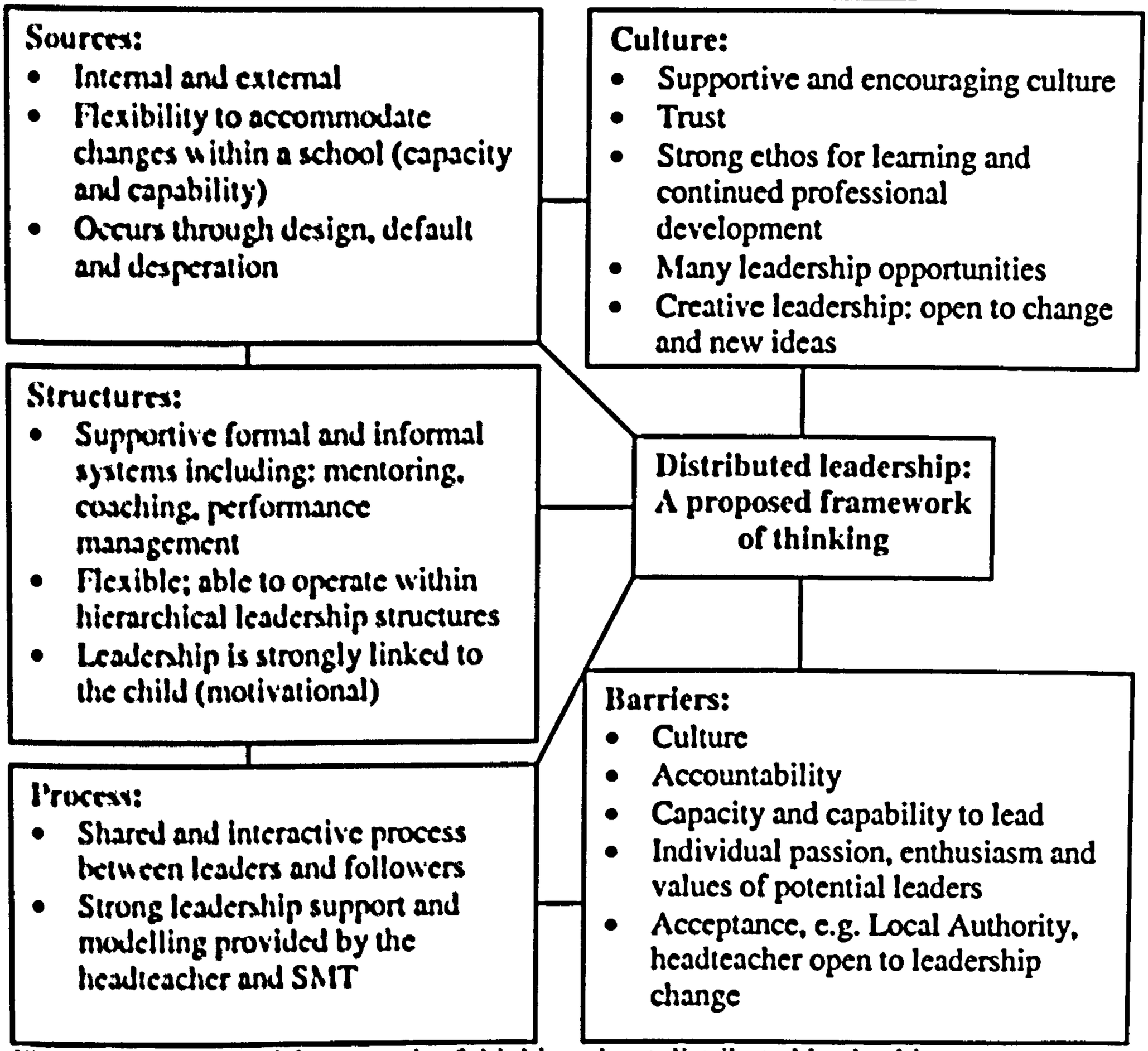

Figure 8: A proposed framework of thinking about distributed leadership.

6.5 Recommendations

Issues for further investigation include:

- To resample the schools investigated, particularly Quainton and St Chads.
- To extend the research sample and use of qualitative methods, to include administration staff, children and local authority representatives.
- To develop an understanding of the role of the local authority (LA) in the development of distributed leadership.
- To investigate the impact of local authority partners on leadership/ headship.
- To measure the impact of distributed leadership on children and pupil achievement.
- To further investigate the systems of monitoring, evaluation and review within the development of distributed leadership.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Primary School Leadership Questionnaire

School Code	

Please complete the following questionnaire and return it, sealed in the envelope provided. All responses will be treated with confidence and anonymity is assured.

1. Name: _____

2. Tick the box to show your role within the school.

Headteacher	Deputy Head	Assistant Head	Teacher	Teaching Assistant	Other *[Please specify]*

3. Tick the box to show how long you have been in your current role at the school.

0- 2 years	3-4 years	5-6 years	7 + years

4. Does your role involve leadership? Yes

No

If yes, please go to question 5. If no, please go to question 6.

5. Think about your leadership within the school over the last 12 months. Read each leadership statement and tick the box that best fits your response.

My Leadership…	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Don't Know
I enjoy being able to lead						
I am told what to do in my leadership role						
I am responsible for making my own leadership decisions						
I am supported in my leadership role						
There is someone in school I can go to talk about leadership issues						
Is carefully designed						
Has benefited the children in the school						
I feel valued in my leadership role						
I am given feedback on my leadership performance						

6. Tick the boxes to show which people in your school undertake leadership roles.

Headteacher	Deputy Head	Assistant Head	Teacher	Teaching Assistant	Other *[Please specify]*

7. Think about the **general leadership** of your school. Read each leadership statement and tick the column that best describes the extent to which this happens within your school.

Leadership Statement	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Don't Know
The Head teacher tells leaders what to do						
Staff are involved in shaping their leadership decisions						
Pupils are involved in shaping leadership decisions						
The school improvement plan informs leadership decisions						
All staff are invited to lead within the school						
Teachers are involved in school leadership						
Teaching assistants are involved in school leadership						
There is good support for staff who wish to lead						
Time is given to enable leadership responsibilities						
Training is given to help staff lead						
Staff support one another in their leadership						
Leadership tasks are linked to the child						

8. Circle the number to show how strongly you agree / disagree with each statement.

	Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
Staff are involved in the School Improvement Plan	1	2	3	4
All leadership is planned	1	2	3	4
Leadership is directed from the Head teacher	1	2	3	4
My ideas are sought to improve the school	1	2	3	4
Teachers are encouraged to lead	1	2	3	4
Teaching assistants are encouraged to lead	1	2	3	4
Teachers are supported in their leadership	1	2	3	4
Teaching Assistants are supported in their leadership	1	2	3	4

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

Appendix 2: The IFL ETHICS COMMITTEE
CONSENT FORMS- SURVEYS, QUESTIONNAIRES

I, of

Hereby agree to participate in this study to be undertaken

By David Gifford

and I understand that the purpose of the research is investigate the impact of shared leadership on the learning and teaching in primary schools.

I understand that

1. Upon receipt, my questionnaire will be coded and my name and address kept separately from it.
2. Any information that I provide will not be made public in any form that could reveal my identity to an outside party ie. that I will remain fully anonymous.
3. Aggregated results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals.
4. Individual results **will not** be released to any person except at my request and on my authorisation.
5. That I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the study in which event my participation in the research study will immediately cease and any information obtained from me will not be used.

Signature: Date:

The contact details of the researcher are:

The contact details of the secretary to the IfL Ethics Committee are Mrs. J.Lison, Centre for Educational Studies, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX.
Email: J.Lison@hull.ac.uk tel. 01482-465988.

The IFL ETHICS COMMITTEE

CONSENT FORM – For Institutions/Organisations

I, ... of .....

.....

Hereby give permission for

.....

to be involved in a research study being undertaken by David Gifford and I understand that the purpose of the research is to investigate the impact of shared leadership on learning and teaching in primary schools.

Involvement for the institution means the following:-

Questionnaires issued to all teaching and teaching support staff within the school. Following questionnaire analysis there will be interviews with: the headteacher, deputy or assistant head headteacher, and subject to questionnaire responses, a class teacher and teaching assistant.

I understand that

1. the aims, methods, and anticipated benefits, and possible risks/hazards of the research study, have been explained to me.

2. I voluntarily and freely give my consent for the institution/organisation to participate in the above research study.

5. I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the study, in which event participation in the research study will immediately cease and any information obtained through this institution/organisation will not be used if I so request.

3. I understand that aggregated results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals.

I agree that

4. The institution/organisation MAY / MAY NOT be named in research publications or other publicity without prior agreement.

5. I / We DO / DO NOT require an opportunity to check the factual accuracy of the research findings related to the institution/organisation.

6. I / We EXPECT / DO NOT EXPECT to receive a copy of the research findings or publications.

Signature: Date:

The contact details of the researcher are:

The contact details of the secretary to the IfL Ethics Committee are Mrs. J.Lison, Centre for Educational Studies, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX.
Email: J.Lison@hull.ac.uk tel. 01482-465988.