THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

PRIMARY SCHOOLS AT THE CROSSROADS

A study of primary schools' abilities to implement educational change, with a particular focus on small primary schools

being a thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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by

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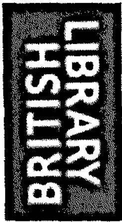

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ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses the issue of primary schools' abilities to implement educational change and focuses, in particular, on small primary schools. A comparison is made between small and large primary schools, in order to determine whether there are differences between the ways in which each have adapted to and implemented changes.

Whilst a series of educational changes since the Second World War have affected primary schools, the thesis takes 1988 as a watershed date, since the Education Reform Act of that year made considerable statutory demands upon primary schools. The thesis examines, in particular, the ability of small schools to implement changes effectively, since this was questioned following the Act, and it seemed that this might precipitate closures and amalgamations at a faster rate than had previously been the case.

The thesis is based upon research over an eight-year period, involving three postal surveys, a series of structured interviews, and a review of relevant literature. The focal point for much of the research is the headteacher, with all of the empirical work being focused on heads, since they have been central to the management of change in schools. Attention is also given, mainly through reviews of literature, to the role of the class teacher and the way in which this has changed in relation to that of the head.

The thesis may be divided into two sections. In the first, the scene is set through an examination of the position of primary schools in general, and small primary schools in particular, before the Education Reform Act. This is followed by a review of published research and the author's empirical studies, in order to gain an understanding of the way in which schools have coped with the implementation of the Education Reform Act. The thesis ends with conclusions and recommendations which are based upon the research findings.

David Waugh
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS WORK

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
APU	Assessment of Performance
ATL	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
CARE	Cumbria Association for Rural Education
CDT	Craft Design Technology
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfE	Department for Education
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DOE	Department of the Environment
DT	Design and Technology
ERA	Education Reform Act
ESG	Education Support Grant
HMI	Her (His) Majesty's Inspectorate/Inspector
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILEA	Inner London Education Authority
INCSS	Implementing the National Curriculum in clusters of Small Schools
INSET	In-service Training
IT	Information Technology
LEA	Local Education Authority
LMS	Local Management of Schools
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
NC	National Curriculum
NDC	National Development Centre for School Management Training
NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research
NLS	National Literacy Strategy
NNS	National Numeracy Strategy
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
ORACLE	Observation Research and Classroom Learning
PE	Physical Education
PRISMS	Curriculum Provision in Small Schools
SATs	Standard Assessment Task
SCENE	Rural Schools Curriculum Enhancement

INTRODUCTION

"There is nothing sacrosanct about the size of schools as we have come to know them. The present situation is the product more of the social and economic development of the country over the last hundred years than of careful planning on educational criteria."

(Killick, J, 1980, p.31)

A stroll through any English or Welsh village will reveal echoes of the past. A disused or converted former chapel will probably be evidence of a time when attendance at religious worship was strong. Close inspection may reveal that some houses were formerly shops or public houses. Estates of new houses may have adopted names which indicate the former use of the land on which they were built: Orchard Road, Sheepfold, Badgers Wood, Meadow Lane. Somewhere in the village there may be a school, possibly a relatively new building or, more likely, perhaps situated next to a crossroads at the heart of the village, a Victorian edifice with a plaque indicating that it was built after the Forster Act (1870) paved the way for public elementary education. The Victorian building may still be in use as an educational establishment, but it is more likely to have been converted into a house or a village hall.

Village life has changed and, while many villages may have increased their populations since the 1870s, many of the facilities which were once to be found have disappeared as demand for them fell, and an increasingly mobile population sought their shopping and entertainment outside the villages. To some extent, schools have been no exception to this trend. However, although thousands have been closed, especially since the Second World War, many have been retained and have been well-supported by local people.

Charlton (a pseudonym), one of the villages whose school is featured in this work, typifies the changing British village. The population has risen in the last twenty-five years, after declining steadily during the previous sixty as families moved to towns to

seek alternative employment as agriculture became less labour-intensive. The old village school at the crossroads near the church has been a private house for thirty years and has been replaced by a newer building. Where once there were seven public houses to serve a population of less than a thousand, now there are two. Whereas, twenty years ago, the village had three grocers, two butchers and half a dozen other small shops, now it has only a newsagent and a hairdresser, yet the population has risen to two thousand four hundred. Estates of private houses have appeared and with them the nature of the population has changed. The majority of the parents of the school's 135 pupils commute to towns and cities for work, and the proportion of children whose parents and grandparents attended the school has declined. The village might be deemed fortunate to have retained a school. Within five miles of Charlton, five other villages have lost theirs in the last sixty years and Charlton itself had fewer than 100 pupils in several of the previous forty years.

This thesis is not a nostalgic attempt to celebrate the village school or to lament the closure of many thousands of small schools during the 20th century. Many of the schools which have closed were simply not sustainable because they did not have sufficient pupils to make them viable. However, there are many small schools which have faced closure whose continued existence owes much to the desire of some parents to have their children educated in small establishments near to their homes, as well as to parents who have chosen to transport their children from outside villages, because they feel that the children will benefit from what parents perceive to be the advantages of education in a small school.

In Britain, the viability of small schools became an important issue after the 1944 Education Act established selection at the age of eleven for secondary education. Before the Act, most villages had elementary schools which catered for pupils from the age of 5 until 14 years. Only the most able children had left the villages to attend the nearest grammar schools prior to 1944. The establishment of secondary modern and technical schools led to the separation of primary and secondary education. Village

schools became 5 to 11 primary schools with reduced numbers on roll. A declining rural population further reduced school sizes and many village schools were closed. In 1947 there were almost 9000 schools with 100 or fewer pupils on roll in England and Wales, compared with 4635 out of a total of 21702 at the time of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA).

Demographic changes to many rural communities have had a significant impact upon small schools since the Second World War (see Champion, 1997). In some areas, house prices have risen as people have retired to villages or bought second homes. As a result, some indigenous families have been priced out of the housing market and have moved to towns where employment may also be easier to find. The period has also seen a rise in the number of professional families living in villages, able to raise funds for local schools and mobilise support when closure becomes an issue (see Murdoch and Marsden, 1994; Abram et al, 1996).

Galton and Patrick (1990, p.7) argued that there had been an "increased nostalgia for the apparent virtues of rural community life supposedly embodied in the earlier unity between family, church and workplace". They maintained that one result of this, in recent years, has been "a reverse movement of population among the mobile, prosperous, well-educated and articulate middle-class from city centres and suburbs to rural villages. It is this group of people who have proved such formidable advocates for the retention of small schools" (ibid., p.7).

This thesis will examine the qualities which small schools enjoy and the difficulties which they encounter, in the context of the challenges faced by primary schools of all sizes. It will explore the strategies which schools have employed as they have faced unprecedented externally-imposed changes to their ways of working, and it will seek to discover if the headteacher's role has changed.

At the heart of education, Plowden (1967) informed us, is the child. Although child-centredness has become a pejorative term for many on the political Right in the last twenty years, the present author would not disagree with Plowden's assertion. However, at the heart of schools faced with educational change, there seems little doubt that it is the headteacher who is the most significant player. Much of the research for this work has focused upon experienced headteachers as they have attempted to implement change in primary schools of all sizes. The headteacher has been the prime agent for implementing change in schools, especially since 1988. Although governors have, nominally at least, been given increased powers and ultimate responsibility for what happens in individual schools, it is the headteachers who have actually had to implement and manage educational changes. This is a point which becomes clear from interviews with heads in 1998 and from successive surveys by the present author. It is worth noting that when Ofsted inspections have identified serious shortcomings in schools, it has been the headteachers who have been forced into early retirement or resignation rather than the governors.

In Chapter Two, it will be seen that the headteacher's role has evolved since the 19th century and has, in some ways, travelled full circle so that heads are now very much at the helms of their schools in the way that many were in the 1800s. This was a clear conclusion from the 1998 interviews and is one which other research supports.

The thesis attempts, through a study of relevant literature and research, and through empirical research over an nine-year period, to discover if school size affects primary schools' abilities to manage educational change. It will explore the changes which have been imposed, together with headteachers' views on them and their strategies for implementing them. The hypothesis that small primary schools are disadvantaged compared with larger schools, when faced with educational change, will be looked at critically. Research questions will emerge as the relevant literature is explored.

The 1989 HMI Report on the implementation of the National Curriculum in primary schools maintained that:

> "Small primary schools found it particularly difficult to prepare for the introduction of the National Curriculum. Two or three teachers often had to cope with all the development work and headteachers had little scope for delegating curricular responsibilities."
>
> (DES, 1989, p.5)

The report also found that "larger schools had forged ahead [in implementing the National Curriculum] at a faster pace than smaller schools which had fewer teachers to share the workload" (ibid., P.5).

This report, coupled with that of the Audit Commission (1990) which suggested that there were 900,000 surplus places in the primary sector, turned the attention of politicians and educators to the subject of small school viability. The commission argued that the surplus places were costing at least £140 million a year and that the money "could otherwise be used to improve educational provision (and hence the quality of education). Alternatively it could be redeployed to improve other local authority services or to reduce taxation" (p.9). The report went on to encourage local authorities "to be bold in identifying options for reducing surplus capacity" (p.21).

In 1998, the East Riding of Yorkshire Council produced statistics for its schools which showed the costs per pupil of running each establishment (East Riding, 1998). The mean cost per pupil was £1480, with the least expensive school costing £1309 per pupil and having 562 pupils. Nine schools cost less than £1350 per pupil and these ranged in size from 227 to 562, with eight having more than 300 pupils. Eight schools had costs of over £2000 per pupil and these ranged in pupil numbers from 35 to 66, with the most expensive at £2463 having 35 pupils. The figures showed a clear relationship between school size and cost per pupil.

However, the debate about the future of small schools, while it has always included considerable reference to cost factors, has never been centred upon these alone. There is a body of opinion (Bell and Sigsworth, 1987; Forward, 1988) which advocates the retention of small schools because they are perceived to offer something which their larger counterparts cannot. Bottery (1991, p.56) sums up this viewpoint:

> "Economic values are but one set of criteria which need to be acknowledged. In this debate, the values of citizenship through community involvement cannot be discounted."

There have been suggestions that, far from being disadvantaged, small schools were actually succeeding. The 1995 White Paper for Rural England (DoE and MAFF, 1995) asserted that early Ofsted inspections had not shown that small schools were struggling:

> "Based on a small sample of primary schools these findings indicate that pupils in the schools with fewer than 100 pupils on roll, most of which are rural, achieve standards which are slightly higher than those achieved by pupils in larger schools. Overall, the quality of learning tends to be slightly better in the small rather than the larger schools. On a wide range of comparisons concerned with the quality of education provision, small schools are rated rather more favourably than larger ones." (pp. 85-86)

The definition of small primary schools used by probably the leading researchers in the field, Galton and Patrick (1990), "one hundred or fewer pupils" (p.27) will be used. This is also in keeping with the manner of recording Government (DES, DfE, DfEE) statistics on school size where small schools can be identified under headings of *25 or fewer pupils, 26-50 pupils* and *51-100 pupils.* Government statistics issued in 1990, when the present work began, show the existence in England and Wales of 3777 small primary schools of all types (i.e. *infant, infant and junior, junior, middle deemed primary, first*). Whilst this represents a considerable decrease since the Second World War, it should be noted that around 15 per cent of primary aged children are educated in such schools.

In gathering material for the thesis, it was found that there was something of a dearth of dispassionate literature. Research on the effects of the size of primary schools on their abilities to manage educational change is somewhat limited. Many articles tend to be polemic and emotive (see, for example, Benford, 1985; Bunyan, 1986; Toogood (ed,) 1991), and those which take a more academic view often pre-date the 1988 Education Act. Often, available literature is based on the views of interest groups concerned with retaining small schools in the face of closure threats (see, for example, Bunyan, op cit.). Thus, a rather 'rosy' view is often taken of the qualities which such schools offer to staff and pupils. While deeply-felt papers which are based upon valid research should not be dismissed as having little value, there is a pressing need for unbiased academic research in this area. Although Galton and Patrick (1990) and Galton, Fogelman, Hargreaves and Cavendish (1991) stand out in the field as dispassionate researchers, much of their work is based upon studies which began before the ERA. However, more recent research by Galton et al between 1992 and 1994 has monitored small schools' classroom organisation following the ERA of 1988 and this, together with other post-ERA studies will be examined.

Research which pre-dates the 1988 Education Reform Act, together with more recent studies; research conducted by the author; and research by others who have tried to establish whether schools' abilities to manage educational change are affected by their size, will form the basis for the thesis. The present author's research has involved three surveys by questionnaire taken in 1990, 1995 and 1998, and a series of case studies involving visits to schools and structured interviews with headteachers, as well as a close examination of relevant official and schools' documentation.

Where comparisons are made between schools of different sizes, these are generally related to small (100 or fewer pupils) and large schools (201 or more pupils). However, throughout the empirical studies, attention is also given to medium-sized schools (101-200). This group presents some problems for the analysis of data since it includes schools which may exhibit many of the characteristics of small schools, as

well as others which have more in common with large schools. It was felt to be preferable to include this separate category of schools, rather than to draw an arbitrary line between small and large schools with nothing in between the two groups. This could have led, perhaps, to comparisons being made between, a 'small' school with 150 pupils and a 'large' school with 151. The existence of a 'buffer group' in between the small and large groups enables comparisons to be made between schools with more obviously different characteristics. The essential characteristic of small schools, as defined here, is that the head is usually a class teacher, whereas this is rarely the case in large schools. Medium-sized schools fall between the two categories not only in terms of pupil numbers, but also because some have class-teaching heads and others do not.

The thesis does not deal with the viability of very small primary schools with 25 or fewer pupils, of which there were 171 in England and Wales in 1988, as these were virtually non-existent throughout the period of study within the LEAs in which surveys and interviews took place. However, at the time of writing, one school in one LEA has declined to 19 pupils and there is controversy over the closure of even smaller schools on Scottish islands and in remote areas of England and Wales, so this may be a worthwhile area for future research.

The first part of the thesis is concerned with showing the state of primary education in the period leading up to the Education Reform Act. The first three chapters are intended to set the scene for the following chapters which look at the effects of ERA and other reforms upon schools and examine whether small schools have been affected differently from large schools by educational change, and whether they are more or less able to manage the statutory changes which have been imposed. In Chapter One, the nature of small schools before the 1988 Education Reform Act will be examined and some of the arguments which have been put for the retention and closure of small schools will be explored. It will be seen that small schools exhibit many features in common with large schools, as well as many differences. Chapter Two is concerned with the headteacher, whose role has evolved considerably since the 19th century. In

particular, the chapter will look at the problems associated with headship of small primary schools. Throughout the thesis it will be emphasised that headteachers are the key players in the management of educational change. Chapter Three turns to the classroom teacher and examines issues such as isolation and in-service training. While the empirical element of the thesis focuses upon headteachers and their views, their role can only fully be understood when it is placed in context by examining the effects of change upon class teachers. This is particularly true where the head is a class teacher herself, as is the case in most small schools.

A pattern is thereby set for the second part of the thesis which examines the effects which educational reform has had upon schools, their headteachers and their teachers. The principal focus is again upon the headteachers, and this is reflected in the amount of attention which is given to their changing role and to their views on the implementation an management of change. The second part of the thesis begins with Chapter Four which discusses the culture of the primary school and the way in which this has been affected by the educational changes which have been made, particularly since 1988.

The methodology which has been used to conduct empirical research and to gather data is set out in Chapter Five and the results of surveys and interviews are presented, together with the findings of other researchers, in the remaining chapters.

As the study has progressed, schools have been faced with further challenges including implementing the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) and the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS), and enhancing and developing the curriculum for Information Communication Technology (ICT). The structures of the frameworks for the NLS and NNS are strongly year-group-based and, as such, may be thought to present particular problems for small schools with mixed-age classes. If the ERA was a watershed for schools in 1988, it may be argued that curricular initiatives in the late 1990s

represented a further significant challenge, and this is an area which is explored in the 1998 empirical research for this work.

Chapter Six turns again to primary schools in general, and small schools in particular, to explore the effects of the Education Reform Act and other externally imposed changes upon the ways in which schools operate. Chapter Seven returns to the role of the headteacher in primary schools and examines the effects which the ERA has had upon post holders, and the strategies which they have employed to implement the statutory requirements within their schools. This is followed by a short chapter (Eight) which looks again at teachers and the ways in which they have been affected by the ERA. This chapter makes the important point that educational change has led to an adjustment to the way in which hierarchies and power relationships have been structured in some schools.

In Chapter Nine, there is an extensive analysis of interviews which were conducted with twelve primary headteachers in late 1998 in order to ascertain their attitudes to, and strategies for, managing educational change. Chapter Ten provides a summary of the findings together with conclusions and recommendations.

It has been evident, during the compilation of this work, that there are many preconceptions about the nature of schools of different sizes. Some will be challenged and tested by the research, while others may be seen to be well-founded. The thesis will demonstrate that, when evaluating the success or otherwise of schools' attempts to implement change, there are factors at play which go beyond issues of size. As Forward (1988. P.x), an advocate of small schools, put it:

> "Small isn't always beautiful, but it can be - everything will depend on how teachers grasp the opportunities offered and deal with the challenges which that very smallness creates."

The Education Reform Act raised questions about primary schools' abilities to deliver high quality education in a new era. The primary school may have been both literally

and metaphorically at a crossroads in 1988, and small primary schools may have been in a particularly vulnerable position, given some of the reservations which had been raised about them before the ERA. Subsequent chapters will reveal the extent to which primary schools of different sizes have managed educational change.

CHAPTER ONE

PRIMARY SCHOOLS BEFORE 1988: THE QUESTION OF SIZE AND OTHER ISSUES

"The current state of the debate on school size and educational quality may be summarised as follows. If everyone were content to define educational quality as performance on standardised tests, the debate could be resolved empirically: as matters stand now, the available literature does not support consolidation on educational grounds. But those on both sides of the debate are inclined instead to define educational quality in broader terms to include a range of phenomena whose evaluation must inevitably be in part subjective. In consequence, the conclusions reached on the relation between school size and educational quality are divided by precisely the same value schism that has caused the policy debate. Thus the issue remains completely unresolved, despite decades of study from an educational perspective..."

(Forsythe et al, 1983, p.23)

Forsythe sums up very neatly the problem facing the researcher on school size. The subject is invested with considerable subjectivity and arouses great passion, particularly on the part of the defenders of small schools. However, the debate about the viability of small schools is not simply centred upon their educational quality relative to larger schools. There are social considerations which both sides have cited in making their cases and, perhaps most significantly, there are economic considerations which are often the starting point for conflict when the issue of closure arises.

In this chapter, research on school size which predates the Education Reform Act of 1988 will be examined. Long before the advent of the National Curriculum and Local Management of Schools (LMS), the educational value of small primary schools had been questioned. In examining the arguments for and against the existence of small primary schools before the educational upheaval brought about by the 1988 Act, those views which have been expressed more recently will be set in perspective. For example, suggestions that small schools were inadequately equipped to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum before 1988 (see DES, 1985) need to be viewed in the light of the increased demands placed upon all primary schools since the ERA.

The demographic and educational changes described in the introduction have conspired to change the context in which small schools find themselves. A dramatic increase in the number of parents owning cars has led to greater mobility for the rural population, with people being able to decide to send their children to schools outside the immediate locality in a way which was unthinkable for the majority of the population in 1944. Thus, the pupil population of many village schools has changed considerably since the Second World War.

The small school has long been thought to be financially unviable by some local education authorities and by central government. Often, when school closures have been debated, local authorities have justified their proposals by referring to educational rather than financial viability. They have cited a number of areas in which they maintained that small schools were deficient. In this chapter, therefore, the organisational, social, academic and financial aspects of small schools will be examined in the light of research findings and the perceptions of educators and government bodies such as Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI), in order to illustrate the position in which small schools found themselves by the time of the Education Reform Act (ERA) of 1988. It will become apparent that the issue of small school viability cannot be examined purely in the light of research on the above areas. Much of the available literature on small schools takes the form of campaigning pamphlets produced as schools face closure, and polemics based upon affectionate views of small schools. Whilst it would be wrong to discount material which is less than dispassionate, the existence of such a body of literature highlights one of the problems of research on small schools: the lack of objectivity in so much that has been written about them. As Gunn (1972, p.22) put it, "The large school in Britain has never been seen as an end in itself, unlike the small school which has many friends".

The Internal Organisation of Small Primary Schools

The Plowden Report (DES, 1967) maintained that a one- or two-teacher school was too small to be educationally practicable and that all schools should contain at least 60

pupils and three teachers. However, years later, Lady Plowden was to question the views she had previously held:

> "Since the Report I have come round to thinking that small country schools should be kept open because of their social value, and because of the continuing community involvement that they provide."
> (Plowden, Interview on Border Television, 29.3.1976)

Two years later Lady Plowden wrote to *The Times* as follows:

> "Is it right to take the heart out of a community by taking away the children, Pied Piper like, thus losing the bond which is created within and between families through a common interest in the school...
>
> "Cost is not everything. We need also to know more about those which are being kept open, especially those where with vision and conviction it is being shown that a small school has educational as well as social value."
> (7.9.78)

Plowden's apparent conversion to the cause of protecting small schools from closure, and her arguments in favour of such schools, typify much of what appears in some of the literature on the subject. This affection for small schools is a key factor in determining their likely future existence, even when more dispassionate commentators produce research which highlights the schools' supposed deficiencies. The affection seems to be based upon the view that small schools offer a 'family atmosphere' in which teachers know all of the pupils and children are taught in small classes (Bell and Sigsworth, 1987).

The Gittins Report (DES, 1967), Plowden's Welsh contemporary, questioned the ability of small schools to deliver a broad curriculum. It maintained that some aspects of the curriculum, such as drama, physical education and expressive movement and science, tended to be weak, and that music might be restricted in scope, with a lack of facilities offering "little opportunity to play an instrument or listen to music" (p.114, para. 7.5.6). The report also asserted that larger schools of eight classes or more had increased possibilities to offer a well-balanced staff who could provide a broad

curriculum. This, Gittins argued, enabled "some degree of specialist training to be available and the pooling of varied knowledge and skills" (ibid., p.39, para 4.7.1).

Some research (for example, Bouri and Barker-Lunn, 1969) has shown that children in mixed-age classes perform less well academically than those in single-age classes. Small schools inevitably have children from two, three or more age groups in their classes and consequently, it is argued, their pupils are disadvantaged.

The Gittins Report (op cit.) asserted that "...in a two or three teacher school there will be at most 5 or 6 children in a year group" (p110, para 7.4.2) and that the small school “may not provide children with the social stimulation provided by an age group" (ibid. p111, para 7.5.1). The Plowden Report (op cit.) commented that in small village schools "...the older children and particularly the abler ones may lack the stimulus of their peers" (op.cit., 1967, p.177, para.479).

As concern about the school curriculum, which had been heightened by Prime Minister James Callaghan's 1976 Ruskin College speech, grew through the late 1970s and 1980s, inevitably, the issue of curriculum provision in small schools, raised in 1967 by Plowden and Gittins, came to the fore.

In 1978, HMI reported that the number of teachers in a small school was "likely to be too small to provide the necessary specialist knowledge in all parts of the curriculum" (DES, 1978, p.121, para.8.53). However, the report went on to suggest that the problem might be overcome by schools working in groups "under the guidance of local authority advisers, through teachers' centres, or with the help of Schools Council or other curricular" (ibid., 1978). The Gittins Report recommended a minimum size for schools of fifty pupils in sparsely populated rural areas and suggested an optimum size of 150 - 180 children with 6 - 8 teachers (op.cit, p.54). The 1978 HMI report also maintained that, with a staff of eight or more, "it may be possible to provide the

necessary range and specialisation from within the staff, especially if this requirement is taken into account when teaching appointments are made" (op.cit. p.109).

The 1978 HMI survey found signs that schools of two-form entry or larger were likely to be better equipped than smaller schools. It reported that the test scores of children of 7 and 11 in mixed-age classes, which were very common in small schools, were lower than those of children educated in single-age classes (op cit., p.109). The report seemed to concur with Gittins' (op.cit.) earlier findings on the arts. In particular, children in infant schools which had at least two-form entry, were found to be better provided for in music and art, while large schools in urban areas were generally found to have better resources for science (op cit., p.109, para.8.9). The report did, however, maintain that levels of performance were more strongly associated with schools' locations rather than their sizes. In fact, the survey found that 60% of inner city schools contained pupils with serious social problems compared with 1% of rural schools (ibid., p.11).

Although mixed-ability teaching was, before the Education Reform Act, a feature of primary education common to virtually all schools, the necessity for small schools to mix age groups as well as abilities within classes is often cited as a further argument against their educational viability. The 1978 Primary Survey (DES, 1978, p.120) observed that:

> "Some schools have so few pupils and teachers that they have no choice but to arrange children in classes which cover more than one school year group."

However, the report acknowledged that some schools, which were not forced to mix age groups because of lack of numbers of pupils on roll, did so anyway. In some cases. these 'mixed-age' classes were an arrangement to keep the numbers in classes fairly even; in other instances the mixing of age groups was "deliberate policy" and was often referred to as "vertical or 'family' grouping" (ibid., p.93, para.7.19). Some schools claimed that vertical grouping enabled children starting school to settle in better

because they entered classes which included many pupils who had already been initiated into school life.

In comparing single-age and mixed-age classes, HMI concluded that for 7 and 11-year-olds, the single-age classes showed a "definite superiority in relating the curriculum to children's capabilities at all ability levels". The 11-year-olds in single-age classes also produced superior scores to children in 'mixed-age' classes for reading and mathematics on NFER tests. For 9-year-olds, no significant differences were found in the assessments, although single age classes tended to show slightly better scores than mixed-age classes. The difference in NFER scores, though less marked for 9-year-olds than for 11-year-olds, "favoured single age classes and was statistically significant" (ibid., p.93, para.7.20).

Bennett et al. (1983) noted that the 1978 HMI survey (op cit.) was the only study to have related achievement to school organisation and cautioned against basing important policy decisions on a single study. It was possible that "the relationship between mixed-age and achievement could be confounded by location" (ibid, p.42). Bennett et al's research indicated that mixed-age organisations were "far more complex than HMI implied" (ibid, p.56).

Nevertheless, the necessity for children to be taught in mixed-age groups in small schools continued to be criticised, notably by the 1982 HMI review of 80 first schools which concluded that "...mixed-age classes present difficulties for a substantial number of teachers", and that "...both the more and less able might suffer some neglect" (DES, 1982, p.59, para.4.16).

It is interesting that this conclusion was drawn at a time when, as stated earlier, many schools were adopting vertical or family grouping systems which created mixed-age classes in both large and small schools. Moreover, some research, including that of

Veenman et al. (1989) in the Netherlands, suggested that mixed-age classes had many advantages:

> "On entering a mixed-age class one might conclude from the seatwork formats that some form of grouped instruction or co-operative (or joint) groupwork takes place. But pupils are rarely, as our findings on setting arrangements reveal, actively engaged in learning directly from one another, or instructed in small groups with the same aptitude dispersion. Each pupil essentially works and achieves alone within a group setting.....The dominant pattern of classroom organisation is whole-class instruction or frontal teaching. It is not only the most prevalent instructional procedure in Dutch mixed classes but also in American, English and German primary classes". (pp.87-88)

The problems of providing a sufficient breadth of educational experiences for children where staffing levels were low were perhaps easier to highlight. The HMI Report on Norfolk Schools in 1984 concluded that it was difficult for small schools [fewer than 60 children on roll] with two or three teachers and limited resources to provide curricula of breadth and intellectual stimulation, but maintained that it was to such schools' great credit that some were managing to do so (DES, 1984).

The 1985 educational White Paper, *Better Schools* (DES, 1985, op cit.), stated that it was inherently difficult for small schools to be educationally satisfactory. As Bell and Sigsworth (1991) argued, "*Better Schools* without genuflecting to Plowden...presented a more hard-edged, content-driven view of what the curriculum ought to look like" (p.15). They went on to maintain that the paper "placed its faith squarely on the benefits of there being a set of subject specialists on the staff, each representing one aspect of the formal curriculum, as the pre-requisite for ensuring the quality of the education provided". Bell and Sigsworth suggested that the thrust of the report indicated that "small schools are intrinsically deficient" (p.15). However, their subsequent commentary makes it clear that this was not the conclusion to which their research led them.

As the Government moved towards the introduction of a national curriculum, the debate over small schools' abilities to deliver a broad-based syllabus grew. In addition,

a Conservative government with a central policy objective of reducing public spending began to look at the costs to the public purse of small schools. It is worth noting that there had been a barely hidden agenda for many years that small schools warranted closure on economic grounds, and many commentators (Grosch, 1988, Bunyan, 1986) suggested that economic rather than educational considerations were behind rationalisation programmes.

It would appear, then, that prior to the 1988 Education Reform Act, there were many questions being raised about school organisation, some of which had a direct bearing upon small primary schools. However, criticisms of organisational structures and curriculum provision, while they were certainly questioned by proponents of small schools, were also countered by those who argued that such schools compensated for any perceived organisational and curricular disadvantages by offering certain social advantages to their pupils.

Social Aspects of Small Primary Schools

Children in small schools, it has been argued (for example, by Plowden, DES, 1967), have few colleagues of the same age and therefore do not develop socially in the ways in which those in larger schools do. When transferring to secondary school the children may, therefore, feel isolated and insecure because they know so few of their new classmates.

There is, however, a large body of literature which not only defends small schools against such criticisms, but which also highlights the small schools' strengths and makes a case for their retention on both educational and social grounds. D'Aeth (1981, p 12), for example, provided a typical viewpoint:

> "...the different ages mix more freely in a small community, as they do in families, and this can have educational advantages. Hence, the number of children is not an over-riding factor from this point of view, unless it is very small; and it can be seen as only one of the circumstances to be taken into account when deciding whether a school should be closed or continued."

D'Aeth did, however, suggest that the number of teachers in a school was a significant factor in determining viability. Certainly, there have been cases made for teachers in small schools suffering from professional and social isolation (see, for example, Ambrose and Baker, 1980; Skinner, 1980; Clark, 1985). Nevertheless, the cohesion which is possible between teachers who are members of small staffs is lauded by Edmunds and Bessai (1978), whose report of their detailed study of two-teacher schools in Cheshire led them to conclude that:

> "...one begins to savour something of the excitement, the glorious spontaneity, the wealth of experience provided in the typical infant class in the small two-teacher schools in Cheshire. A somewhat similar approach is also observable at the junior stage, with cross-linking and cross-fertilisation of various subjects." (pp.2-5)

The advantages to pupils of being educated in small schools have often been related to the extent to which they are given responsibilities. Barker and Gump (1972), writing about schools in the USA, claimed that a much larger proportion of the small school students held positions of importance and responsibility than was the case in larger schools. Similarly, Nash et al. (op.cit, 1976) found that pupils in one-teacher schools derived benefits which might not be available to their counterparts in larger schools:

> "They were given a considerable degree of responsibility by the teachers and were treated by them almost as equals, certainly as persons of greater maturity than if they had been only one of many ten year olds in a larger school. The importance of this in the development of these children must be considerable." (p.18)

Galton and Patrick (1990), too, drew attention to the social benefits of small schools, suggesting that there was "greater social cohesiveness" among children in small schools. The small schools' size, they argued, dictated that older children play and work with younger ones "so that the sharp differentiation between age groups reported in some studies of larger schools (Blyth and Derricott 1977; Meyenn 1980) are not reproduced" (Galton and Patrick, p.17). There was also evidence (Lewes, 1980; Hargreaves, 1990; and Patrick and Hargreaves, 1990) that pupils in small schools were better behaved than their counterparts in larger schools. This may, of course, be due to

socio-economic factors associated with rural and urban life rather than the size of schools attended by children.

Hargreaves, L's (1990) examination of pupil behaviour led her to conclude that the impression sometimes given by the media that disruptive behaviour is a feature of primary schools was not borne out by the *Curriculum PRovision In SMall Schools* (PRISMS) research, a DES funded project which began in 1983 and involved nine local authorities. In fact, very little disruption was observed in the schools in the PRISMS survey. Less than 0.2 per cent of all the observations revealed examples of "children fooling around, or acting so as to distract other children" (p.79). This finding, according to Hargreaves, "reflects both the earlier ORACLE study in which only 0.3 per cent of all observations were of disruptive behaviour or 'horseplay', and Tizard's recent study of thirty-three inner-city infant schools where only 4 per cent of observations involved disruptive behaviour and less than 1 per cent involved aggression (Tizard et al. 1988)" (Hargreaves, p.79). Patrick and Hargreaves' (op cit.) research concluded that pupils spent more time on task and less in distracted behaviour than was the case in the larger schools in the ORACLE study (in Galton and Patrick (eds.), 1990, p.108).

The view of small schools as relatively harmonious places was further expressed later in Hargreaves' work, when she concluded that classrooms in small schools were "relatively tranquil places to work" (p.103). The PRISMS teachers, she found, seemed to be busier than their colleagues in larger schools.

> "They spent more of their time interacting with children, mostly on an individual basis, but gave relatively more attention to groups and the class as a whole than either the ORACLE teachers or the ILEA teachers in more recent studies." (p.103)

Bunyan's (op cit.) passionately pro-small school *The Conspiracy Against Village Schools* made an emotive case for their retention. Statements such as, "If state education is indeed responsible for the drift towards 'the yob society', one solution might be to break up large schools and replace them with smaller schools on the village

pattern" (p.3), demonstrate the depth of feeling aroused by the threat of closure of the local school.

The social advantages of small schools have been debated extensively. Publications which supported small schools, particularly when they were threatened with closure, tended to emphasise their social benefits. Bunyan (ibid.), for example, argued that most small schools experienced no bullying, no vandalism, indiscipline or truancy, while another pro-small schools publication (C.A.R.E. (Cumbria Association for Rural Education), 1978, p.6) also maintained that the social advantages of such schools were significant:

> "Compelling evidence has also been produced to show that relationships in the small school replicate the nature of relationships pertaining in the rural areas outside school. To insist on horizontal peer group relationships is to deny rural culture and to impose the more artificial urban values."

Nash et al (1976) took up a similar theme, painting a picture of rural relationships which one might question over twenty years later, given the demographic changes which have seen the expansion of settlement in such areas of commuters, many with nuclear families:

> "Rural friendships can be seen to be of a vertical kind based on kinship networks and religious affiliation, while those of urban children are horizontal in character and based on the attributes of the children." (p.19)

The question as to whether school size has a direct effect upon pupil attitude is one which is often raised by those who campaign for small schools. Benford (1985) maintained that the secondary headteachers to whom he had spoken had all observed that children from rural schools tended to settle in well; be better disposed to work; and be less prone to exhibiting personal inadequacy than the children from larger schools. He went on to assert that there were long term benefits of rural schools both to children and to the rest of the community:

> "What price may we put on such security, which undoubtedly contributes to later performance all the way into working life and social life, as well as across the ability spectrum... it is vital that some of us begin to accept that there is economic common sense in boosting education budgets today even if the benefit is to social service and inland revenue calculations in 10 to 20 years' time..." (p.16)

Caskie (1983), too, saw social advantages in small schools which, while somewhat intangible, were nonetheless important, arguing that fewer rural than urban children require the care of the social services. Caskie also maintained that vandalism was less prevalent in rural than in urban areas and that less guidance and probation was required. The economic costs of a small school were measurable, according to Caskie, but it was more difficult to determine the social and educational values of retaining local schools.

The costs to a community of closing a small school have been highlighted by many authors, some of whom had a campaigning agenda behind their writing. An example of the concerns expressed may be seen in CARE's (op cit.) views on transporting pupils to school from rural areas rather than providing them with education nearer to home. Their argument is, however, supported by research evidence and is put in a less emotive tone than has sometimes been the case. In a survey of 833 children (mainly of infant age) from 57 rural primary schools in Devon, they found that pupils with transport journeys to and from school "showed poorer social and emotional adjustment than those with walking journeys (even when of roughly equal time) and, furthermore, this effect did not decline with age for the transported children as it did for the walkers" (op.cit., p.7). This, of course, might be posited as an argument both for and against rural schools which must, almost inevitably, draw pupils from a wide area. However, the situation would, it was argued, be exacerbated by closing such schools and making all rural pupils travel to schools away from their villages.

A survey by Waugh (1984) revealed that children who were transported to schools from outside the immediate locality missed out on extra-curricular activities in smaller schools. Interestingly, the research revealed that, although larger schools provided a

greater range of extra-curricular activities, participation levels were higher in smaller schools.

The Schools Council's (1975) study of 65 schools between 1974 and 1975 concluded that good small schools performed useful, sometimes essential, social and educational functions. While it was conceded that not everything the team saw in small schools was of the highest quality in terms of organisation and curriculum, the report maintained that this would be true of any randomly selected group of educational institutions.

Relationships between staff have been given little attention by researchers on school size. One headteacher's (Robson, 1993) experiences of working in schools of different sizes suggest that, where conflict arises in larger schools, the resultant divisions tend to prove less disruptive than those in smaller schools where teachers have little chance of avoiding those with whom they have been in dispute. However, the divisions within larger schools may lead to animosities which virtually produce schools within schools. The views of this headteacher, who moved from a seventy-pupil school to a 300-pupil school in 1982, are interesting and worthy of quotation at length:

> "With inter-departmental strife developed to an art form it was three schools within a school and each department was certain that it was the only one doing the job correctly. Therein, I feel, lies the big difference between the small and large school headship. With the former, anywhere between 25% and 50% of the children come under the head's direct teaching umbrella and, as a skilled practitioner, the head will thus ensure high standards from those children. One staffing change, if the head has been unlucky with his or her inheritance, and the whole school is swung around. In the large school it is necessary to convert hearts and minds, and no matter how talented a teacher one is, a divided, entrenched staffroom demands management skills which are not learnt in the classroom. Patience and good luck play a large part, and until the team in the staffroom is right the children will not get what they deserve." (p.12)

It would seem, then, that there are arguments which suggest that small schools may be able to provide social benefits to staff and pupils which may outweigh the supposed disadvantages which accrue from lack of pupil and teacher numbers. While children may have fewer similarly-aged peers than their counterparts in larger schools, they will.

it is averred, make friendships which are not simply based upon age and they may be given more responsibility within the schools. Teachers, where they co-operate, may be able to work as a more cohesive unit than their colleagues in larger schools, and headteachers may be younger and more enthusiastic than those in larger schools (Bunyan, op cit.). Some of the arguments appear tenuous and based upon emotion and hearsay rather than dispassionate research, but they are nonetheless put forcefully by people with experience of life in small schools.

Academic Attainment in Small Primary Schools

It has been argued (for example, by HMI, DES, 1978 and 1989 and the Audit Commission, HMSO, 1990) that educational provision in small schools may be inferior to that in larger schools, because the limited number of staff does not enable schools to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils. In addition, children have limited numbers of peers of the same age with whom they can work and against whom they can measure their progress. The question of the effect of school size on academic attainment has been explored by a number of researchers but, as Plowden found, "The evidence of research about the attainments of children in schools of varying size is inconclusive" (DES, 1967, para 454). This view seems to have been the general conclusion of many researchers before 1988.

Nash (1978), for example, studied 26 two-teacher schools in rural Wales and concluded that there were no differences between the measured reading attainments of children in two-teacher schools and children in larger schools. Nash also maintained, in an earlier publication, that there was no evidence from surveys of attainment in Wales which indicated depressed attainments of children in small rural schools (Nash, 1977). Having tested the attainments of 600 children in one- and two-teacher schools, Nash (1978) asserted that small rural schools with one or two teachers did not lead to lower standards and that there was no evidence that larger schools provide a better education.

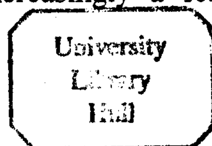
Smith and DeYoung (1988), in the USA, concluded that the size of schools seemed "consistently unrelated to student learning outcomes", although they did feel that there was a case for "the superiority of small schools..." (p.9).

Nash, Williams and Evans (1976), in a study of five one-teacher schools in Wales, did not find evidence of narrow curricula in the schools. Indeed, they reported that:

> "The standards achieved in mathematics seemed perfectly adequate...the visual arts were not neglected...music played an important part in the schools' cultural life...Religious and moral education was a central part of the schools' life." (p.30)

Gittins (op cit.), however, averred that small, isolated, rural schools were "particularly liable to become educationally stagnant" and also suggested that the small, rural school could be "a retreat" which enabled teachers to "escape from the challenge of new ideas and experiment" (op cit., p112, para 7.5.2).

Barker-Lunn (1984), conducting research for the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), found that smaller schools showed interesting differences from larger schools. The smaller schools featured less class teaching and more individual teaching than the larger schools and more practical and modern maths, less English grammar, slightly more project work, more 'free choice' periods and more school visits and field trips. It is interesting to compare this picture of the culture of the small primary school classroom with that of the primary classroom of 2000 in which maths and English grammar work have been prescribed as part of the curriculum, and in which whole class teaching is increasingly a feature, especially in literacy and numeracy.



Although it is difficult to find a strong body of evidence of lower academic standards in small schools before 1988, one should be wary of concluding that school size has no effect on attainment. The influence of demographic changes (see above) which resulted in an increase in the numbers of professional families moving to rural areas, where most small schools are situated, should be considered. The presence of families,

with supportive parents and often well-motivated children, may account for the schools' abilities to match or even exceed the academic standards of their larger, often urban, counterparts.

The smaller classes, which have tended to be a feature of small primary schools, have been cited (see Forward, 1988, xii) as being one of their chief advantages. It has been argued that they enable teachers to spend more time with individual pupils and thereby foster improved academic achievements. However, Galton and Patrick (1990) had reservations about the extent to which teachers exploited these benefits:

> "To teachers the advantages of small classes are logically and emotionally indisputable. The research evidence suggests, however, that these advantages are not always realized in practice." (p.171)

Concern over restricted curriculum provision in small schools is often expressed, although a research project at the University of Aston (Comber et al, 1981) concluded:

> "The fears often expressed about the limited curriculum of small schools received no support from the visits except in the case of science, which is a weakness by no means restricted to small schools." (p.34)

The Schools Council (1983) was a little more guarded when it reported there was evidence that some small schools succeeded in offering as wide a curriculum as large schools. The report went on to state that the evidence showed that small schools could do a great deal to compensate for their size and limited resources, especially when they had the active support of their local authority.

While it may be true that small schools need additional support if they are to provide a broad curriculum, the same might also be said of larger schools. Burstall (1987) examined all published reports of HMI visits to schools made between October 1983 and October 1986 and concluded:

> "From this scrutiny, one point emerged clearly and immediately: no evidence is presented in the reports which supports the view that a small school per se is inherently disadvantaged from an educational standpoint." (p.4)

Galton and Patrick (op cit.) maintained that research into academic standards in small schools has been hampered in the past by inefficient techniques and research designs which failed to take into account numerous independent variables. This weakness has led Nash (1978) to conclude that "There is no overall evidence either way to determine if pupils in small schools under-achieve" (cited in Galton and Patrick, op cit., p.9). The lack of rigorous research is also highlighted by Bell and Sigsworth (op cit., p.86):

> "In the matter of the small rural school size and its alleged disadvantaging effect upon pupil attainment, little beyond rhetorical assertion is used to support the claimed relationship. This is not surprising since unequivocal evidence does not exist..."

Bell and Sigsworth's views on the size of teaching groups are worth noting here:

> "To the extent that the alleged connection between small school size and pupil attainment is, in the light of present knowledge, of doubtful validity, it follows that the implication of the small peer group as a factor depressing pupil performance is similarly dubious. Moreover, it should not pass unnoticed that both higher education institutions and the independent education sector assert exactly the counter thesis to that of small school critics, namely that learning is enhanced by the provision of small teaching groups." (ibid., p.89)

Bell and Sigsworth's conclusions are particularly interesting when looked at in the context of the 1990s when class sizes in many schools rose and became a cause for concern for teachers and their unions, and parent groups. Indeed, reducing class sizes was clearly perceived as an important issue and as a potential vote-winner in 1997 when New Labour pledged money to ensure that Key Stage One classes should not exceed thirty pupils.

However, whilst educators and parents may argue for the retention of small schools on academic and social grounds, ultimately the cost to the tax payer of maintaining schools, which are often described as not financially viable, tends to dominate debate.

Financial Implications of Small Primary Schools

It is often maintained (for example, DES, 1977a) that small schools receive funding which is disproportionate to the numbers of pupils which they educate and that they are, therefore, a burden on government and local education authority finances.

Galton and Patrick (op cit.) suggested that decisions to close small schools were largely political and were influenced by the financial constraints which local authorities experienced. They argued that the criteria on which these financial judgements were made did not necessarily rely upon sound evidence and that, for example, few authorities could "produce figures relating to the global sums spent on small schools as distinct from primary schools as a whole without a great deal of difficulty" (p.174).

A DES survey quoted in the Plowden Report (op cit.) found that areas where school sizes averaged 70 pupils or fewer had high running costs which decreased as sizes reached 120-130 pupils, before increasing again.

Storrs (1980) found that small primary schools took a disproportionate amount of available resources and were "insufficiently resourced compared to the larger urban schools", and that in his own authority it was "twice as expensive to educate a child in a thirty-pupil school, and three times as expensive in a twenty-pupil school, as in the average urban school." (Storrs, in Richards, (ed.), 1980, pp.164-65).

Briault (1979) argued that, "from the financial point of view, the smaller the school the higher the cost, and the greater, therefore, the pressure at some stage to consider its closure" (p.11). He went on: "there is however a legitimately educational factor, which is the professional judgement as to how small a school can be and still be regarded as educationally satisfactory". Briault pointed out that the answer to this question varied widely "as does the judgement of successive Secretaries of State" (p.11).

However, a different point of view was offered by D'Aeth (1981):

> "The arguments against a direct comparison of unit costs are over-riding, for it is inherent in the nature of dispersed rural populations that the delivery of services is bound to involve higher unit costs than in compact urban areas. This applies as much to education as to water, electricity, telephones, gas, transport, health, social services, etc., and there has been no suggestion that these should be cut off unless they can be provided at the same unit costs as in urban areas." (p.18)

Calculations of the cost effectiveness of small schools do not, according to Galton and Patrick (op cit.), take into account "the indirect benefits to the local community" (p.15). They argued that the presence of a school in a village encouraged people to move into an area and that other savings could be made by using the school premises out of school hours for community activities.

Simkins (1980), too, wished to look beyond simplistic views of costing, arguing that costs per pupil in themselves did not reveal the relationship between resources expended and results achieved. He maintained that even if it could be shown that school closures produced savings, the social and educational value of alternative provision had to be taken into account too. However, in a more bald statement on financial viability, Phillips and Williams (1984) stated that "the minimum 'economic' size is probably a one-form entry primary school with 260 pupils" (p.185) and pointed out that costs per pupil rose quite sharply in schools with fewer than 100 pupils, and particularly in those with fewer than fifty pupils.

Reporting on a study which examined curriculum provision in 18 schools in Cambridgeshire, Howells (1982) concluded that there was no evidence to support the view that small schools were any less educationally viable than large schools. The main problem, he argued, was that they were more expensive to run. However, he concluded that while larger schools may be more financially viable, they were not necessarily educationally better and did not take into account individual needs and differences.

Bottery's (1991) assertion (see Introduction) that consideration should be given to issues beyond the financial when considering the value of small schools is illustrated by his view that if the "sense of belonging, of personal fulfilment, and therefore of meaningful contribution to that society is to be effected, then the existence of a community school, playing its part in this, is something which cannot be considered on economic grounds alone" (ibid., p.56). This concern for the community and the welfare of its citizens is summed up neatly by educational psychologist, Hemming (1991, p.9), who propounded the benefits of small schools:

> "Individuals grow, and learn to differentiate themselves positively, in a group of psychologically digestible size; they shrivel and lose personal identity in a crowd."

Nevertheless, financial considerations are usually central to the policy decisions of most governments or local authorities, and any evidence that institutions, which are already more expensive to run than others, may have deficiencies is likely to provide ammunition for those who would wish to rationalise provision. Small schools have been closed in thousands rather than hundreds since the Second World War. It is a matter for debate whether these closures were entirely justifiable on educational and social, as well as financial grounds.

Discussion

Research on school size prior to 1988 provides a range of different and often conflicting conclusions. Criticisms of small schools, based upon a supposed narrowness of the curriculum, have been countered by research which suggests that the curricula of schools of all sizes was broadly the same before the 1988 Act. Patrick and Hargreaves (op cit.), for example, found that the similarities between small and large schools were much greater than the differences and added that, "In answer to the question 'Are small schools different?' we have to conclude that, in general, they are not" (ibid., p.109).

In the same volume, Galton and Patrick concluded that the extent to which small and large schools differed was less than the differences which existed "between two local authorities, between different age ranges, and more importantly, between schools within a local authority" (p.173). This statement was made at a time when teachers' *licensed autonomy* (Dale, 1989) allowed many considerable opportunities to determine the nature of the curriculum to be taught in their classes, free from the statutory demands of the National Curriculum, which was introduced following the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). It will be interesting to see if the similarities have grown, persisted or diminished in subsequent years.

There would appear, nevertheless, to be a substantial body of authoritative opinion which has found small schools to be wanting in a number of areas. Indeed, Bell and Sigsworth (op cit.), two proponents of small school education, acknowledged this when they wrote:

> "If all the criticisms which the official perspective levels at the small rural school are brought together, they represent summatively a charge that it represents a defective and inherently disadvantaging element in the national system." (p.31)

However, one must set against the arguments put forward for reducing the number of small schools on cost and academic grounds, the growing lobby of support for the small school. Bell and Sigsworth summed up the problem which faces anyone evaluating the viability of small schools when they maintained that small schools in rural areas would continue to appear educationally deficient as long as they were thought of as being simply smaller versions of large urban schools. Nevertheless, in the post-Education Reform Act period, small schools are expected to provide the same curriculum as larger schools and any failure to do so might provide ammunition for those who seek their closure on economic as well as academic grounds.

Although much research evidence has, until recently, suggested that small schools do not necessarily disadvantage their pupils and, indeed, may offer many advantages, it is important that the place of the small school be re-examined in the light of recent

legislation. The 1988 Education Reform Act placed many additional demands upon schools and the statutory requirement to teach nine foundation subjects, in particular, may have serious implications for the future of small schools. This will be examined in Chapters, Six, Seven, Eight and Nine.

However, before this can be considered, it is important that other issues are examined: in particular the role of teachers and headteachers and how these were affected by school size before 1988. The limited sizes of staffs in small schools, it has been argued (Skinner, 1980, p.56), inhibited professional development and did not provide teachers with the stimulation to experiment and to learn from colleagues. Since small schools are usually situated in rural areas, geographical isolation may also have restricted opportunities for visits to teachers' centres and attendance at courses. With this in mind, in the next chapter the role of the headteacher will be examined and an attempt will be made to establish how this was affected by the size of the school in which he or she worked.

This will be followed, in Chapter Three, by an examination of the ways in which teachers in small primary schools in the pre-ERA period worked, and research which looked at the similarities and differences between teachers in schools of different sizes will be discussed. Once these important issues have been examined, the effects of the changes which followed the 1988 Act, and the ways in which schools of different sizes were able to cope with them, will be studied.

CHAPTER TWO

THE EVOLUTION OF THE ROLE OF THE PRIMARY HEADTEACHER BEFORE THE 1988 EDUCATION REFORM ACT

"The head [of the 19th century public school] came to be seen as the embodiment of the school, and he came to enjoy a status and prestige both within and without the school which made for a peculiarly British conception of headship and organisation in the school, which was naturally transmitted to the state schools."
(Bottery, 1988, p.107)

This chapter will explore, briefly, the historical development of the role of headteacher and will attempt to establish how the nature of the job has changed. In seeking to understand the nature of the role of the headteacher in a small primary school at the end of the 20th century, it is worthwhile examining the changing role of headteachers in all schools since the 19th century when, Bernbaum (1976) argues, the unique position of the head emerged. In developing an understanding of the evolution of the headteacher's role, the subsequent research on headteachers in small primary schools after 1988 will be provided with background and context.

It is interesting to note some of the similarities between the roles assumed by some headteachers in the 19th and early 20th centuries, often in large schools, and the role which heads have been expected to adopt in many small primary schools since the Second World War. In particular, the 19th century head's limited number of colleagues, the existence of mixed-age classes, and the need to use limited finances to deliver the curriculum while attracting new pupils, have much in common with the demands made upon more recent holders of the post.

The Developing Role of the Headteacher in the 19th Century

Until the 19th century, the head was often the only employee of the trustees of a school. In many schools there were no other staff and few pupils, the wealthier parents preferring private tutors for their eldest sons.

The headteacher was frequently responsible for teaching all the pupils in a school and was often referred to as the *schoolmaster* rather than as the *headmaster*, given his role as *master* of the boys. Assistant masters might be appointed by the head to help with the teaching, but these people had no authority of their own. The schoolmaster was, therefore, reliant, according to Bernbaum, upon "force, or the threat of force" (op cit., p.12) in his attempts to retain order.

The numbers of pupils taught in one room by the schoolmaster could be immense by modern standards. When Marlborough opened in 1843, the schoolmaster taught 180 boys in one room, and the master taught a similar number at Eton in 1820.

Dissatisfaction with the state of many of the major public schools, which had grown by the middle of the 19th century, led to a changing role for headteachers. There were complaints about the curriculum, the ways in which schools were financed, and about poor sanitation, as well as about the brutality of the schools' regimes. The Public Schools Commission was set up in 1861 to investigate the nine major public schools, and the Schools Enquiry Commission in 1864 did the same for other endowed or old-established grammar schools.

Bernbaum argued that the Clarendon Commission's investigations were "especially significant in strengthening the position of the head over the internal organisation of his school" (p.13). An increasing number of laymen took up headships and the general effect was "to encourage the view that the head was a man of responsibility who ought to be granted a free hand" (ibid., p.13).

Falling land values in the later 19th century reduced income to schools from endowments and they became increasingly dependent for their incomes on fees. Heads had, therefore, to adopt an entrepreneurial approach to attracting pupils to their schools. Decisions about staffing and the state of buildings had to be based on assessments of

what would make the school attractive to prospective parents. Schools also faced increased competition for pupils from the new Higher Grade Elementary schools where education was much less costly. Bernbaum (ibid, p.17) maintained:

> "Under these conditions the generally dominant role of the head within the school developed. The 'free hand' given to the head in the context of an uncertain financial future concentrated much of the important decision-making capacity. Thus the head was in a position to decide about the size and quality of the teaching staff, the amount of his own teaching, the numbers of pupils admitted, the extent of the boarding arrangements, and the overall 'tone' and 'image' of the school."

The heads, therefore, became experts in all aspects of the life and work of the schools. However, this autonomy was to be reduced in the early years of the 20th century in state or locally financed schools, following the 1902 Local Education Authorities' and Central Board of Education's increased involvement in education.

Headteachers in the 20th Century

The appointment of an inspectorate to ensure that capitation grants from the Board were being well-spent ensured that heads had to preoccupy themselves with providing education which would be approved by the inspectors. In 1914, half of the inspectors for secondary schools had no teaching experience, with the majority being drawn from the major public schools and the old universities. Not surprisingly, the inspectors sought the same qualities and curricula that they had encountered in their own schooling. Thus classics and literary aspects of the curriculum were emphasised, while scientific, technical and commercial elements of the Higher Grade Schools were regarded as less important.

During the inter-war years public money was increasingly available for secondary schools and heads became more confident about the supply of pupils. This, according to Bernbaum, meant that heads of such schools "could [for almost the first time] attempt to match their superior counterparts in general leadership and emphasis upon moral qualities" (ibid., pp.19-20).

Peters (1976) argued that, by the time of the 1944 Education Act, headteachers found themselves faced by a dilemma. Many may have wished to adopt a democratic style of leadership, but the Ministry drew up a draft instrument which defined their roles as being responsible for "the internal organisation, management and discipline of the school" and stated that they should exercise "supervision over the teaching and non-teaching staff" (p.6). Peters maintained that the fact that heads had "ultimate responsibility for everything that goes on" made them reluctant to put themselves in positions where they might be held responsible for "disasters arising from policies with which they have no personal sympathy" (ibid., p.6). This is an interesting conclusion to be drawn about heads' attitudes over fifty years ago, given the compulsion to implement mandated and often controversial government policies of which there was a plethora in the 1980s and 1990s.

As the grammar schools increasingly became staffed by good honours graduates with subject specialisms, the pedagogic element of the head decreased and the leadership role was enhanced. Although local authorities were now more responsible for the power of dismissal, heads retained control over their teachers through the testimonial and reference system at a time of high unemployment. The influence of the LEAs and politicians grew as rising costs of school buildings and materials and shortages of teachers for some subjects increased. Bernbaum considered that increased militancy from teacher unions also served to threaten the head's status and powers.

Pollard (1985) maintained that primary headteachers enjoyed "very great autonomy over many aspects of teaching processes and curriculum decisions" (pp.103-4) once most schools were no longer constrained by following curricula which were dictated by the need to prepare children for the eleven plus examinations. following widespread conversion of grammar and secondary modern schools into comprehensives during the 1960s and 1970s. There was, therefore, according to Grace (1995), considerable scope for innovative headteachers to institute radical change. Grace saw headteachers as

having significant institutional powers which made them "a force to be reckoned with in English schooling culture" (p.96).

Educational legislation in the 1980s had profound effects upon the role of the primary headteacher. The role was diverse and susceptible to the effects of externally imposed changes. These changes have not been confined to curricular reform. It will be seen, in Chapters Four and Six, that heads have been required to assume greater responsibility for their schools' budgets as well as for a range of other aspects of school management, many of which were previously the preserve of local education authorities. Moreover, heads have been forced, sometimes unwillingly, to involve governors in decision-making to a greater extent (Taylor Report, DES, 1977b; DES, 1992), and parents' increased rights to choose schools for their children have meant that an element of competition between schools has also developed.

As the intensity of educational change increased, the question arose as to whether it continued to be feasible for one person to assume responsibility for all aspects of running a school. Indeed, as long ago as 1980, Coulson argued:

> "In view of the complexity of the educational enterprise in modern society, it is no longer desirable or practicable for the heavy responsibility of controlling and directing a school to be placed upon a single individual - the head." (p.287)

The role of the headteacher evolved as educational changes affected the tasks which had to be carried out. It has been seen that heads assumed considerable responsibility for all aspects of school life in the 19th century, but that the rise of the local education authorities in the 20th century reduced heads' responsibilities. As the 1988 Education Reform Act began to take shape and there were predictions of reduced powers for LEAs, headteachers' roles were set to change once again. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries schools have varied in size and the headteacher's role has been affected by this, with heads in small schools continuing to have considerable responsibility for teaching, while those in large schools moved away from being the leading teacher to assuming the role of senior manager.

School Size and the Role of the Headteacher

One of the frequent criticisms of small schools has centred on the limited scope for the headteacher to delegate responsibilities for aspects of the curriculum to subject specialists. Whilst it may be desirable for heads to delegate responsibility to other members of staff, this may be easier to achieve in larger schools where more people are available to take on additional responsibilities and where such extra work may be more easily rewarded financially. Small school heads, with small staffs and limited funds available for salary enhancement, may be less able to persuade colleagues to take on additional duties. Thus, those heads who have the greatest teaching loads (see Chapter Seven) may find that they are disadvantaged compared with their counterparts in larger schools in their ability to delegate.

Davies (1975) argued that a headship in small school "enables a teacher to be at the same time and in the fullest sense, teacher and administrator" (p.76). However, the administrative burden has grown to such an extent since Davies' publication that heads may feel that they are no longer able to perform either role effectively. The West Glamorgan Working Party on *Resourcing the Small School* (1985) concluded that the central problem in the role of teaching head was the conflict of interest created by the dual role of manager and teacher, responsible for a class. The report maintained that, at certain times, the conflicting roles imposed unreasonable demands on the headteacher and restricted educational opportunities for children.

The importance of the head's role as a classroom teacher and, therefore, as an example to colleagues, has traditionally been a significant feature of headship. Indeed, a Commons Select Committee (1986) recommended that every primary head should be legally compelled to do some teaching. Coulson (op cit. p.288) summed up the emphasis placed upon this aspect of headship:

"It is part of the traditional concept of headship in Britain that the head is considered a teacher rather than an administrator (an emphasis symbolized by the word headteacher). Because of this, most heads subordinate administrative means of shaping their schools to interpersonal strategies. In particular, the head expects to influence teachers by his own example and to persuade them to identify with his aims and methods."

It was, perhaps, the extent of the headteacher's teaching role rather than its existence which exercised the minds of those involved with small schools. While heads may have wished to take on class teaching and may have felt that this was central to their role, those who worked in schools which required them to teach for all, or virtually all, of the school day may have felt aggrieved that they did not have the same amounts of time set aside for administrative, management and pastoral work as their colleagues in larger schools. Iniquities were felt even more acutely when LEAs were compared. As long ago as 1967, the Plowden Report (DES, 1967, para. 938) asserted:

"There are striking differences between authorities on the size of school in which headteachers are expected to take charge of a class. In some areas, the head must teach full time when there are as many as 200 children in the school; in others, he is free of a class in a school of 100 or fewer. We are clear that, except in one class schools, all heads need part time assistance so that they can get to know both children and parents and advise staff, including probationers."

The head's role as a teacher must, inevitably, have reduced the opportunities which he or she had to devote to other aspects of the role. Walsh et al. (1984) maintained that heads felt that the following areas would suffer if they had an increased teaching commitment:

* meeting other teachers and working with them in the classroom;
* dealing with emergencies such as ill children;
* clerical and administrative work;
* curriculum development work;
* liaison with secondary schools;
* planning;
* meeting parents;
* relations with psychological and welfare services.

One might begin to question whether the headteacher of a small primary school could fulfil his or her role adequately, given a virtually full-time teaching commitment, if the demands which Walsh lists were central to that role. Indeed, given the additional demands which have been made since 1984, the problem might be expected to have increased.

Southworth (1987, p.63) discussed the head's teaching role as it impinged upon the teaching of colleagues:

> "...on becoming a head the person may feel that their teaching is of such an order that it is worthy of emulation by others...The head is not just the leader of the school, s/he is now the leading exemplar of the school."

This position as an example to other members of staff may have been threatened if the head was preoccupied with the non-teaching aspects of his or her post. A further problem in the small school may, then, have been the limited opportunities for other members of staff to observe the head's teaching. In a large school, where he or she may not be specifically timetabled to teach a class, it may have been possible for the head to work alongside teachers. However, in the small school doing so would have involved finding a replacement teacher for the head's class. Perhaps it was for this reason that the head's good practice may not always be translated into good practice by other members of staff. Thus, Reid et al (1988, p.81) reported that HMI had found a small school in which the headteacher's good practice was not emulated by the rest of the staff. Reid et al. responded to this finding by arguing that:

> "The lack of guidelines may be due, in this and other schools, to the lack of time needed for their adequate formulation. There is a limit to which good practice will permeate from the headteacher's classroom without strong supportive strategies."

Harvey's (1986, p.64) findings, too, suggested that it was not surprising that good practice did not always filter through to all staff in small schools:

> "In small rural schools compared with all other types of school, relatively little time was spent on contacts with staff...this applies both to teaching and non-teaching staff."

It may appear surprising that contacts between staff could be limited in a small school, given the close proximity in which teachers must almost inevitably work. However, non-teaching time in a small school may often be taken up with duties which restrict contact. In a two-teacher school, for instance, the head may have to use breaks and lunch times to catch up on telephone calls and administration and one of the teachers will inevitably be on playground duty at every break. However, the head's role as a class teacher also conferred some advantages according to Bell and Sigsworth (1987), who maintained that the teaching headteacher accrued certain benefits from being seen by his or her colleagues as a class teacher. They asserted that:

> "Because the headteacher is as much at the chalk face as his teachers, he shares their working life and experiences the same problems. Further, because he is a classroom practitioner, his class teachers cannot claim sole rights to the delivery of classroom quality. In that endeavour, headteacher and class teacher are equal partners."
> (pp.132-133)

Bell and Sigsworth conceded that they were unable to find research which demonstrated the implications of the influence which heads and their staffs could "wield over each other" (ibid., p.133), but they did point out some of the possible scenarios which may have arisen according to the way in which the head chose to stress his or her role. For example, they maintained that considerable teacher isolation would occur in a small school in which a junior-trained head sought to influence practice of an infant-trained teacher. In such circumstances, the latter's resistance to what might be regarded as "unenlightened intrusion" (p.134) could result in the teacher asserting her right to exercise her professional expertise.

The supposed intimacy which a small staff might superficially, at least, seem to promote, may be questioned in the light of research which suggests that heads in small schools may have become so preoccupied with their own teaching that they were unable to work closely with colleagues. This is a point which will be returned to in Chapter Seven and is an aspect of small school headship which is highlighted by the head of Newby Primary School in Chapter Nine.

Wallace and Butterworth (1987) reported that while heads of small schools had no management tasks to perform which were unique to them, "achievement of their management tasks is affected by factors which in combination are specific to the context in which they work" (p.58). It is possible, they argued, that school size is a key determinant of the relative order of importance of the management task areas.

Harvey's (op.cit.) survey of 32 primary heads demonstrated some of the problems which teaching heads faced due to interruptions to their work. He found that the small rural school head was interrupted less often than average, possibly because he or she spent more time teaching pupils and so was less available to be interrupted. Heads of large urban schools were also interrupted less often than average, "...possibly because there was a full-time secretary to absorb some of the potential interruptions and keep the head more closely to a planned set of engagements" (p.62).

However, there were also arguments which suggested that small schools may have benefited from their size when recruiting headteachers. Plowden (DES, op cit.), for example, found that small schools' place at the foot of the promotion ladder for headteachers could provide them with distinct advantages:

> "Enterprising teachers, who want to try fresh ideas, often prefer headships in a country school, with responsibility for a class, to a deputy headship or a graded post in a larger school and this is bringing new strength to some small schools."
>
> (para 475)

This view provides an interesting contrast with those expressed by some heads in Chapter Nine in 1998, when small school headship seemed to have lost some of its attractions, and gives an insight into the extent to which the impressions of school leadership have changed.

The virtual demise of selection at eleven and the consequent freedom in determining the curriculum which followed in the late 1960s and continued in the 1970s and early

1980s, presented headteachers with opportunities to create schools *in their own image*, perhaps to a greater extent than had been possible for many years. However, the concurrent changes in attitudes to leadership allowed classroom teachers a greater say in the running of many schools, and may have served, in some cases, to diminish the headteacher's role from being one of *leader* to one of *facilitator*.

However, as will be shown in Chapter Five, the so-called 'progressive' movement began to be questioned with the publications of the Black Papers (Cox and Dyson, 1969). Scepticism grew following the events at William Tyndale school between 1974 and 1976 and the publication of research by Bennett (1976), which was widely interpreted as suggesting that 'traditional' didactic teaching methods were more effective than progressive methods.

By 1976 Prime Minister, James Callaghan, was questioning the content of the curricula in schools in his Ruskin College speech and promoting a *Great Debate* in education. With the election of a Conservative government in 1979, the pressure to change and make more uniform what was taught in schools grew. Increased powers were given to governors following the Taylor Report (op cit.), and the Government introduced measures which it maintained would increase parental choice and raise educational standards by exposing schools to market forces in their recruitment of pupils.

Discussion

The perception of the nature of headship was refined in the post-Second World War period, with the established orthodoxy of the traditional leadership role being challenged both by teachers and headteachers. Indeed, the 1970s HMI report, *Ten Good Schools*, commended as good practice consultative decision-making rather than hierarchical direction by the headteacher. Grace (op cit., p.194), however, argued that changes in notions of leadership brought with them certain problems:

> "Among the contradictions was the fact that, in most cases, the introduction of a more democratic and consultative style of school leadership depended in the first instance upon an exercise of hierarchical initiative by the headteacher."

This is one of the contradictions which will be discussed in later chapters in the light of the educational changes with which schools were faced, particularly after 1988. The changes in education and the challenges to current practices were substantial in the early 1980s, but it was the advent of the Education Reform Act (ERA) in 1988 which was to have the greatest impact upon schools and their teachers and headteachers. The legal obligation to introduce a prescriptive new curriculum meant that headteachers had to review their leadership roles and determine how they could meet statutory requirements in the face of unease, or possibly hostility, from their staffs.

Craig (1989) envisaged a changing role for headteachers which he summed up concisely:

> "The term headteacher in the 1990s will become a misnomer. The task of headship is management and much more than about being a good teacher." (p.9)

However, any move to make the headteacher more of a manager than a teacher would inevitably have implications for the heads of small schools whose opportunities for managerialism may be restricted by their teaching commitments. In any case, the demands of managing a key element such as the teaching staff may be quite different in small schools, where staff numbers are limited, from large schools with large teaching staffs.

In the next chapter, the role of the teacher in the small school will be examined to determine if there were significant differences between primary teachers in schools of different sizes before the Education Reform Act.

CHAPTER THREE

TEACHERS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS BEFORE THE 1988 EDUCATION REFORM ACT

> *"Teachers in small rural schools may not suffer from the stresses and problems of inner city schools, but may appear to feel a sense of professional isolation and can lack the stimulus of a staff of reasonable size with easy access to in-service training and to facilities for further study."*
> (Skinner, 1980, p.56)

In Chapter One, it was shown that many of the criticisms of small primary schools before 1988 were connected with the view that they were less able to provide a broad and balanced curriculum than colleagues in larger schools. This was attested to be due to their lack of a range of expertise which arose simply because there were so few teachers in each school (see for example DES, 1967; Terrell and Gillies, 1986). It was further argued that teachers in small schools had different characteristics from those in larger schools, and that they often felt isolated from fellow professionals.

This chapter will examine research on teachers in small primary schools before 1988 in order to establish the veracity of these claims in the pre-ERA period. The chapter focuses on the pre-ERA period because it is important to see the position of teachers in small schools before significant educational changes affected the roles of all teachers. This subject will be returned to in Chapter Eight, in order to examine the ways in which school size affects teachers' abilities to cope with revisions to the curriculum within a changing educational context.

According to Williams, P (1989), the teacher in the small rural school faced various pressures in addition to those encountered by teachers in larger urban schools. He suggested that the teacher may:

"- experience a degree of geographic isolation
- have less resources
- have less prospect of internal promotion
- have a wider role definition
- work with a wider vertical grouping
- teach the same group for 3 or 4 years."
(p.274)

In the following pages many of these problems will be examined in the light of research on small schools before the Education Reform Act of 1988.

The Characteristics of Teachers in Small Schools

Age and Experience of Teachers

Many commentators, pre-1988, argued that teachers in small schools differed from those in larger schools. For example, Plowden (1967) reported "We have been told that the average age of the village teacher is rather higher than that of all teachers" (DES, para 47). Burstall's (1987, p.2) research would seem to support the Plowden findings of twenty years earlier. She wrote:

> "Teachers in the small schools were, on average, older than those in the large schools and tended therefore to have had greater teaching experience, particularly with primary-age children. They tended to live in the village which the school served and to play an important role in the life of the community. Teachers in the large schools tended to live some distance from their place of employment and often had few points of contact with the community in which the school was situated."

Galton and Patrick's *Curriculum PRovision In SMall Schools* (PRISMS) research (1990), which was largely concerned with the pre-1988 period, sought to discover if the stereotypical views of teachers in small schools were well-founded and, in particular, if the teachers "tended to be older, not very well qualified, isolated from new developments, and to remain in post for longer than average" (Galton and Patrick, 1990, p.167). Their detailed research contradicted the traditional view of the small school teacher. They found:

> "... the prevailing myths...that teachers in small schools were older, more resistant to change, and unlikely to be interested in new curriculum developments were not sustained from this comparative survey of a sample of teachers in both large and small schools from nine local authorities where the PRISMS research took place."
> (p.167)

However, Patrick (1991) found that over 60% of the teachers in the small schools sampled were aged 40 or over and 75% were women, a proportion similar to the national population of primary teachers, although teachers in small schools were slightly older on average (p.60). Headteachers, however, were found to be younger than average and were more likely to be in their first headship than heads in primary schools generally. This finding is hardly surprising, given that salaries for headteachers were, and continue to be, based on school size, with heads of larger schools being more highly paid than those in smaller schools. However, the relative inexperience of the headteachers contrasted with the relative experience of their staffs, and the implications of this for management of small schools may be an area for further research. It is worth noting that three of the five heads of large schools whose interviews are reported in Chapter Nine had previously been heads of smaller schools, and that headship of a small school has often been regarded as a stepping stone on the route to other positions (DES, 1967).

Patrick (ibid.), concurred with Government statistics (DES, 1984, p.7), when she reported that about a quarter of the teachers in small schools were graduates and that they were slightly more likely than average to have degrees. It is interesting that the move towards an all graduate profession following the James Report (1972) would seem to have made it much more likely that schools with relatively young staffs would have a higher proportion of graduates. However, small schools seem to have had slightly older staffs, and yet their teachers appear to have been more likely to be more highly qualified than those in larger schools. This may be because headteachers, who tend to be among the most highly qualified members of the teaching profession. formed a higher proportion of the teaching staff in small schools.

Galton and Patrick (op cit.) maintained that, given their findings that PRISMS teachers differed little from their colleagues in larger, urban schools in training, background and views, "it is only to be expected that the content and manner of delivery of the curriculum in small schools should be similar to that in larger ones" (op cit., p.74). One might question whether the differing clienteles in small, rural primary schools and large, urban schools might have influenced the ways in which the curriculum was delivered. For example, the fact that primary classes in small schools were made up of children from different age groups might affect teachers' styles of teaching, compared with those in larger schools with single-age classes.

Teachers in small schools were, however, likely to be more experienced than colleagues in larger schools, and Galton and Patrick (op cit.) found that those teaching in small schools had experienced teaching a wider age range of pupils in more schools than teachers from larger schools.

Teacher Isolation and the Provision of In-Service Training

If schools operate as autonomous, independent units, it would seem logical to suppose that those with the smallest staffs would also be those where teachers felt most isolated from professional developments and from their counterparts in other schools. However, before the Education Reform Act introduced local management of schools (LMS) and the possibility to opt out of local authority control, the majority of schools had traditionally been the ultimate responsibility of local education authorities (LEAs), and many of these LEAs had developed initiatives specifically aimed at small schools in order to counter teacher isolation. This section will examine research on teacher isolation and the extent to which it may be seen as a phenomenon which was prevalent in smaller schools before 1988. Clark (1985, p.45) summed up the nature of isolation:

> "...isolation is a complex factor and can be imposed or self-enforced. It can affect all who live and work in the country, but to some, who have chosen it, or been brought up with it, it may present no problem. This can be true of teachers, many of whom find life in an isolated rural school idyllic. Others find it depressing, insular and debilitating in its effect on them and their pupils".

It is interesting that Clark should have regarded isolation as not necessarily being a pejorative term. Nevertheless, reports by local education authorities showed that some teachers in small schools did perceive professional isolation to be a problem. For example, the Schools Council Committee for Wales noted, in 1983, that "professional isolation is a familiar item on the list of problems of small rural schools" (p.11). The report gave as one of the aims of the Llangefni cluster group to "try to overcome the feeling of isolation and lack of professional development experienced by most teachers in two or three teacher schools" (ibid., p.11).

North Yorkshire County Council, in reporting on its Education Support Grants (ESG) projects in Swaledale and Eskdale, also gave *overcoming teachers' professional isolation* as one of the purposes of its support groups (Eskdale and Swaledale Projects, 1988). Similarly, Norfolk's report on its Rural Schools' Federation regarded one of its aims as breaking down isolation (Norfolk Rural Schools' Federation, 1989).

Given the content of so many reports, it is easy to conclude that professional isolation was a serious problem in small schools. However, Clark (op cit.) suggested that "Perhaps the real professional isolation is in the mind of the teacher himself" (pp.46-47). In other words, teachers were told frequently that professional isolation was a problem for those working in small schools so, inevitably, many of them believed this to be the case and, when questioned, identified isolation as a major difficulty.

Bell and Sigsworth (1987) suggested that, although teacher isolation was often regarded as a problem associated with rural schools, it may have been symptomatic of conditions encountered in all schools, and be dependent upon the characters and personalities of individual teachers, and caused by the very nature of teaching as a profession (Ross, 1980; Rosenholtz and Kyle, 1984). Most schools were, and continue to be, designed with individual classrooms which may be shut off from the rest of the school when the door is closed. Even some of those which are open-plan in design

often seem to acquire screens and other partitioning devices, as teachers seek to segregate themselves and their classes from others. There may be perfectly sound educational justifications for this but, nevertheless, such strategies suggest that many teachers may seek isolation from their peers for much of their working day. Professional isolation may, therefore, be a problem found in both urban and rural schools. Indeed, Sigsworth (1984) found, in his study of relationships in three small primary schools, that the teachers felt that they had experienced far greater isolation when they had worked in larger schools.

Hartley (1985) suggested that teachers often took advantage of the isolation afforded them by virtue of their often being able to work autonomously, in order to resist changes desired by the headteacher. He did not, however, identify this phenomenon as being peculiar to small schools and drew upon a study of a large primary school in Scotland where he found:

> "It was the very isolation of the teacher in her classroom that prevented [the head] from closely ensuring that his policy was being realized. Teachers are adept at publicly assenting to the official wisdom and privately proceeding in their own classrooms in quite divergent ways." (p.52)

Ross (op cit.), too, identified teachers' attempts to retain autonomy through "spatial isolation". He wrote of "a pervasive phenomenon that manifests itself in myriad boundary maintenance activities all of which function to reduce the influence [of the headteacher] upon their individual practices" (p.220).

Rosenholtz and Kyle's (op cit.) view of teacher isolation, based on research in the USA, is interesting in that isolation in America, too, was not deemed to apply specifically to teachers in small schools:

> "Teacher isolation is more than just a physical separation. In isolated settings, there is a shared sense that teachers alone are responsible for running their classrooms, and they are accorded and accord to others full responsibility for doing so." (p.10)

Galton and Patrick (op cit.) did, however, find examples of professional isolation in some small rural schools and discovered that, among those who completed questionnaires, the teachers working in small schools were significantly more likely to agree with the statement, *My job gives me little opportunity to make personal contact with other teachers.* However, Galton and Patrick qualified this as result of their observations, maintaining that they had discovered little evidence in their research to support such a view, possibly because teachers were aware of the danger of isolation. It is this awareness of the potential problems which may account for research findings which counteract what might be thought to have been a problem for teachers in small schools. It would appear that many schools and LEAs took positive steps to reduce potential isolation. The PRISMS teachers were, for example, slightly more likely than others to have stated that they had opportunities to meet teachers from other schools, and most heads had opportunities to meet other heads. Galton and Patrick also discovered that small schools were no less likely to be visited by LEA advisers or inspectors than larger schools. However, teachers in the study who discussed the advisory service felt that the advisers were often too busy to be of much help.

Patrick's (1990) research cast further doubts upon the view that teachers in small schools had little chance to observe each other at work compared with their counterparts in larger schools:

> "Within their own schools PRISMS teachers were just as likely as their colleagues elsewhere to report that they had opportunities to observe each other at work, and more likely to report that they could observe the headteacher at work." (p.30)

This is a particularly interesting finding, given the assertions reported in the previous chapter (Harvey, 1986, Reid, Bullock and Howarth, 1988) that heads in small schools had limited opportunities to be observed teaching by colleagues.

When examining heads' opportunities to work alongside colleagues, it should not be assumed that communications were better in small schools than in large schools. One teacher's involvement in playground supervision at every break may militate against

discussion of curriculum matters. In addition, the administrative burden placed on the head, which may well have taken up time at the beginning and end of the school day and at lunchtime because of teaching commitments, may prohibit discussion at other times too. HMI (DES, 1985, ibid.) found, in one two-teacher school, that contact between the head and her colleague was limited to informal talk. The lack of systematic consultation and the practice of holding separate class assemblies engendered a sense of professional isolation.

Galton and Patrick (op cit.), however, concluded that their findings suggested that teachers in small schools were not unduly isolated or lacking in opportunities to encounter new ideas. While they had fewer colleagues immediately at hand in school, "they were by no means cut off from teachers in the neighbourhood, and they make as much use of the opportunities available to them for professional development as do their colleagues in other schools" (ibid, p.30).

Ambrose and Baker (1980) suggested that problems did exist for teachers in small schools, and that in-service training was particularly important for such people. They argued that the expectation that teachers in small rural schools could demonstrate the full range of understanding for curriculum change and implementation was largely unfounded. Rural isolation, according to Ambrose and Baker, imposed limitations on teachers' maintenance of professional contact with colleagues from other schools, with geographically distant teachers' centres and institutes of higher education and limited opportunities for extended teacher release being further areas for concern. They maintained that the roles of advisers and in-service tutors in helping to identify areas for INSET work were far more important for rural than for urban schools.

This lack of provision may account for the conservatism of practice which some commentators associated with teachers in small schools. Galton and Patrick's (op cit.) research led them to argue there were few courses which enabled teachers to examine "classroom organization and pedagogy with specific reference to the problems of

teaching in small schools" (p.177). In view of this, they found it unsurprising that local evaluation reports concluded that "four years after the start of these ESG [Education Support Grants] programmes there is little sign of any sizeable shift in practice or in attitudes to children's learning" (ibid., p.177).

The question of providing in-service training which was appropriate to the particular needs of teachers in small schools was considered further by Galton and Patrick, who maintained that teachers in small schools received little in-service training "specifically related to their special circumstances" (p.170). They argued that teachers therefore applied the organisational methods they learnt during their teacher training and which they had used in larger schools, "...methods which were largely derived in the aftermath of the Plowden Report to cope with the demise of streamed classrooms and the prevalence of mixed-ability grouping" (p.170).

Evidence collected from PRISMS and non-PRISMS teachers (a random sample of teachers in 102 larger schools in the same nine local authorities as the PRISMS schools) showed that over 80% had attended one or more in-service course during the current school year. Over a quarter of the teachers had been on courses lasting for more than five days, and 20% had attended courses which extended over more than ten evenings. Headteachers in PRISMS schools were "significantly less likely to have recently attended a course on management though only slightly less likely to have ever attended courses for heads or prospective heads" (op cit., p.29).

The majority of PRISMS teachers, when interviewed, however, seemed satisfied with opportunities for professional development within their locality and "most said they were able to go on courses in which they were interested" (ibid, p.29). It is clear that in the post-ERA primary school culture in-service training has been conceived as something to which all teachers should have access. Indeed, the introduction of five training days (popularly known as *Baker Days*) following the ERA was a clear indication of the importance the Government placed upon this.

Teachers in Small Primary Schools and the Curriculum

In examining the effect which school size had upon ability to provide a broad curriculum, it is interesting to look at the performance of small schools in relation to science, a subject which many commentators have argued was neglected in primary schools before the introduction of the National Curriculum made it a compulsory part of the curriculum. Terrell and Gillies (1986) reported that one LEA had found that the amount of science teaching in its schools was low, and that it was felt to be particularly so in two- or three-teacher rural primary schools. Staff development was difficult because many of the teachers in these schools worked a long way from teachers' centres. Terrell and Gillies added that:

> "...because of their small size, the staff did not have easy access to a range of colleagues of varying expertise. As a consequence staff often felt professionally isolated in some subject areas and unable to respond to calls for updating their skills or learning new ones." (p.91)

The authors, however, provided scant evidence for their assertion that teachers in small schools were less able to provide a science curriculum than those in larger schools. Indeed, they cited Assessment of Performance Unit (APU) reports (APU, 1981, 1983) which showed that a significant number of primary school teachers in schools of all sizes included very little science in the curriculum, and claimed that lack of knowledge and basic training were the most commonly given as reasons for this (see Bradley, 1976; Bassey, 1981).

The Leverhulme Primary Survey (Bennett and Carré, 1989) showed that primary teachers tended not to feel competent in teaching science and identified the subject as one in which they required in-service training. Whilst it may seem logical to suppose that teachers in small schools, because they had fewer colleagues on whose expertise they may draw, might have found the provision of a science curriculum more difficult than those in larger schools, there does not appear to be any evidence that a large number of teachers with science backgrounds existed in primary schools generally.

Those who are involved with recruitment for initial teacher training courses are all too aware of the past and continuing difficulty of attracting scientists to courses, even at times when applications far outnumber places. It is worth noting that a second Leverhulme survey (1991) revealed an increase in feelings of competence about science teaching among all teachers and a decrease in the numbers identifying science as an area in which they required in-service training.

It would seem, then, that while teachers in small schools may not generally have felt that they were isolated from colleagues elsewhere, there was a need to take into account the needs of small schools when designing in-service training courses. Although teachers in small schools may have differed little from those in larger schools in background, the nature of their jobs may have differed substantially. For example, a teacher in a primary school of 40 pupils would probably have had three or four year groups within her class and would have needed to plan curricula for different maturity levels as well as for different intellectual levels. Differentiation would have been essential and a greater variety of tasks may need to have been devised than in a larger school where classes, while being mixed ability, were at least generally single-age.

Despite the problems associated with multi-age teaching groups, there may have been professional advantages for teachers in small schools. It could be argued that working in a small school afforded teachers opportunities to develop professionally by assuming responsibility for a range of subjects. There is, however, evidence that this potential has not always been fulfilled. HMI (Schools Council, Welsh Office, 1985) found that insufficient use was generally made of the potential for leadership embodied in the interests and expertise of class teachers in small schools and that, given the particular difficulties of providing a broad, balanced curriculum in such schools, this was detrimental to the schools' aims.

This topic will be returned to in Chapter Eight, where the changing roles of teachers following the 1988 Education Reform Act will be examined to see if there was a trend

towards greater responsibility being assumed for subjects as it became necessary to implement the National Curriculum.

Teachers and Relationships in Small Primary Schools

Hopkins and Delyth (1985) identified problems for teachers and pupils in small schools because children had to stay with the same teacher for more than one year. They argued that clashes of personalities between a child and the teacher may have a damaging effect on a child's progress, and that a weak teacher could have serious repercussions on both the entire class and the whole school. These would be of far greater magnitude in a small school where children's education could be affected over a number of years.

The problems associated with mixed-age teaching discussed earlier have been elaborated upon by HMI (DES, 1982), who found that mixed-age classes presented difficulties for a substantial number of teachers. In their survey, they found that both the more and less able within the class might suffer some neglect. HMI concluded:

> "Where mixed-age classes must occur thought needs to be given how to minimise some of the problems. It may be necessary that ancillary or peripatetic help should be directed to these classes, or that heads should give them more than an equal share of their own time." (para 4:16).

HMI went on to recommend that attention should be given to the in-service training needs of teachers of mixed-age classes. It will be interesting to see if similar recommendations are made for teachers of mixed-age classes as problems arise as a result of the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy (DfEE, 1998). which demands that teachers teach specified aspects of literacy to whole classes during specified terms. These will be examined in Chapters Eight and Nine.

There were, however, advantages claimed for mixed-age classes which, as Reid et al. (1988) observed, included: opportunities for younger children to take classroom

responsibilities; greater continuity in teaching; and an increased concentration on the child as an individual.

It was often argued (Bell and Sigsworth, 1987; Forward, 1988;) that teachers in small schools built up greater knowledge of pupils, since they knew each one well and observed their progress over a number of years. Children may have been less apprehensive about changing classes when they knew the teacher to whose class they would be moving, and the make up of the class each teacher had at the beginning of the academic year would only change slightly, as one age group may make up only a quarter of the class. The advantages of this stability should, however, be set against the potential problems which a weak teacher may cause. Plowden (op cit., p.177, para.479) summed up both advantages and disadvantages:

> "The knowledge of children that a good village school teacher can build up is invaluable. Yet one weak teacher can destroy a child's educational opportunities and a clash of personality between a teacher and a child may be disastrous. A good head can quickly influence a small school, particularly if, as is becoming more common, a rigid class organisation is broken down and teachers pool their ideas and gifts."

Forward (op cit., p.xv) saw the advantages to children of being taught in small schools where the knowledge of each child which the teacher develops "can allow for just the right door of experience to be opened at just the right moment for that particular child". However, he was also aware of the damage which might result from a child suffering "a three- or four-year incarceration with an unimaginative, weak teacher" (p.xv).

The problem of relationships was taken up by Wragg (1985) who stressed how vital it was that these be successful, given the limited physical environment in small schools. The consequences of conflict between teachers in such circumstances may have been far more serious than in a large school. Similarly, where children and parents lost respect for a teacher, this could have a much more profound effect where that teacher was one of two or three staff, rather than being part of a much larger teaching force in a large school.

The Schools Council (1975) found that easily the most significant advantage of the small school from the point of view of the child was the close relationship between pupil and teacher. Teachers were, in the main, able to diagnose particular problems and relate them to the child's home and school situation. The authors concluded, "This awareness, so frequently lacking with the best will in the world in the larger school, is one of the small school's greatest assets" (p.5).

Small schools may, however, according to some commentators, have offered fewer opportunities for social development for children. The Gittins Report (DES, 1967) maintained that evidence from rural education authorities highlighted the difficulties associated with providing a suitable range of activities to meet the wide range of age and ability, and suggested that small schools may not provide children with the social stimulation which working and playing with children of their own age group could offer. The Plowden Report (op cit.) expressed concern that older children in small schools might lack the stimulus provided by a large peer group, but found that children starting school settled in easily and could quickly assimilate the established traditions of learning and behaviour.

There was clearly a problem for teachers in providing peer friendships and peer stimulation for pupils in small schools, where a child may have been the only pupil of his or her age. The fact that many small schools were conscious of their potential problems led to the setting up of clustering structures, discussed in Chapter Six, and other, sometimes less formal, arrangements designed to enable staff and pupils from different schools to meet for both social and academic purposes. Indeed, Patrick (1990) was able to conclude that such co-operative ventures were more prevalent among the smaller schools in her sample than in the larger ones:

> "With respect to their links with other schools the PRISMS schools were also different from other schools. Eight out of ten PRISMS schools. compared with six out of ten other schools, were involved in co-operative schemes of various kinds."
> (in Galton and Patrick, pp.46-47)

The perceived needs of teachers in small schools were recognised by central government, and between 1985 and 1991 fourteen local education authorities received a total of more than £7 million for pilot projects designed to enhance the curricula in small rural primary schools. Bell and Sigsworth (op cit.), however, saw a contradiction in central government's attitude towards small schools. They asserted that the Government's official face was set "firmly against small schools with under 60 children on roll" (p.225), and yet between 1985 and 1986 the Educational Support Grant system funded a dozen LEA projects with the aim of improving the quality and range of curriculum provided in primary schools in rural areas. They argued that this was the first time that a central policy had recognised that teachers in small rural schools required different systems of support from those needed by teachers in urban areas.

Discussion

The characteristics of teachers in small schools prior to the ERA appear to have differed little from those of their colleagues elsewhere before 1988, according to many commentators. Hargreaves (1990), for example, concluded that apart from the greater incidence of class teaching, the PRISMS teachers worked in similar ways to teachers in large schools. The same body of research revealed that it was only in their significantly greater use of members of the local community to provide skills and expertise in the curriculum that the PRISMS schools differed from their larger neighbours (Patrick, 1990).

However, it is worth noting that teachers' perceptions sometimes differ from research findings. For example, PRISMS teachers tended to feel that teaching in small schools differed from teaching in a large school in a number of ways. Many, when interviewed, said that because there were so few adults in the school with whom to share the work, they had more duties and responsibilities than they would have had in a larger school (Galton and Patrick, 1990). Patrick's research (op cit.) confirmed the teachers' view that those employed in small schools had a significantly heavier load of

non-teaching duties. Despite this, they were "just as likely as their colleagues elsewhere to have a designated responsibility for a subject or subjects within the school and only slightly less likely to have an organizational responsibility" (ibid., pp.31-32).

It would seem logical to suggest that teachers in small schools did have more duties in some areas of school life than colleagues in larger schools. The very nature of the schools made this inevitable, with playtimes being as frequent in small as in large schools, but with fewer teachers among whom to share supervision of children. Whether the extra duties made the role of teacher in a small school more onerous than that of teacher in a large school is difficult to determine. It may be that additional duties in the small school were compensated for by smaller classes and, possibly, more easily-managed pupils.

It has been argued (Hopkins and Ellis, 1991, Nisbet, 1983) that small schools required a particular kind of teacher and that those responsible for recruitment should establish criteria for selection accordingly. Hopkins and Ellis averred that such people needed to be 'all rounders' able to cater for children of different ages and abilities with an awareness of individual needs, skill in planning, good organisation and a flexible teaching style. Nisbet (op cit.), too, maintained that the selection and deployment of teachers in rural areas was of crucial importance and that improvements in primary education in such areas were more likely to occur if teachers were offered appropriate support than by administrative re-organisation.

The penalties for making poor choices of staff in a small school were magnified compared with larger schools, given that each teacher in the former made up a greater proportion of the whole staff than in the latter. Moreover, the teacher in the small school may have had a profound effect upon the education of a group of children over a far longer period than his or her counterpart in a larger school. In-service training took on an added significance in the small school, where weaker members of staff may have had a significant effect upon children's primary education in a way that their

counterparts elsewhere could not. This was acknowledged by Patrick (op cit., p.44) who maintained:

> "Despite pressure of time, heads had to face up to issues of staff development in a more positive way than might be necessary in a larger school. An unsatisfactory teacher was difficult to 'hide' on a small staff."

In the light of Patrick's comments, it is interesting to note the reservations about employing newly qualified teachers (NQTs), post-1988, expressed by small school heads whose interviews are reported in Chapter Nine.

Galton and Patrick's (op cit.) research revealed that teachers in small schools had experience of teaching a wider age range of pupils in more schools than their peers in larger schools. This experience, it might be argued, should have enabled them to cope with mixed-age teaching better than some other members of the profession. However, the prospect of a turnover in staffing which might alleviate problems caused by weak teachers is greatly reduced in the small school where, according to Patrick (op cit.), almost a quarter of the PRISMS schools' headteachers had not appointed a new member of staff for over three years. In non-PRISMS schools, only one in ten had not made an appointment in a similar period. The turnover rate of one in ten in a ten-teacher school would allow the head to appoint a new teacher annually, but in a three-teacher school a new teacher would appear far less frequently.

The low turnover in staff in small schools, while it may have been attributed to the simple arithmetic of staffing levels, may also be a phenomenon of rural schools generally, possibly induced by teachers' perceptions that a move to an urban school might afford less job satisfaction and result in a greater preoccupation with discipline and classroom management problems. Equally, teachers may have identified closely with schools situated within the neighbourhoods in which they live. Killian and Byrd (1988), in a study in the USA, maintained that rural teachers generally had longer-term commitments to their teaching posts than urban teachers, as well as personal ties with and credibility in the community.

Given the efforts of many small schools to form cluster groups (see Chapter Six), it could be argued that teachers in many small schools were less isolated than their counterparts in larger schools whose autonomy had, perhaps, remained undiminished by co-operative ventures. It will be interesting to see if those practices identified by Ross (1980 op.cit) and Hartley (1985 op.cit), which teachers in large and small schools were attested to employ in order to retain autonomy through spatial isolation, have continued to be prevalent since the introduction of the National Curriculum in England and Wales.

It is particularly significant that, following some of the most extensive research ever carried out on small schools in England and Wales, Galton and Patrick (op cit., p.30) were able to assert that: "On the basis of our evidence there is little justification for the traditional stereotype of the teacher in the small school."

The first three chapters have shown that small primary schools, before 1988, exhibited many differences from larger schools, as well as many similarities to them. There is little conclusive evidence that they provided a generally inferior education or that they taught in different ways. However, the perception that small schools had limitations led to attention being focused on their ability to implement the educational changes demanded by the Education Reform Act of 1988. The chapters have also produced a picture of primary education before 1988. Chapter Four will focus upon the effects of educational changes upon schools, particularly since 1988. It will explore the way in which the culture of the primary school has been challenged by changes which have often been statutorily imposed. This will lead the discussion on to the strategies which schools, LEAs and governments have adopted in order to manage change. The remainder of the work then examines the ways in which small schools have adapted to educational changes and contrasts this with work in larger schools.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

"With change forces abounding, it is easy to experience overload, fragmentation and incoherence. In fact, in education this is the more typical state. Policies get passed independent of each other, innovations are introduced before previous ones are adequately implemented, the sheer presence of problems and multiple unconnected solutions are overwhelming."
(Fullan, 1999, p.27)

Fullan's description of changes in education provides an appropriate summary of the position in which schools found themselves following the Government's educational reforms in the late 1980s. In 1990, when this research began, primary schools were faced with numerous changes which they were required to implement. These included: teaching the National Curriculum; managing finances through Local Management of Schools; changes in teachers' pay and conditions; introducing testing at 7 and 11; appraisal of teachers; integrating special needs pupils; staff training through 'Baker Days'; increasing parental choice over which school their children would attend; reduced LEA support; and increased involvement of governors in the running of schools.

In this chapter the view, discussed in earlier chapters, that the culture of the primary school in Britain before 1988 was typically one in which teachers operated as individuals within the confines of their own classrooms (Taylor, 1999) will be explored further. It will be argued that, while there was a wide variety of cultures within the general culture before the 1988 ERA, what most schools had in common was the licence to pursue their individual goals within a loose framework of guidelines. The changes which have been made to the British education system will be placed in

context through an exploration of literature relating to educational change. It will be seen that the reforms had a significant impact upon the working practices of teachers and headteachers, and that the traditional culture of primary schools was seriously challenged. Subsequent chapters will focus more closely on the impact of educational change upon schools of different sizes and will explore the ways in which these impinged upon the management and cultures of schools.

The Culture of the Primary School before 1988

The culture of the primary school might be defined as incorporating the ethos and climate of the institution (Alexander, 1984). Before the ERA, a typical school was dominated by the headteacher. The primary head, according to Coulson writing in 1980, has "no tradition of delegation, and the "flat", class-based structure of most schools encourages teacher independence rather than teacher inter-dependence" (p.282). Structures in secondary schools were more complex and often involved at least two deputy heads, as well as various heads of department and senior teachers. Scale posts in primary schools were sometimes awarded on the basis of long service or for areas not central to what has become known as the core curriculum, such as boys' games. Thus many primary schools lacked a senior management team which might give a lead when changes were made to the curriculum or to the organisation of the school. Heads who might have wished to involve staff in decision-making which affected the whole school found it difficult to persuade people to do so, given the lack of a tradition of such involvement. There also existed the problem of imposing change upon teachers used to considerable autonomy over pedagogy and the curriculum.

Given that many teachers taught in their own classrooms behind closed doors, the structure of most primary schools militated against breaking down the autonomy of individual teachers (Ross, 1980; Hartley, 1985). The absence of free periods and of

opportunities to observe others' practice led to what Alexander has termed *privatisation* (cf. Ball, 1990 who used the term in a broader sense) in the classroom and a lack of coherence of the curriculum. Teachers, therefore, may have had considerable freedom and independence to experiment with teaching methods and, perhaps in some cases, to adopt the so-called *progressive* approaches to teaching which were anathema to the political Right from the 1960s onwards.

Galton et al (1999) discuss the clash of ideologies which led to the production of literature which condemned the progressive teaching which some (Cox and Dyson, 1969) felt was prevalent in schools. It is argued that, despite some notable examples of well-publicised "progressive" schools such as William Tyndale Junior, the evidence would suggest that a revolution in primary education never occurred. Bennett's (1976) research appeared to provide opponents of "informal" education with ammunition, since it seemed to indicate that children made better progress in formal rather than informal classrooms. However, it also demonstrated the essentially conservative nature of primary teachers and showed that schools were not dominated by progressives. Campbell and Neill (1994) argued that the national picture in the two decades before ERA was "not a golden, so much as a rather leaden age" (p.177) in which the curriculum was narrow with little science and an emphasis upon numeracy and literacy through repetitive exercises. They concluded that "Plowdenesque progressivism flowered largely in rhetoric, with progressive practice, however defined, being a minority taste amongst the teachers" (ibid, p.177). Before 1988 teachers had been victims of a policy vacuum in the primary curriculum. The 1988 Act, they suggest, filled that vacuum.

The absence of cohesion in the curriculum is illustrated by one of the heads interviewed for the present research who described the culture of the school when he was appointed in 1980:

"The staff's attitude when I came was: 'This is my classroom. I'm in charge of what goes on in it'. There was open hostility to my gentle suggestions that we look at our practice together. Apart from one young teacher in his second post, everybody was very protective of their little empires."
(Head of Charlton, 135 pupils)

The head went on to describe his attempts to review the curriculum with the staff and explained that staff had resisted this; some arguing that those who taught infants did not really need to know what happened in the upper junior class. The head had found it difficult to delegate to staff mainly because *"most of them didn't think there was anything much that needed doing. They were happy in their little empires and they thought they were doing just fine."* The staff had regarded running the school and teaching the lower juniors for part of each week as being the Head's job, and teaching the children in their classes as being the role of the rest of the teachers. He did concede that school concerts and an annual pantomime were whole school activities in which everyone took part enthusiastically, but recalled that:

"Any new government or LEA initiative which percolated through to them from the news or the daily paper, or, very occasionally, from the copy of the TES I ordered for the staffroom, was dismissed by most of them as 'just another bandwagon' they didn't need to get on board."

Taylor (1999) describes the "atomistic" nature of school management in the 1970s and early 1980s which saw LEAs managing schools for the DES in a way that "virtually allowed each school to devise its own curriculum" (p.26). The only two constraints were that schools held a daily act of worship and provided non-compulsory religious education for all pupils. As Taylor asserts, "By the early 1970s...even these 'core' activities had, in some schools as least, begun to fall into disuse" (p.26). Taylor

describes a "mosaic of unsupervised curriculum provision" in which "the schools themselves appeared to be entrenched as the major arbiters of curriculum policy" (ibid, p.26)

Before ERA, able to determine a curriculum free from the constraints of tests and examinations, many heads were able to create schools 'in their own images'. Alexander (op cit.) has described the *familial complementarity* which obtained in many schools, with the heads generally being male (74% in 1981, DES, 1982d) and class teachers generally female (78%). It was possible for strong heads to dominate the cultures of their schools, but radical changes in the curriculum could often only be made with the quiescence of teachers who may have enjoyed considerable independence throughout their careers.

Twenty years on, delegation is a feature of many primary schools and has been made inevitable by the need to implement statutory changes (see Tables 7.12-7.16). The culture of primary school management was seen to be changing during the 1980s. Lloyd (1981) conducted research on the role perceptions of 50 primary headteachers and found that *paternal* and *coercive* styles of leadership were no longer perceived as desirable by over half of his respondents. There was a trend towards involving teachers in the decision-making process. However, the experiences of Charlton's headteacher suggest that some teachers resisted attempts to involve them and were happy to be led, providing their autonomy in the classroom was not infringed. The traditional view of teachers as autonomous and in which, according to Stoll (in Fullan, & Hargreaves, 1992), teachers' classrooms were their castles and they were not expected to participate in school-level decision making. is no longer tenable in a period of constant change. Indeed, March and Olson (1976) described schools as 'organized anarchies', while Dale (1989) maintained that schools' relative autonomy led to

considerable 'slippage' between the policy decisions made at government level and the schools where such policies were expected to be implemented.

Alexander (1984) described the headteacher in primary schools as a 'keeper' of the school's value system able to restrict access by staff to courses, materials and resources. As Torrington and Weightman (1993, p.45) asserted:

> "Traditionally the culture in schools was one of high consensus, often centred on strong loyalty to a headteacher who was expected to symbolize and expound the culture of the school, rather like a monarch, through such ritual devices as social distance, taking school assembly, ... having a veto on major decisions and running staff meetings in a magisterial way."

Torrington and Weightman argued that the considerable changes brought about in the 1980s and early 1990s not only made great demands on teachers, but "also made inoperable a culture of consensus based solely on loyalty to the head" (p.46).

The last 20 years have shown that it is not unusual for governments to impose changes upon organisations and then expect them to implement them (cf. Civil Service, privatization of utilities, National Health Service, health and safety legislation). However, in education, perhaps particularly in the latter part of the 20th century, a culture of independence had evolved, with schools and teachers and LEAs enjoying considerable freedom to dictate what happened in classrooms. There was sufficient scope for independence for schools to be able to establish themselves as beacons of excellence in certain aspects of the curriculum (for example, Balby Road in Denaby and Broughton in Humberside for the arts, Mount Pleasant in Humberside for design technology). While such schools delivered broad curricula, they were able to focus attention on some subjects at the expense of others. Thus, for example, both of the first two schools cited above devoted periods each day to art and physical education. The implementation of the National Curriculum often forced such schools to

compromise their principles on the curriculum in order to ensure that all areas of the prescribed curriculum could be taught, with the statutory nature of the curriculum, allied to the introduction of testing and inspection, providing added impetus for schools to do this.

Finnan and Levin (in Altrichter and Elliott, 2000) suggest that each school has a unique culture but that there is an overall perception of what the culture of schooling is. They argue that school cultures do not necessarily resist change and that there are "mini-changes" happening daily and larger changes over longer periods. Indeed, organised resistance to educational change post-1988 has been limited to the industrial action taken by the National Union of Teachers in 1993 in protest against new assessment procedures. Such was the lack of formal protest against change that an episode of BBC Radio 4's drama, *King Street Junior*, was felt by many to lack verisimilitude when one of the teachers at the school began to organise a petition in protest against the National Curriculum.

Donnelly (2000) explored the concept of school ethos by studying two schools in Northern Ireland. She concluded that a school's ethos may constrain people to act in certain ways but that ethos was "not a static phenomenon" (p.150). By understanding a school ethos, Donnelly argued, one can explain why schools react differently to policy initiatives. While this may be true, visits to schools by the present author and colleagues reveal an increasing homogeneity in areas of study, suggesting some similarity in schools' responses to curriculum change. It is not unusual, for example, for virtually all of the schools visited in a single week to have displays of work on Aztecs, or Victorians, or St Lucia. The prescriptive curricula for The National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) and The National Literacy Strategy (NLS) mean that there is a strong likelihood that children in the same year groups in different schools will be

covering similar aspects of arithmetic or literacy work, and the availability of material *on-line* from the National Grid for Learning (NGfL) has also promoted increasing uniformity.

Sikes (in Fullan and Hargreaves, A eds, 1992) suggests that teachers who are faced with imposed educational change may be required to change themselves and their beliefs. This reduction in their "professional freedom and autonomy" (p.37) has been described as the *proletarianization* of teachers by Apple (1987). Sikes argues that teacher cultures develop within schools and that these are heavily influenced by headteachers. Externally imposed changes can undermine the values and beliefs which contribute to these cultures. Indeed, the comments of several Secretaries of State for Education (for example, Joseph, Baker, Clarke, Patten and Blunkett) suggest that the educational reforms were intended to do just that. The National Literacy Strategy, for example, introduced by the Labour Government in 1998, sought to place "greater emphasis on whole-class teaching" (DfEE, 1998, p.10). By the late 1990s politicians were making little attempt to conceal the motivation for reforms. The culture of the *secret garden* of primary education was deliberately being undermined and challenged. Resisting change or ignoring it ceased to be a real option as the Government introduced testing and inspection. As Sikes (op cit., p.45) maintained, in discussing the possible reactions of experienced teachers to change:

> "Even when changes are legally enforced it may be possible to go through the motions and present an appearance of change without any real change taking place, although this becomes increasingly difficult when monitoring and assessment are involved as they tend increasingly to be."

Huberman (1988, cited in Sikes, p.47) found that older teachers were more resistant to change than younger ones and were more likely to believe that changes would not work. Given the tendency, discussed in Chapter Three and cited by some researchers

(Burstall, 1987; Patrick, 1991), for teachers in small schools to be slightly older and more experienced than colleagues in larger schools, there may be implications for the implementation of change in schools of different size.

The culture of the primary school was, then, under threat and many both within and outside schools felt that change was inevitable. As Coulby (1989) argued, in a chapter which made several criticisms of the Government's approaches to educational reform:

> "While it is necessary to remain suspicious of the current rhetoric of standards and the 'ineffective teacher' demonology, it cannot be pretended that in 1988 there were not schools and teachers whose curriculum planning left something to be desired."
> (in Bash and Coulby, 1989, p.58).

Following the 1983 White Paper, *Teaching Quality* (DES, 1983b), which proposed that teachers be appraised, and *Better Schools* in 1985 (DES, 1985) which proposed that teachers' pay be linked to performance, the scene was set for educational change as the Tory Government in 1987 prepared for a general election. The ERA was prepared in secret with selective leaks to the media (Tomlinson, 1992) and it became clear that education was to face changes on a similar if not greater scale to those experienced by other institutions. In the next two sections the nature of the changes to primary schools will be examined in the context of recent research on the management of educational change.

Changing Primary Schools

Before 1979, governments had sought to control what happened in schools through HMI and LEAs. The efficacy of the *licensed autonomy* (Woods et al, 1997) which this allowed schools could be checked through inspections, but these were infrequent and HMI were limited by their lack of personnel and by their perceived role as advisors

rather than inspectors. LEAs were often Labour-controlled in urban areas and the Conservative Government was sceptical about their efficiency and political motivation. It was clear to many politicians in the 1970s and 1980s that schools had retained autonomy to such an extent that educational provision was diverse without being successful in meeting the needs of children or industry. Duncan Graham, former Chair of the National Curriculum Council, wrote of thousands of well-intentioned educators in the 1960s and 1970s "concerned together in a benign conspiracy, reinventing thousands of wheels a day" (Graham, 1993, p.1). Schools, according to Graham, became "hooked on some perfectly respectable philosophies" (ibid.) some of which became ends in themselves rather than contributing to a balanced curriculum.

The Governments of Thatcher, Major and Blair may have felt able to justify the limited consultation offered for educational reforms by referring to the attempts of their predecessors to introduce changes in education. Expensive and well-publicised reviews of education (Plowden, 1967; Bullock, 1975; HMI, 1978) had made recommendations in the past, but many schools had merely paid lip-service to these and had continued to operate in ways which suited them. The imposition of a statutory curriculum, with testing and assessment and external inspection, may have seemed the only way to ensure that reforms were actually implemented. There had been a feeling among some politicians and commentators that schools had hitherto been run for the convenience of teachers rather than for the benefit of pupils. The Thatcher Government, therefore, took steps to create radical changes in the ways in which schools operated. It faced considerable criticism for the way in which reforms were implemented, but the Government's intransigence may be viewed in the context of the failure of previous attempts at reform. As Fullan (1991, p.274) argued:

> "Governments can't win. If they encourage widespread debate during the development phase, the policy gets delayed and the discussions bog down in abstract goals (not on what changes in practice are at stake). By the time the new guideline hits the streets it may be discredited for some and insufficiently developed for others."

The Education Reform Act threatened the consensual approach to education policy which had involved government, LEA associations and teacher unions, and which had evolved since the 1944 Act began to be challenged in the late 1960s and 1970s. The work of the Schools Council from the 1960s and the Assessment of Performance Unit from 1975 provided the first indications of the coming national curriculum and the monitoring processes which were to accompany it. Intervention by government in areas which had previously been the preserve of LEAs and schools was further developed through the Education White Paper of 1972, which set out national objectives for education. By the time James Callaghan made his Ruskin College speech in 1976 there was growing disquiet about the education system. The early 1980s saw a succession of publications on the curriculum (DES 1980a; 1980b; 1985a; 1985b) which led to the claim by Brighouse (1986, cited in Williams, V, 1995) that the combined DES/HMI output between 1976 and 1986 exceeded the entire published output from government on the curriculum during the previous century.

Public perceptions of the purposes of education and the administrative and professional means of delivering it had changed over a period of time since the *Black Papers* began to be published in 1969 (Cox and Dyson, 1969). Although the picture of primary schools as being imbued with the spirit of Plowden was never one which reflected what actually happened in most schools (see, for example, Bennett, 1976, 1980; Galton et al, 1980), public opinion had been fed by politicians of the New Right such as Sir Keith Joseph, who was Secretary of State for Education from 1981. Joseph's contribution to the radical reforms which were introduced after he had left office was,

according to Maclure (1988, p.161), "a heightened public anxiety", as he dwelt upon what he regarded as the shortcomings of the education system.

Changes in the culture of schools were required if the reforms were to be successful and the groundwork for this was prepared in advance of the 1988 ERA. The research of Professor Sig Prais (Prais and Wagner, 1983) which compared British pupils' mathematical performance unfavourably with that of German pupils; and the pronouncements of ministers, contributed to a climate in which change was both expected and demanded in many quarters. The changes to the culture of primary schools, which were evident after the 1988 Act, were substantial. However, as Maclure (1988, pp.149-150) pointed out: "What is clear on examination is that the received wisdom and the established verities had been undermined over a period of time, not suddenly in 1987".

Maclure drew attention to the views of Sir William Pile, Permanent Secretary at the DES from 1970 to 1976, who "had wondered aloud to a visiting team from OECD 'whether the Government could continue to disbar itself' from what had been termed "the secret garden" of the curriculum" (Maclure, 1988, p.158). The hands off approach to education which British governments adopted was exemplified in an episode of BBC Television's *Yes, Prime Minister* in which PM Hacker's desire to make radical changes was tempered by his civil servants who pointed out the impracticabilities associated with interfering with the education system. The programme, remarkably, was first broadcast in January 1988 only six months before the introduction of the most radical changes to education since the Second World War. This suggests that a perception remained, despite some of the initiatives of the 1980s, that education was not to be meddled with by government.

Educational Reforms

The educational reforms of the Conservative governments between 1979 and 1997 can be seen as stemming from concerns expressed by the Labour prime minister, James Callaghan, in his 1976 Ruskin College speech. This speech, in which Callaghan questioned many educational orthodoxies, is often cited as the catalyst for much that followed. Young (1998, p.100), for example, asserts that:

> "Since Callaghan's Ruskin speech in 1976, the economic role of education has undoubtedly taken precedence, at least in the minds of policy makers and politicians, over its role in the personal and intellectual development of young people"

It is, perhaps, this increased preoccupation with the economic value of education which shaped future reforms and which ensured that the terminology of the market place (*value for money, consumers, relevance of the curriculum to the workplace* etc.) would become a feature of documentation. Given that small schools are relatively expensive to run in terms of costs per pupil compared with large schools (see Introduction), this represented a potential threat to them.

The 1988 Act gave the Secretary of State for Education more than 400 new powers (Judd and Crequer, 1993), with the Government taking control of the curriculum, and encouraging schools to opt out of local authority control and receive finances from the Funding Agency for Schools rather than the local education authorities. LEAs were also less able to control admissions to schools, as the Government strove to foster parental choice. Control of large proportions of budgets was delegated to schools through Local Management of Schools (LMS), although small schools were, initially, exempted from this.

Lawton (1992) set the changes in context when he wrote of what he regarded as the traditional qualities of British primary schools:

> "At their best, English primary schools have served as a model for many other societies. At their best, they were - and are - superb" (p.118).

However, he acknowledged that a succession of reports by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI), together with other evidence in the 1970s and 1980s, highlighted a number of problems. The neglect of certain aspects of the curriculum such as science, history and geography, and the lack of progress of some very able children, along with occasional lack of provision for children with special educational needs, led the popular press and some politicians to blame what they described as *progressive* methods. Lawton did, however, aver that the available evidence presented a much more complex picture, and he pointed out that:

> "...the fact that many parents send their children to state primary schools but use private secondary schools, must indicate a higher degree of satisfaction at the primary stage, although there is sometimes a suspicion of a lack of "stretching" for more able primary pupils." (ibid., pp. 119)

An alternative interpretation of this phenomenon could be that parents feel that secondary education is more important than primary, since career-affecting examinations are taken and they are prepared to pay in the hope that their children will be successful. Whatever the case, the vast majority of children have continued to attend state primary schools and there has been considerable concern about their standards of attainment expressed by politicians, the media and by some academics and inspectors for many years.

The changes to the curriculum, and to the ways in which state schools were to be managed, were considerable and in excess of what seemed likely only a few years earlier. As Maclure, (1998, p.13) commented:

> "The proverbial visitor from Mars - or even Sweden which puts a premium on neatness and tidiness - would have found the pre-Education Reform Act situation hard to credit. Curriculum control in primary schools rested largely with headteachers; only where selective secondary schools remained, were the primary schools constrained in part by 11-plus tests. As comprehensive education spread, this constraint disappeared and primary headteachers used their own judgement, tempered by the guidance of advisers and inspectors, to determine what should be taught and how."

This laissez-faire approach to the curriculum was anathema to the Conservative Government, which subsequently summed up its approach to education and society in general with its *Back to Basics* slogan. A strong emphasis on what was often termed a *golden age*, when children were seated in rows and learned multiplication tables by rote, was a feature of the Major government's pronouncements in the 1990s, and the term *traditional* seemed to be sprinkled liberally over every ministerial speech. Successive Secretaries of State for Education made attempts to address the issue, but the DES had, in 1983, hinted at what was to come in a paper on curricular provision in secondary schools:

> "It seemed essential that *all* pupils should be guaranteed a curriculum of distinctive breadth and depth to which they should be *entitled*, irrespective of the type of school they attend or their level of ability or their social circumstances and that failure to provide such a curriculum is unacceptable."
>
> (DES, 1983, p.38)

However, when Secretary of State, Sir Keith Joseph, issued *Better Schools* (DES, 1985), it still did not seem that the reforms would be as far-reaching as they eventually were. For example, Sir Keith's words in 1985 (DES, 1985, pp.11-12) did not suggest that the Government was contemplating the dramatic changes to the curriculum which were imposed only three years later:

> "...it would not in the view of the Government be right for the Secretary of State's policy for the range and pattern of the five to sixteen curriculum to amount to the determination of national syllabuses for that period...The Government does not propose to introduce legislation affecting the powers of the Secretaries of State in relation to the curriculum."

The Education Reform Act was, however, to have a profound effect upon schools and to legislate far beyond the level which Sir Keith had anticipated. In particular it:

- made teachers more accountable by strengthening the powers of governors and parents;
- supported teacher appraisal;
- devolved budgets and gave schools greater autonomy over spending;
- allowed for open enrolment which, in theory at least, allowed parents greater choice;
- introduced a national curriculum for all state schools.

Pierson (1998) argues that the goals of Tory education reforms lacked consistency and that conflicts arose between aims.

> "On the one hand, there was the libertarian logic of allowing consumers to choose the educational service they wanted and, on the other, the wish to reimpose a traditional curriculum, 'traditional' teaching methods and an education service which met 'the overall needs of the economy'." (p.131)

Chitty, (1997) maintained that "The 1988 Act sought to erect (or reinforce) a hierarchical system of schooling subject both to market forces and to greater control from the centre." (p.53), while Maclure (1998, p.6) sets out clearly the view that the reforms were intended to set a new political agenda for education:

> "The radical Right set out to remove any ambiguity about the locus of power by formally abandoning the century-old idea that authority should be shared between central and local government. The related ambiguity about who was responsible for the curriculum was also removed: the introduction of a National Curriculum made Parliament the arbiter of what is to be taught."

Those who argued for the market principle to be adopted in education felt that the professionals had, for too long, acted in their own interests rather than those of the consumers according to Hartley (1997), who maintained that the Government, rather than the educationalists. came to determine what the product would be in education and that:

> "Once the national curriculum was in place, then standardized assessment could follow, thereby providing the results which would allow (customers) parents to compare schools." (p.138)

Before the eleven plus virtually ceased to exist, parents were able to look at schools' pass rates to do this. The intervening period had not provided a similar indicator, but the SATs scores and inspection reports provided replacements.

The Government's radical changes have amounted to *restructuring* according to Woods et al (1997). This restructuring has involved the *marketization of schooling* (Ball, 1994). Ball (1990) described five aspects of educational policy which have acted upon the educational system in Britain:

- *Privatisation* has involved selling off elements of educational services including putting services out to private tender and increased reliance upon parental contributions to fund school activities.
- *Marketisation* has been introduced through measures such as open enrolment and LMS which have induced competition between schools.
- *Differentiation* has involved the creation of different types of schools such as grant maintained and city technology colleges.
- *Vocationalisation* has focused schools' attentions on the need to satisfy the needs of industry for a suitable workforce.
- *Proletarianisation* (see Apple, 1987) of teachers has resulted from their increasing distance from decision making and their decreased opportunities for choice and creativity.

At the same time as the Government introduced measures which amounted to decentralisation, it also instituted a considerable element of centralisation by imposing a national curriculum to be followed by all state schools in England and Wales.

As announcements of changes were made, teachers were often portrayed in the media, including by members of the Government, as inadequate or guilty of failing their pupils. Galton et al (1999, p.15) describe 'scare stories' about poor teaching which served to heighten public feeling that change was necessary. Hargreaves, A (1994, p.xiv) summed up the Government's attitude to teachers:

"In England and Wales, policymakers tend to treat teachers rather like naughty children; in need of firm guidelines, strict requirements and a few short sharp evaluative shocks to keep them up to the mark."

The virtual vilification of teachers from some sources (for example Lawlor, 1990), which Ball (1990) describes as 'a discourse of derision', may have been counter-productive. Certainly, many teachers left the profession taking early retirement or making career changes during the 1990s. By 2000, the Government was offering at least £6000 to each postgraduate trainee in both primary and secondary initial teacher training in a bid to counter growing teacher shortages. Teaching appeared to be an increasingly unattractive career option for graduates and the often expressed disaffection and disillusionment of serving teachers, allied to the need to cope with constant changes to working practices, often with little or no consultation, may have been as significant as increased opportunities for work in industry in deterring people from entering the profession. The OECD (1989) argued that "...educational reforms, no matter how they are conceived in principle, will only be fortuitous if the teachers who are actually responsible are not made an explicit and pivotal plank of these reforms." (cited in Fullan and Hargreaves, A, (eds) 1992b, p.50)

However, the reforms were imposed by statute and little cognisance was taken of the opinions of those who would deliver them in schools. The values and cultures of schools were seen to be flawed and the Government pressed ahead with its reforms. MacDonald (in Altrichter and Elliott, 2000) criticised the changes introduced by government since 1979 and stated:

"It would be difficult to overstate the extent to which these reforms constituted a repudiation of the values, aspirations and organizations which had hitherto powered the post-war expansion and modernization project." (p.22)

The nature of the reforms was debated within the Conservative Party as well as outside it, with Secretary of State, Kenneth Baker, effectively winning the day and promoting his own scheme in the face of hostility from Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher (see Taylor 1999 for reminiscences of HMI and DES officials at the time). As Bush (1999, p.241) maintained:

> "The main legislative changes reflected a fundamental contradiction between the centralizing wing of the Conservative Party and those from the 'new right' who advocate a substantial degree of autonomy for schools and maximum competition between them in order to increase their responsiveness and hence raise standards."

The principle elements of the ERA are discussed below.

The National Curriculum

The National Curriculum was intended to counter "the mismatch between the output of schools and the needs of the labour market" (Gipps, C, 1993, p.38). To achieve the changes it required, the Government acquired control of the curriculum, which had traditionally been the province of local education authorities and schools.

The statutory, Government-defined, curriculum was implemented in stages from the autumn of 1990. The core subjects of English, mathematics and science were in place first, with seven other foundation subjects (six in primary schools where modern foreign languages were not compulsory) following. Initially, each subject was defined in an individual document and pupils were to work at one of ten different levels of attainment, with their progress being assessed by teachers and by external standard assessment tasks (SATs). Programmes of study outlined what was to be taught and attainment targets defined the range of knowledge, skills and understanding which children were expected to acquire at different stages of their school careers. Richards (1993) asserted that this was the first time since the withdrawal of the elementary school regulations in 1926 that primary schools had been required to plan and deliver curricula which were largely legally specified.

The National Curriculum was not intended to be the complete school curriculum, and other cross-curricular themes such as health education, environmental education and economic awareness were also to be studied (see DES, 1989, 3.3-3.9).

It soon became apparent that the implementation of the National Curriculum had resulted in an overloaded timetable and in 1993 Sir Ron Dearing was asked to review and revise the curriculum. Basini (1996, p.2) sums up the criticism of the National Curriculum and its content and implementation:

> "Critics suggested that there had not been sufficient consultation, especially with teachers; that the curriculum structure was an obsolete grammar school type subject-based one that neglected important areas such as political awareness; and that there was excessive bureaucracy, overload of content and assessment procedures."

There were concerns from the outset that the curriculum for primary schools was too subject-centred and had more in common with the secondary curriculum than with what had been taught in primary schools in the previous twenty years. Indeed, the composition of the National Curriculum was compared by Goodson (1995) with that of the Secondary Regulations of 1904. He demonstrated this by listing the two curricula side by side:

1904	*1987*
English	English
Maths	Maths
Science	Science
History	History
Geography	Geography
Physical Education	Physical Education
Drawing	Art
Foreign Language	Modern Foreign Language
Manual Work	
Domestic Subjects	Technology
(Music added soon afterwards)	Music

(pp.203-204)

The similarities led Goodson to question "the rhetoric of 'a new initiative'" and to assert that the National Curriculum could be seen "as a victory of the forces and intentions" (pp.204-5) of the political Right.

Moon and Mortimore (1989, p.9) argued that the primary curriculum was presented in restricted terms: "... as if it were no more than a pre-secondary preparation (like the worst sort of 'prep school')".

The extent of the subject range raised questions about schools' abilities to deliver such a broad curriculum with a teaching force which was felt to lack subject knowledge in some areas. Indeed, even before the final documents had been produced, the Cox Report (DES, 1989), which was the forerunner of the English National Curriculum, had maintained that courses for children in knowledge about language were not being recommended and that this was partly because

> "...substantial programmes of teacher training are required if teachers are themselves to know enough to enable them to design with confidence programmes of study about language." (6.3)

Interestingly, there were few similar expressions of concern about teachers' subject knowledge when the National Literacy Strategy was being developed eight years later, and this demanded a far greater knowledge of linguistic metalanguage than the National Curriculum for English.

The concerns about teachers' abilities to teach aspects of English, a core subject, are significant, but there were further worries about teachers' subject knowledge in areas such as science and technology (see Galton and Patrick, 1990 and Leverhulme Project (Bennett and Carré, 1993)).

There was, then, considerable support in many quarters for a more structured approach to education. However, the implementation of the National Curriculum was fraught

with difficulties. Each subject's curriculum was designed by a committee of people with a vested interest in ensuring that coverage would be comprehensive. As a result, the curriculum became overloaded. As Maclure (1998, p.13) commented: "The creation of a broad and balanced National Curriculum was undertaken at break-neck pace without adequate time for preparation and planning."

Young (op cit.) wrote of a "policy of over-specification of outcomes and little consultation with teachers" leading to a curriculum which monitored schools' achievements, but offered "few incentives for teachers to take more responsibility for raising achievement in their schools" (p.85).

Despite the prescriptive nature of the National Curriculum, no attempt was made at first to influence teaching methods, but by 1992 Alexander, Rose and Woodhead ('The Three Wise Men') had been commissioned to report on curriculum organisation and classroom practice, and had recommended more 'whole-class' teaching and less time spent on 'topic work'. The trend towards such an approach was identified by Pollard et al (1994), but the report suggested that further changes were necessary.

The Dearing Report (1993) was the Government's response to growing discontent among educators. Galton and Fogelman (1998) saw the Report as the Government's attempt to solve some of the problems which had arisen because of curriculum overload and a growing rebellion, particularly among secondary English teachers, over testing and assessment which culminated in many teachers refusing to administer SATs in 1993. According to Galton and Fogelman (p.120):

> "From the outset it was clear that the purpose of the Dearing report was not to evaluate the Government's National Curriculum strategy but to find ways of reducing teachers' workloads and of solving the impasse over the schemes of assessment"

Intending to slim down the curriculum and streamline testing arrangements, Dearing (1993, p.61) clearly recognised many of the above criticisms when commenting:

"..we have created an over-elaborate system which distorts the nature of different subjects, which serves to fragment teaching and learning in that teachers are planning work from the statements of attainment, and which has at times reduced the assessment process to a meaningless ticking of boxes."

While the curriculum had proved problematical for schools, they also had to face the challenge of assuming greater responsibility for the management of their finances and this is the subject of the next section.

Local Management of Schools (LMS)

Parents were, following the ERA, often described as *consumers*, with schools being the *producers* who offered their services in a competitive market. The concept of the market place was further enhanced by the devolution of substantial responsibility for financial management to schools at the expense of LEAs. Howells (in Williams, 1995) asserts that LMS challenged the culture of primary education:

> "The thrust of LMS is that schools should be more businesslike, more competitive, concentrating on image and public relations, satisfied customers and measured products, marketable in the nation's economy, risking bankruptcy, avoiding co-operation and insisting on only the best quality raw materials. Such business objectives bear little relation to the agreed aims of most schools." (pp.54-55)

Howells went on to argue that the LMS was "a political device to put on to other shoulders the responsibility for making unpopular decisions about cuts and economies" at a time when educational spending was being cut. LMS also served to individualise schools and created a climate of rivalry for pupil numbers in many areas. The introduction of LMS led Bullock and Thomas (1997) to identify a paradox in the Tory Government's education policies. The decentralisation of the control of resources which enabled schools, through LMS, to take greater responsibility for the management of their finances could be seen as an example of devolving power to individuals and small units, while: "...the centralization of control over the curriculum

would appear to be contrary to the market principle and more consistent with the principles underlying planned economies" (p.211).

Whitty (1989, p.330), too, discussed the "contradiction within an Act which increasingly gave market forces their head...yet suddenly introduced prescription into one area of education where hitherto there had been autonomy". However, Webb and Vulliamy (1996b) argued that while heads complained about excessive administrative burdens, most welcome the ability to make decisions about financial management as a result of the introduction of LMS. This view is borne out by the responses of many of the headteachers who were interviewed as part of the present study.

Downes (op cit.) identified three features of LMS which were attractive to headteachers:

- Greater flexibility to use resources effectively rather than being "hide-bound by externally determined staffing limits and allocations for capitation, or centrally decided maintenance plans" (p.26)
- The incentive to be cost-effective so that money saved could be used to promote the delivery of good education.
- The sense of autonomy which lifted heads' morale.

Howells (op cit., 1995) discussed the growing significance of age-weighted pupil numbers (AWPU) in making schools compete with each other for "clients": something which, he argued, the Government encouraged. He asserted: "These were not major issues for headteachers a generation ago, but we ignore them today at our peril" (p.45).

The culture and climate of education was changing and with the change came a new vocabulary. A key word in the lexicon of the 1988 National Curriculum was *entitlement*. Every child was to be entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum which was similar in every school in the country. However, schools which could attract more pupils would be better off financially and therefore be likely to be able to deliver the curriculum using better resources.

Local Education Authorities

The declining role of LEAs, which accompanied devolution of finances to schools, reduced one of the support systems which schools had previously enjoyed. Humberside LEA, for example, was particularly proactive in helping its schools to implement the National Curriculum from 1988. When the first documents appeared, the LEA held a series of three-day conferences for key trainers within each of its schools and strongly suggested that schools adopt a cross-curricular approach to delivery based around five key elements of the science curriculum. Advisors recognised that science was probably the most neglected area within schools and that if it was to be incorporated into the syllabus it should be at the heart of the curriculum. As the demands of the National Curriculum became more apparent, the LEA backed away from this approach insisting that it had never intended to be prescriptive about the strategy for curriculum delivery. Advisors then promoted an approach in which each lesson should be focused upon a single National Curriculum subject, with any other subjects being covered incidentally during the lesson.

The LEA did, therefore, provide a stimulus for change and through its internal inspection service and its influence over career advancement it was able to make schools accountable to it. Gradually, however, schools moved towards their own diverse approaches to delivering the curriculum and felt increasingly accountable to Ofsted and to parents as inspections became regular and league tables of SATs results began to be published. Nevertheless, as greater proportions of educational funds were devolved to schools at the expense of LEAs and schools became able to take up tenders from private companies for in-service and maintenance work, LEAs' importance declined. Many headteachers regretted this, feeling that a support system had been

taken away from them (see Chapter Nine). As Church (in Williams, 1995, p.29) maintained:

> "Individual schools and teachers are increasingly uncomfortable with values which they see as being unforgiving to the weak and to the disadvantaged. They want the LEA to be the referee – to act and persuade from its knowledge and wide experience across many schools of how such issues can be addressed. Above all, they reject isolationism and seek collaboration and partnership in what they do."

Nevertheless, the pressure groups of the New Right, which had a strong influence on the Government, tended to portray LEAs as local monopolies (Flew, 1987; Lawlor, 1989) which should be broken and which were perceived to be partly responsible for *progressive* educational practices. The 1993 Education Act (DfE, 1993) left LEAs with more limited functions, since it removed the requirement for them to have an education committee and set up a funding agency for schools opting out of LEA control.

Grant-Maintained Schools

The 1988 Act allowed schools to assume grant-maintained status by *opting out* of local authority control to receive funding directly from the Government. LEAs in which schools opted out were to have their budgets cut accordingly and the grant-maintained schools were to receive higher incomes than their LEA counterparts, since the element of funding which was allocated for LEA administration went directly to the schools. Thus, schools could determine which LEA services they wished to *buy in* and could, if they so wished, make use of alternative providers. An example of this was revealed by the head of Barratt GM, whose interview is reported in Chapter Nine. The head decided that the LEA's preferred provider of school meals was too expensive and dispensed with it when the contract came up for renewal. He replaced it, in the short term, with a service provided by parents, with profits going directly to the school, before finding an alternative supplier.

Downes (op cit.) noted that the opportunity to opt for Grant Maintained status was relished by some heads who were "unashamedly competitive (including a few who engineered significant pay rises for themselves in the process)" (p.28).

Maclure (1998) suggested that proposals to close a school or merge it with another would be likely to prompt moves to opt out of local authority control, since GM status represented a school's best chance of reprieve.

> "Local authorities have responded by bringing forward fewer reorganisation schemes and weighing carefully the possible consequences in terms of GM defections - if only because if one school is allowed to opt out, the balance of a reorganisation scheme may be radically altered." (p.19)

With changes in LEAs' roles and a redefined curriculum, educational changes had altered the educational landscape and had forced schools to consider new structures. Consultation had been minimal and heads and teachers often felt overwhelmed by the task of implementing the changes. Hargreaves, A (1994) maintained that the educational changes in Britain were extreme in terms of pace, extent of influence and "disrespect and disregard for teachers themselves" (p.6). He went on to argue that "In the political rush to bring about reform, teachers' voices have been largely neglected, their opinions overridden, and their concerns dismissed" (p.6). In the next section some perspectives on the nature of educational change will be examined in the light of the reforms of the past two decades.

The Nature of Educational Change

There exists a range of models of educational change, the majority of which incorporate theories about the management of change. Many of the changes to the educational system in England and Wales since 1988 have been mandated by central government in such a way that those who were to deliver the changes in schools were

not fully involved in the process. Hargreaves, A (1994) maintains that "the involvement of teachers in educational change is vital to its success" (p.11), while Williams argued in 1995:

> "During the past five years, substantial problems have arisen in education reform principally not because of the policies that have been pursued but through the absence of sustained discourse with those who have been required to implement them." (p.22)

The imposition of change from above has meant that some of the elements of change which are seen as desirable by researchers in the field (Hargreaves, A, Fullan, Morrison etc), such as collaboration and collegiality; involvement of those who have to deliver change in the change process from the outset; congruity of change with existing practices; and a mixture of top-down and bottom-up strategies, have been limited or absent. A considerable burden has, therefore, fallen upon headteachers to act as agents for changes which they may or may not have seen as desirable, but which they were, by virtue of their positions, obliged to implement.

It will be seen in subsequent chapters that some headteachers came to view many of the educational changes as having been both necessary and desirable. Indeed, Fullan (1999, p.9) has asserted that "...well-implemented equity-based reforms (such as achieving literacy standards for all children) may be in all of our interests as they result in economic growth in the society as a whole". In the light of the climate of negative views of education which had been created prior to the ERA, the Government clearly judged that public opinion was ready for radical change. Initial resistance to change may, for many, have been dissipated by the reality that the Government, on this occasion, intended to ensure that change was implemented and set up mechanisms (Ofsted, SATs) to check that it was. The head of Milburn (323 pupils) summed up the mood which he felt had overtaken heads and teachers by the early 1990s:

"The war was lost, if there had ever been one. I think most people knew that things had to change and even though the curriculum was a bit of a dog's breakfast, we knew it was better than what had gone before. There were still some battles that people wanted to fight but a government which can wipe the floor with the miners wasn't going to lose many battles with teachers!"

Morrison (1998) describes change as a "dynamic and continuous process of development and growth that involves a reorganization in response to 'felt needs'. It is a process of transformation, a flow from one state to another, either initiated by internal factors or external forces, involving individuals, groups or institutions, leading to a realignment of existing values, practices and outcomes" (p.13). Some of the headteachers whose interviews are reported in Chapter Nine felt that change was needed, but they instigated changes in organisation in response to external rather than internal forces. Morrison went on to assert that:

> "...change concerns people more than content. This is a critical factor, particularly in the human services like education. Change changes people but people change change!" (p.15)

Morrison's view of change echoes that of others (Hargreaves, A, 1994; Fullan, 1999). He went on to argue that change is likely to be successful if it is "congruent with existing practices...understood and communicated effectively; triallable and trialled; seen to be an improvement on existing practice by the participants; seen to further the direction in which the institution is moving" (p.17). Morrison maintained that change is likely to be unsuccessful if the above criteria are not met and if change is brought in without real consultation. He argued that the National Curriculum's introduction was an example of a change which lacked proper consultation and that it required the "force of statute to over-ride hostility" (p.17).

The impetus for educational change has clearly come from central government in England and Wales. The top-down mandate has been reinforced by the imposition of

methods of accountability. These imperatives have provided headteachers with mandates at a local scale which some have implemented in a top-down way, while others have implemented in a bottom-up way. This may be particularly true of teaching heads who operate at both a top-down and bottom-up level, since they may have to implement change from above by virtue of their role as head and their ultimate responsibility when inspections take place, and from below as part of a team of class teachers. This has led, according to Webb and Vulliamy (1996b), to a tension between collegiality and managerialism with the result that more directive approaches are being adopted to manage change. This view is supported by Pollard et al (1994) in their Primary Assessment Curriculum and Experience (PACE) study.

Government has driven the changes which schools have faced, particularly since 1988. They have been imposed by statute and schools have then had to implement them. Thus, the prerequisite for change which many researchers (Clarke, 1994; Carnall, 1995) have identified, that those involved should see the desirability of change and be dissatisfied with the status quo, has not always been strongly evident, despite the comments of heads such as Milburn's. One of the "battles" this head mentioned concerned the hostility towards the changes in assessment made in the late 1980s and 1990s and culminated in the boycott of testing and assessment and saw the series of Secretary of State being replaced. It might be argued that a greater understanding of the mechanics of the process of change may have enabled the government to have approached their "battles" in a more productive and less confrontational manner.

Wilson and Corcoran (1988) suggested that policy-makers should "temper their desires for immediate and total change with an understanding of the change process" (cited in Fullan, 1991). It would appear that the Government did not dwell on the need to

develop an understanding of the subtleties of the change process, but relied instead upon coercion. As Woods et al (1997, p.9) put it:

> "Since teachers are no longer required by the state to engage in professional debates concerning the ends of education, but are merely expected to implement the plans of others, collegial work can be considered as a form of 'indirect rule' by the state. Thus, by this argument, teachers come to collaborate in their own oppression."

Considered in the light of much of the literature on change, the above words are significant. It would appear that some of the features of the management of change which are seen as desirable (collaboration and collegiality) have developed in response to the Government's mandated change without being based upon some other desirable features of change such as participation, empowerment and ownership, and a perception that change is needed by those who have to implement that change. Nevertheless, the introduction of change by top down mandate is not necessarily viewed as making the change process problematical. Fullan (1999) asserts that mandates put pressure on local reform and "provide opportunities for legitimizing the efforts of local change agents working against the grain. Top-down mandates and bottom-up energies need each other" (p.19). It seems, too, that some of the desirable features of change can develop within a situation where change is mandated. For example, Fullan (1992) argues that true ownership does not occur "magically at the beginning, but rather is something that comes out the other end of a successful change process" (p.128). Similarly, he suggests that participation, initiative and empowerment "are key factors from the beginning, but sometimes do not get activated until a change process has begun" (ibid. p.127). He also argues that the 'fit' between a new programme and a school's needs "may not become entirely clear until implementation is underway" (ibid.p.112).

Hargreaves, A (1994) maintains that practice can change before beliefs and that this may be particularly so when change is imposed. The changes in the mood of headteachers' comments about some aspects of the ERA, which are evident in the 1990, 1995 and 1998 surveys conducted for the present research, suggest that, in some cases at least, heads may have changed their beliefs as changes were put into practice.

Hargreaves goes on to argue that teachers' own desires for change tend to be overridden when politicians and administrators impose change. They rely upon compulsion, constraint and contrivance to force teachers to change and assume that teachers are to blame for pupils' lack of achievement. Hargreaves' description of the features of the changes which are imposed are redolent of those which made up the ERA and which have been imposed since:

> "mandated and purportedly teacher-proof curriculum guidelines, imposition of standardized testing to control what teachers teach, saturation in new teaching methods of supposedly proven effectiveness, career bribery through programs of teacher leadership linked to pay and incentives, and market competitiveness between schools to secure change through teachers' instinct for survival as the struggle to protect their schools and preserve their jobs" (pp.11-12).

Such an approach may serve to divorce heads from the blame for change in the eyes of their staffs, while at the same time giving them greater authority to implement change. It will be seen in Chapter Nine that some heads, while they complained about some government initiatives, felt that the statutory changes had given them what the head of Borchester (314 pupils) called "the clout" to make changes without encountering overt staff resistance. This view is echoed by the head of a primary school in Webb and Vulliamy's (1996b) study who had experienced problems in making changes in his school before the ERA and had met resistance from staff:

> "Along came the documentation and there all of a sudden I could say 'Right you see that, do it. Not for me, no, because the law says we all have to do it', and so that was a major turning point." (p.449)

The Government appeared to put great faith in headteachers to introduce the changes successfully. Indeed, a national qualification for headteachers was introduced in the 1990s and was regarded by the Government as having a vital role to play in creating more effective leaders. The role of headteachers in educational change is the subject of the next section.

Change and The Headteacher

The changes to education made by the Conservative Government in the 1980s and 1990s, together with those introduced since 1997, have increased heads' administrative burden (see Table 7.1). The result is that heads may, according to Southworth (1999), be *transactional* rather than *transformational* leaders. Southworth asserts that headship is being reshaped by external changes and that heads' involvement in this reshaping is limited: "They are the objects to which the change forces are applied. Headship is therefore being largely designed and driven by the policy makers not the practitioners" (p.63). He maintains that "the prospects for transformational leadership in schools in England look, to put it bluntly, bleak" (p.63). This would seem to be a reasonable conclusion, given the views of Northouse (1997) that such leadership involves being attentive to the needs and motives of followers, and Senge (1993) and Coleman (1994) that transformational leadership is value and vision driven. Given the prescriptive nature of educational change, especially since 1988, opportunities for visionary approaches and concern for the needs of those to be led, may be limited. Nevertheless, Northouse's description of the transformational approach suggests that some aspects may be feasible within schools, even if the vision is not conceived by the leader but is one imposed by government. For example, he asserts that "To create

change, transformational leaders become strong role models for their followers" (op cit., p.142). The teaching head, faced with implementing educational change, has an obvious advantage here in that she can provide a model for her colleagues within her own classroom.

It is interesting to note here the parallel with the position of teachers who similarly faced implementing change which was externally imposed. However, while teachers have often been criticised and derided, successive governments and senior figures in education have taken pains to assert the importance of the headteacher. The white paper, *Excellence in Schools*, for example, stated:

> "The quality of the head often makes the difference between the success and failure of a school. Good heads can transform a school; poor heads can block progress and achievement. It is essential that we have measures in place to strengthen the skills of all new and serving heads." (DfEE, 1997, p.46)

Chris Woodhead, Chief Inspector of Schools, was unequivocal:

> "It is the leadership provided by the headteacher which is the critical factor in raising standards of pupil achievement...headteachers must have a clear vision of the curriculum...the strength of personality and interpersonal tact needed to engage with teachers in raising standards...the administrative drive to plan programmes of improvement and see that they were carried through." (1996, pp.10-11)

However, Southworth (op cit.) asserted that "when central Government refers to leaders transforming 'their' schools, what is meant is the improvement of the school's effectiveness and performance and not revisions to the school as a social and moral organisation" (p.54).

What is it, then, that headteachers do which makes them such significant players in educational change? Bell (1988, pp.6-7) defined the role simply:

> "Expressed in terms of what a manager in a primary school may actually be observed to do, these tasks fall into the deceptively simple categories of keeping things going (administration), doing new things (innovation), and reacting to crisis (salvation). Effective management demands that the manager in the primary school achieves an appropriate balance between these three tasks. To the extent that any one of them receives too much attention or too little consideration the total enterprise will suffer."

Bell's simple analysis of transactional primary school management in the late 1980s provides a basis on which to analyse the changing role of the headteacher as the 1988 Education Reform Act and other legislation began to impinge upon it, and put pressure on heads to give more attention to some tasks than others. The model relies upon heads being seen as managers rather than leaders in possession of a vision, and it may be that time constraints force some heads into a disempowered, functional role in which they run their schools in response to external forces, but do not transform their schools. Southworth (op cit.), for example, found from interviews with ten headteachers that they criticised the manner of government's implementation of reforms and regarded many as being "hurried and ill-thought-out" (p.56). The heads felt that it had been up to them and their colleagues to try to make the reforms work. Their views on their increased workloads and in particular their administrative burdens echoed those found from the present author's research (see Chapter Nine). The heads felt personally accountable for their schools' performance, but asserted that the range of pressures of work impeded their ability to develop the schools as they would have wished:

> "All implied they were juggling competing priorities for their time and attention and often felt they had to relinquish development activities because maintenance tasks were more urgent. There was too much management and not enough time for development." (p.56)

Fullan (1994) discusses some of the problems which occur when the head is closely associated with a vision of the school. Teachers, he asserts, lack opportunities to

challenge the vision and to let the head know that it may be flawed, and they become manipulated and managed with collaboration being imposed. Bell (1999), too, argues that the conceptualisation of educational management which over-emphasises the headteacher is flawed since it assumes that the head will provide a vision of what the school should be like. This view of management, according to Bell, ignores the importance of involving staff at organisational and operational levels. The vision, he avers, needs to be shared by all members of the school and heads cannot manage schools without significant support from colleagues. However, the tradition of the head being central to the school's culture is embedded in primary education's culture (Alexander, 1984, Torrington and Weightman, 1993) and perhaps accounts for why, in the past at least, many people wished to assume the role. The extent of the heads' identification with their schools was, Southworth found, evident when Ofsted inspections took place:

> "For them, the inspection was not only an external audit of the school's strengths, and the quality of its work, it was also, because of the head's strong attachment to the school and identification with it, a professional assessment of the head. At its very core the meaning of school inspection for primary headteachers is that it is they who are being judged." (p.57)

Nevertheless, it is clear from the interviews with headteachers which appear in the present research that some heads' perceptions of their roles differ from what Gunter (1997) asserts is the model of headship which is presented by the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH), and which she argues is at odds with educational values. She analyses some of the changes in the work of headteachers in the previous decade and concludes that:

> "Educational professionals are being constructed as purchasers or providers, who work in cost centres, negotiate contracts and achieve individualised differentials through performance-driven pay" (p.253).

West (2000) found that heads had different perceptions of their roles and were conscious of a variety of possible styles of leadership. All of the heads in his research could cite instances of change being implemented because of their strong personal involvement, but all could also provide examples of occasions when they took a supporting role in changes and developments. The present author's research revealed that while the head of Kirkby (93 pupils) was pleased that Ofsted inspectors could not readily identify him as the headteacher because of the collaborative culture which he felt he had created in the school, the roles assumed by other heads (Borchester, Milburn and Turf Moor, for example) were much closer to the managerial images which Gunter finds distasteful.

Jones' (1999) study of 12 primary heads led her to conclude that "...the primary headteacher role is in a process of fundamental change..." (p.493). All of the heads felt that their roles had changed significantly as a result of Government legislation and that their jobs had been "enlarged as a result of an increase in management activities" (p.486).

The present research is concerned particularly with small primary schools and it may be that the headteachers of such schools operate in different ways from colleagues in larger schools. Research on Scottish small schools by Wilson and McPake (2000), who defined small schools as having fewer than 120 pupils, is revealing. In Scotland 38% of primary schools fall into the category of small schools. In a two-year study of the management of change, commissioned by the Scottish Office, Wilson and McPake conducted a national survey to which 82% of small school heads in Scotland responded. They found that:

> "The dual role of teaching headteacher and vertical grouping of pupils are factors with which all small school headteachers must cope and which militate against the withdrawal of the small school headteacher behind hierarchical structures." (p.121).

Wilson and McPake found that 83% of headteachers in their survey agreed that heads' credibility was based on the example they set for other staff in the classroom. Delegation was placed low on heads' list of management strategies, but the authors assert that lack of staff numbers can be advantageous, given that every member of staff would be likely to be involved in the implementation of change and would, therefore, be aware of the issues. The head's involvement as a teacher would also enhance his of her role as a curriculum leader.

Small school heads were involved in a wide range of management activities and were particularly adept at time management, according to Wilson and McPake. Involvement in activities as diverse as unblocking drains and programming boilers "is likely to be an advantage for a headteacher of a small school", since it provides him or her with a wide repertoire (p.129). The assertion that small school heads differ from their counterparts in large schools is interesting, particularly given the researchers' views on styles of management:

> "...it seems clear that headteachers of small schools do not adopt a style of management based upon the 'positional power' of the headteacher to make decisions, determine strategy, delegate tasks and monitor performance. Our evidence suggests that they see themselves as part of the 'teaching team', work with others as professional colleagues and lead from within the group, rather than directing from the outside." (p.129)

Wilson and McPake argue that small schools heads do not operate the traditional 'plan-implement-review' model for change and define such heads' approach as:

- quick audit
- realistic planning for achievable targets
- implement with help from all available internal or external sources, especially networking
- 'sign off' – move on

(p.130)

The lack of time available to small school heads for evaluation and monitoring may, suggest Wilson and McPake, be seen as a weakness and they suggest that additional support may be needed for this.

Dimmock (1999), in his study of the perceived dilemmas of a group of Australian principals, argues that school leaders tend to neglect professional and educational aspects of their roles as they increase their administrative and non-educational functions. He suggests that successful performance of one set of functions makes performance in the other more difficult and goes on to maintain that school restructuring in Australia has centred on improving the quality of teaching and learning, and that this has been the most difficult challenge for principals. One can see a parallel here with events in England and Wales which have required changes in teachers' classroom practices. Where heads are preoccupied with management and administration and are increasingly divorced from the classroom, it may be difficult for them to influence teaching practice.

In small schools, where the head is also a class teacher, it may be much easier to implement change. Wilson and McPake (op cit.) define the small school heads' approach as *situational school management* since it is "determined more by context than management philosophy" (p.130). This may lead to a more natural relationship with colleagues which, where staff are on good terms, could invoke a co-operative approach to managing change. This view is supported by Webb's (1993) research and

Implementation of the National Curriculum in Small Schools (INCSS) (see Galton et al, 1998) which demonstrate that heads in small schools were better acquainted with the National Curriculum than their counterparts in larger schools, whose work on LMS, in particular, kept them out of classrooms. Heads in small schools, meanwhile, were delivering the curriculum in classrooms just as their colleagues were.

The preferred management model of the 1980s and 1990s was, according to Bush (1999), collegiality, with professionals sharing ownership of outcomes. This has been modified as a result of the pressures to implement externally imposed changes so that Hargreaves' (1994) concept of *contrived collegiality*, described later in this chapter, seems best to describe its present incarnation, given the imposition by some LEAs of clustering arrangements, and many heads' development of senior management teams and phase teams within schools.

Woods et al (1997) confirm that many writers see the role of the head as having changed considerably in emphasis, with a move from being *leading professional* to *chief executive.* Pollard et al (1994) found that there was a trend away from collaboration in managing change in schools and towards more directed approaches. However, many heads have set up structures similar to that which Woods et al (op cit.) describe in their study as *contrived democracy.* Thus, in one of the schools which formed part of their study, Woods et al found that a new head had set up "a productive informal collaborative culture" (p.46) which contrasted with the regime of his predecessor and which was appreciated by staff. However, under pressure from outside agencies he began to be more directive and collegiality became contrived. The head of St Kevin's (168 pupils), whose comments are recorded in Chapter Nine, faced similar pressures following an Ofsted inspection.

However, in contriving collaborative structures, heads faced problems since teachers, who had generally operated in a culture of individualism, were seen as badly placed to respond to change. Webb and Vulliamy (1995) suggest that teachers may have been deskilled by having to implement a curriculum which many had not previously taught, while Hargreaves, A (1992) maintained:

> "Getting teachers to work more closely together may be undermined by a curriculum that is seen by teachers as so tightly defined, there is little for them to collaborate about." (in Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992, p.44)

Fullan (1991) argued that it was easier to change structures than values, beliefs and behaviours. Both he and Hargreaves, A (1994) advocate collaboration as a means to change cultures, since it provides teachers with opportunities to work together to try new experiences. The sharing of professional knowledge is central to school improvement according to Hargreaves, D and Hopkins (1991), and is supported by Ofsted in its criteria for inspection (Ofsted 1995b). It is interesting, given Ofsted's supposed enthusiasm for collaboration, that some of the heads interviewed for the present study were criticised by inspectors for their collegiate approaches (see Chapter Nine). Issues surrounding collaboration and collegiality are, therefore, addressed in the next section.

Collaboration and Collegiality

Jones, N (1999) has asserted that "...the NC brought benefits in terms of whole-school collaboration, shared planning and team work but also brought such negative features as lowering of staff's confidence, lowering of morale and excessive paperwork" (p.446).

In this section, collaboration within and between individual schools will be discussed, since collaborative ventures have been advocated and encouraged both by researchers on management of change (for example, Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992b) and government as the means of implementing change effectively and efficiently. HMI in 1978 had maintained that effective teachers were capable of working with colleagues to share subject expertise and to provide training and guidance. Hargreaves, A (1994) referred to a new professionalism with collaboration replacing teacher isolation, and maintained that collaboration and collegiality may take many different forms. Where specific initiatives are concerned they might include: team teaching, collaborative planning, peer coaching, mentor relationships, professional dialogue and collaborative action research. Informally, they can include: staffroom talk, conversation outside the classroom, help and advice about resources and many other "small but significant actions" (p.188).

It may be that, when directed to collaborate, teachers resent this and fail to become involved with the culture of collegiality. Hargreaves explores this and other notions of co-operation by examining *collaborative cultures* and *contrived collegiality.* The key features are set out below:

COLLABORATIVE CULTURES	CONTRIVED COLLEGIALITY
spontaneously formed	administratively regulated
voluntary	compulsory
development-oriented	implementation oriented
pervasive across time and space	fixed in time and space
unpredictable	predictable

Collaborative cultures, while they appear to provide participants with a sense of ownership and control, may become comfortable and complacent and lead to a lack of challenge to current practices. As Hargreaves contends: "Collegiality can be reduced

to congeniality" (p.195). Contrived or mandated collegiality, however, may fail through certain drawbacks which are summed up by Hargreaves:

> "The inflexibility of mandated collegiality makes it difficult for programs to be adjusted to the purposes and practicalities of particular school and classroom settings. It overrides teachers' professionalism and the discretionary judgment which comprises it. And it diverts teachers' efforts and energies into simulated compliance with administrative demands that are inflexible and inappropriate for the settings in which they work." (p.208)

Hargreaves' findings have implications for the present study in that they provide a framework in which to explore the successes and failures of some of the clustering arrangements which heads have described (see, in particular, Chapter Nine). It seems clear that Darrington's (70 pupils) successful cluster group was not contrived or mandated by the LEA and that the energy which has gone into its development has resulted from participants feeling motivated to play their part in this. Rivalries between schools and teachers have not been a factor, since the schools are geographically widely spread. Membership is voluntary and, while the cluster has certain targets, particularly since the appointment of a science co-ordinator, there is also an unpredictable element to the cluster's work. It is well-established and has been able to turn its attention to new issues as these have arisen. Darrington's cluster appears, therefore, to meet Hargreaves' criteria for being a collaborative culture.

The decline of some of the other clusters may be due to their being mandated by the LEA which, buoyed by the receipt of government funding through Education Support Grants (ESG), was keen to establish them in response to the perceived problems which might face schools when implementing educational change. These clusters appear, in Hargreaves' terms, to be contrived and to be implementation-oriented. It seems, from heads' comments, that the clusters did not always take into account the individual needs of member schools and that rivalries between geographically proximate schools

may have been a factor in reducing their efficacy. The cluster in which Charlton (135 pupils) is involved is an interesting exception to this, since it includes only those schools within one secondary school's catchment area, and the primary schools within it range in size from 60 pupils to over 400. Many compete with each other for pupil numbers. It was interesting to note that disunity existed within the group over target-setting at the time of the interviews. This did not appear to be a threat to the cluster's continued existence, perhaps because the nature of the cluster as part of a pyramid would make it difficult for one school to leave, and also because many of the cluster's activities were well-established and involved teachers within classrooms as well as headteachers. As the head of Charlton explained:

> *"I did consider throwing the towel in and letting them get on with it [when some submitted targets after promising not to do so] but there would be an outcry from parents and teachers if we stopped doing French* [this had been made possible because of a cluster initiative] *and we probably would if we weren't in the pyramid group. Anyway, it's more of a lovers' tiff that a divorce issue. We all know each other too well for any of us to take our bats home."*

The cluster had evolved partly at the instigation of the secondary school, but with the support and compliance of the primaries. Its strength appeared to lie in the fact that members felt a sense of ownership of the activities and an involvement in the development of the cluster's work. Membership was accorded by virtue of schools being.part of the secondary school's catchment but the cluster was not contrived by the LEA as many of the small school clusters had been. In fact, the schools varied considerably in size with only one having 100 or fewer pupils.

The clusters in Hull were, in most cases, imposed by the local authority and were generally at a less advanced stage than Charlton's. Indeed, most of the collaboration in the family groups of schools was at headteacher level and did not have a direct bearing upon classroom teachers. Schools were generally not competing for the same pupils,

however, and heads in some were enthusiastic about the clusters. The exception in Hull was the Education Action Zone (EAZ) which was confined to one area of the city and was in the first stages of a major enterprise which would affect every teacher and pupil. Interviews conducted by the present author, who is jointly responsible for evaluating the EAZ (unpublished data), suggest that most heads are very enthusiastic about the EAZ and do not feel threatened by working with potential rivals. However, the head of one school was a notable exception who clearly did not wish to be associated with the project and had sought unsuccessfully to have his school excluded. Consequently, he attended none of the meetings and his school was a nominal rather than actual participant. This seems to be an example of what Hargreaves would term *mandated collegiality* and illustrates the problems which may occur when schools are forced against their wishes to collaborate.

Sullivan (p.94 in Macbeth, McCreath and Aitchison (eds), 1995) sums up the problem of inducing collaboration in a climate of competition:

> "How can schools be expected to link together with others in the neighbourhood in this climate of enforced competition? Firmly linking funding to pupil numbers has ensured a vigorous response to market forces. Where there is a surplus of pupil places, co-operation and friendly rivalry has often been replaced by sharp marketing and a schism between schools."

Husbands (1996) suggests that some collaborative developments between small schools develop from schools seeing that their wider interests might be served by collaboration in a limited number of defined areas, and that this collaboration may actually make competition a greater possibility. For example, schools might work collectively to develop science in their curricula or to enhance extra-curricular activities, in order to make them more attractive to parents and pupils, and to enable them to compete against larger schools for pupil numbers. Thus localised competition

with non-members of the cluster could be precipitated by co-operation between smaller schools.

It was clear from an interview with the head of the non-participating EAZ school that local rivalries were a major factor in his school's lack of enthusiasm for the EAZ. His was the most successful school in the area in terms of SATs scores and it attracted a relatively middle class clientele. He felt that his school had succeeded where others had failed and he did not see why others should have *"easy access to the things we have done to make us successful when we've done all the hard work"*. In addition, he resented having the EAZ imposed upon his school because it happened to be in a convenient geographical location. He did not feel the school would benefit from participation (*"except materially by getting a computer suite and an interactive whiteboard")* and suggested that involvement would *"have a negative effect on our image"*. Leonard (1995) discusses NIH ('not invented here') syndrome and argues that this exists where there is a negative response to new ideas. She suggests that "The most successful antidote to NIH is an organizational culture that embodies a sense of urgency for innovation, encourages interactions with outside sources of expertise..." (p.160 cited in Fullan, 1999). The EAZ certainly exhibited these features and evaluations by the University of Hull and the DfEE confirmed this. However, the head's response demonstrates the problems which contrived or mandated collegiality can bring.

Hargreaves and Fullan (1998) argue that it is no longer tenable or desirable for schools to withdraw from their environments and ignore what is happening 'out there'. Schools, they maintain, need outside influences to enable them to get jobs done and collaborative schools are better able to deal with the outside. Nevertheless, some schools clearly do not accept readily the influences of collegiality where this does not

match their perceived requirements. In the case of non-participating EAZ school, the head had links with other CE schools which he found helpful, but his participation in the EAZ and the family cluster created by the LEA were limited.

Collaboration, then, is generally viewed as a desirable means of implementing educational change, but it takes different forms. The absence of a culture of collegiality in many schools meant that this was contrived in order to meet a pressing need. In some cases schools have co-operated with each other in clusters, although, again, some of these clusters were contrived by local education authorities. The declining influence of LEAs, allied to an increasingly competitive climate in inter-school relationships, appears to have made some schools reassess their involvement in clustering arrangements (see Chapter Nine). Within schools, collaborative ventures may have proved more successful as teachers did not generally consider themselves to be in competition with each other. However, it will be interesting to see if the introduction of threshold payments for selected teachers in 2000 will lead to a more competitive climate within schools. It appears that governments create a need for collegiality and co-operation through legislating for educational change, and then make such collegiality unappealing through further reforms.

Local Contexts for Change

It has been maintained that a prerequisite for successful educational change is that instigators take account of local context when devising programmes. As Fullan (1999, p.21) has argued:

> "Local context (readiness to learn, local capacity, etc.) is a crucial variable. and no program can expect to spread successfully if it does not take into account the various contexts which it will inevitably encounter."

In this section the importance of local context will be explored in the light of educational changes made in England and Wales. Healey and De Stefano (1997, p.10) suggest that successful reforms have the following features:

1. The reform addressed a well-understood local need,
2. there is a significant local demand for the reform,
3. the reform itself is locally derived,
4. it is championed by one or more 'messiahs',
5. it is adequately financed, and
6. there is widespread ownership of the reform.

It is interesting to compare Healey and De Stefano's features of successful reform with the model which seems to have been used by governments, particularly since 1988. The ERA addressed what politicians perceived to be a national rather than a local need, and did so at a time when many did not feel that curricular reform was necessary or desirable in the form which it eventually took (Lawton, 1988). However, there was a groundswell of opinion, especially outside the education establishment, which favoured change. Reforms were certainly not locally derived and, while he may be flattered by the epithet, Kenneth Baker, who championed the ERA, was hardly seen as a 'messiah' by teachers. Indeed, Coulby (in Bash and Coulby, 1989, p.69) wrote:

> "The profession a whole has little reason to offer Baker its support: apart from being the man who deprived them of their negotiating rights, he is regarded as a politician more interested in furthering his own career than in the painstaking implementation of important educational change."

As far as adequate financing is concerned, the Government spent considerable amounts of money on the ERA and produced vast amounts of folders and other literature, but it did so in a period of cuts in public spending, and many would argue that financial aid at school level was limited (see Chapter Nine). Finally, the extent to which those who had to deliver it felt they had ownership of the curriculum is open to debate. The curriculum was not devised by those who taught it and it was imposed upon them. However, a sense of ownership may have arisen as individual schools introduced

collaborative structures in order to allow teachers to come to terms with the practicalities of delivering the curriculum.

In discussing systematic school improvement programmes in the USA, Fullan (1999) argues that roles and responsibilities change in successful projects so that schools in large districts dismantle independent staff development departments and incorporate responsibility for this into the role of the area superintendent responsible for a cluster of schools (p.51). This is an interesting viewpoint when seen in the light of the fall and rise and possible further fall of LEAs in England and Wales. During the height of the implementation of educational reforms, LEAs were under threat from a government which urged schools to opt out of their control and which forced them to hand over ever-increasing portions of the rate support grant to schools, who could then decide whether or not to buy in LEA services. The LEAs enjoyed something of a revival under New Labour, but were still under threat and some, at the time of writing, have had responsibility for schools removed and transferred to private companies. The uncertain position of LEAs made them less significant as agents for change and some heads in the pilot study for the present research reported, in 1990, that their LEAs had taken few authority wide initiatives to help schools to implement the ERA. Humberside, which is the former LEA in which the three surveys took place was, initially, proactive (see earlier in this chapter) in both curricular and financial matters. It set up an LMS advisory group of seconded senior teachers and heads to support heads in financial management and encouraged and virtually mandated clustering arrangements for small schools using Educational Support Grants.

Kingston-Upon-Hull LEA, which was formed in 1996 after Humberside LEA was dismantled, maintained the tradition of intervention and reacted to its lowly position in league tables of academic performance and relatively low levels of achievement in

literacy in particular, by providing training for teachers from all of its schools in THRASS [Teaching Handwriting Reading and Spelling Skills] (Davies and Ritchie, 1998). This was seen as something of a panacea for raising literacy levels and many schools adopted the scheme. The knowledge that the LEA was to be inspected provided a stimulus for many to introduce THRASS, as well as the fact that literacy levels were so publicly scrutinised. Hull's proactive approach was not typical of the other LEAs which had formed Humberside, but demonstrates the urgency which may arise when anxiety levels are raised through the presence of quasi-autonomous accountability agencies.

Gross et al (1971) found, from their research on educational innovation in an American elementary school, that it was important that a strategy should include mechanisms for effective feedback between those who initiate change and those who have to implement it. This contrasts, perhaps, with the minimal consultation which was allowed during the implementation of educational reforms in the post ERA period. Opinions were sought during limited periods which often coincided with the ends of terms or school holidays, but once reforms were on the statute books those implementing them were seldom invited to offer feedback at anything other than a local level (Tomlinson, 1992).

The educational reforms in England and Wales, then, signally failed to take into account local contexts. While the delivery of the National Curriculum could be adapted to take into account the different natures of small and large schools, since it prescribed a syllabus but not pedagogy, the NLS and NNS went further and set out the teaching methods which were to be deployed. Although some minimal guidance was provided for small schools and mixed age teaching, this did not amount to taking into account local contexts in any significant way. The fact that a different political party,

when it came to power, should implement change in a similar way to its predecessor says much about its acceptance of the efficacy of such an approach. The NLS was, at least, piloted through the National Literacy Project, and its implementation was not statutory. However, ministerial pronouncements and speeches by those responsible for implementing NLS made it clear that schools which did not adopt the Strategy could be poorly judged by Ofsted if they were found wanting in literacy teaching (Barber, 1998).

Micklethwait and Wooldridge's (1996) views that the state is "an incredibly blunt instrument; it gets hold of one overarching idea and imposes it without any sensitivity to the local context" (p.121) has applications for the UK where the NNS and NLS were imposed by a government seeking what Micklethwait and Wooldridge would term a "magical solution" to a problem of under achievement in numeracy and literacy. The lack of account taken of local context and the features of schools of different kinds, particularly those in which children were taught in mixed-age classes, suggests that Fullan's words are particularly appropriate when considered in the light of the implementation of the NLS and NNS:

> "Most reform initiatives at best have a theory of education, and rarely have a theory of action to address local context or conditions." (Fullan, 1999, p.65)

As Healey and De Stefano (1997, p.11) assert:

> "...even in those instances where an 'outside' innovation addresses some of the specific needs and aspirations of a particular location, its fate is still precarious, for unless there is widespread ownership of the innovation (a factor largely engendered through the development of local solutions), chances are that it will not become a permanent part of that location's educational landscape."

Discussion

Fullan (1999) describes the implementation of the NLS and NNS as being "...the most ambitious implementation strategy undertaken by a major government" (pp.58-59),

since their goals are backed by implementation strategies which include "initial teacher training, professional development, local plans, assessment and feedback, family programs, national activities and the like" (p.58).

The local plans relate to targets rather than any account which those who devised the strategies might have taken of local contexts. However, the comprehensive nature of the educational change and the structures which accompany it have taken mandated change to a new level. For the first time a style of pedagogy has been prescribed and it appears from progress reports (Ofsted 1999) that teachers generally seem to have adopted it. It may be that teachers have become used to accepting edicts from outside agencies and no longer have the will or desire to oppose them. It is difficult to imagine that the NLS and NNS could have been implemented in the school culture which existed in the 1970s and early 1980s, and it may be that the Education Reform Act and other pieces of legislation laid the foundation for the more prescriptive changes which have followed by changing the culture of primary schools. This susceptibility to change is illustrated by the fact that the NLS and NNS are not statutory as the National Curriculum is, but it appears that virtually all state schools have adopted them.

New Labour, having before the election talked of an alternative curriculum "which values local flexibility and the professional discretion of teachers" (Labour Party, 1994), continued to deploy the prescriptive curriculum devised by the Conservatives. Indeed, it went on to introduce the NLS and NNS which were more prescriptive than anything which had gone before. It came to office pledging to achieve literacy and numeracy targets for 11-year-olds by the end of its term of office in 2002, and stated its aims in simplistic terms redolent of the Tories' 'back to basics' ethos. Every child was to be "taught to read, write and add up" (DfEE, 1997, p.9). The literacy and numeracy strategies were the big ideas which were to ensure that this happened.

Both New Labour and the Conservatives maintained control over curriculum content, but New Labour sought to influence pedagogy in a way that their predecessors never attempted. Davies and Edwards (1999) argue that both approaches have in common "a profound mistrust of teachers" (p.270). They suggest that the close control of teaching methods means that we might view the literacy and numeracy hours "as the pedagogical equivalents of painting by numbers" (p.270).

The culture of primary education has, it would seem, changed as governments have become progressively more daring in their introduction of educational changes. Changes have been imposed as politicians became increasingly determined to challenge what was perceived to be a conservative educational establishment. The changes have altered in many ways the nature of the curriculum and the ways in which schools are run. However, despite the radical elements of the changes, it is interesting to speculate as to whether the Government would have been able to introduce the NLS and NNS in the educational climate which existed before 1988, given the way in which pedagogy is prescribed. It may be that many educators have, like the head of Milburn, resigned themselves to having lost any battles which might be fought against change. It will be interesting to see if the empirical studies for this and other research reveal that heads' perceptions of their roles have changed as they have increasingly been faced with implementing changes which have been initiated by others.

The review of literature on educational change and other research related to school size has given rise to certain questions which are especially relevant to the present study. Some of these questions were determined at the outset of the study, while others arose as a result of continued educational change and schools' reactions to it. These

questions will form the basis of much of the empirical research which will be described in subsequent chapters:

- To what extent have the externally imposed reforms changed the role of the head?
  Does school size affect this?
  How have heads of different sized schools responded to educational change?
- How have teachers been affected by educational change?
- To what extent are collaborative structures set up by schools of different sizes when they attempt to implement change?
  Which factors encourage or inhibit collaboration?
- How have schools of different sizes approached and been affected by educational change?
- How capable are schools of different sizes of implementing change?

The research instruments used to seek answers to these questions are described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

METHODOLOGY FOR EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

"Research is conducted to solve problems and to expand knowledge."
(Drew, 1980, p.4)

Background

The existing research in this field is largely based upon studies conducted in the 1980s, and it was felt that educational changes of such significance had occurred since then that new research would have to be conducted if any meaningful conclusions were to be drawn. Since the research began other researchers (e.g. Galton et al, 1998) have worked in similar areas and their results will be compared with those from the recent research.

A Triangulation of Methods

The methodology for research for this thesis was based upon a triangulation of methods (Denzin, 1978) designed to allow analysis of findings based upon three key periods and three categories of school size. The three methods of research involved were:

1 *Exploration of findings of other researchers through an extensive literature review;*
2 *Three postal surveys: one in each of 1990, 1995 and 1998;*
3 *Structured interviews with headteachers in 1998.*

Denzin argued that by using a triangulation of methods any inherent bias in methods, investigators and sources could be neutralised. King (in Richardson [ed] 1996) suggests that triangulation is justified by researchers who claim that it strengthens the claims they make and provides "a richer and fuller story" (p.194) rather than absolute truth, while Woods (1986) states that "the use of three or more methods or bearings to explore an issue greatly increases the chances of accuracy" (p.87). In the case of the present study, there was only one investigator, but by using different research

instruments it was hoped that breadth could be added to the study and that the first methods used would help to inform subsequent methods (Greene et al, 1989).

Bryman (1988) asserts that there are certain difference between quantitative research such as surveys, and qualitative research such as that used for interviewing heads. The former may be preparatory for the latter, which can be a means of exploring the respondents interpretations. Data produced may be richer and deeper than the "hard, reliable" material which can emerge from a survey.

In this chapter, the methodology which was employed for postal surveys and structured interviews will be discussed and explained.

Research Questions

Some research questions arose from an initial survey of relevant reading, while others emerged with further reading and following new government initiatives and education acts, and as a result of the findings from empirical research. Structured interviews helped address issues which were not evident in 1990, but which were affecting schools in 1998. The matrix below (Table 5.1) provides details of the research questions and the instruments used to seek answers to them.

TABLE 5.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR THE PRESENT STUDY

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS
To what extent have the externally imposed reforms changed the role of the head? Does school size affect this? How have heads of different sized schools responded to educational change?	Structured interview Questionnaire Literature review
How have teachers been affected by educational change?	Structured interview Questionnaire Literature review
To what extent are collaborative structures set up by schools of different sizes when they attempt to implement change? Which factors encourage or inhibit collaboration?	Structured interview Questionnaire Literature review
How have schools of different sizes approached and been affected by educational change?	Structured interview Questionnaire Literature review
How capable are schools of different sizes of implementing change?	Structured interview Literature review

Structured interviews were also conducted in 1990 and involved five schools. These interviews provided useful background information but, since three of the headteachers were no longer in post by 1998, the same sample of headteachers could not be re-interviewed and a new sample was chosen. Two of the schools which retained the same headteacher continued to be in the sample for the 1998 interviews. The 1990 interview responses have been incorporated, where appropriate, into the discussion of the empirical data which resulted from the 1990 surveys. An analysis of two of the 1990 interviews may be found in Waugh (1991).

RESEARCH DESIGN FOR THE QUESTIONNAIRE STUDY

The present study is a *longitudinal panel study* (Babbie, 1973), that is, it involves the collection of data over a period of time from the same group of schools. Such studies, according to Babbie, may suffer from *panel attrition* whereby the initial sample is reduced as respondents either decline to respond or leave the sample: this was true of the present study.

Questionnaires provide lists of questions which are asked of all respondents in exactly the same way. The questions may be closed and require a yes/no answer or the provision of data. Such questions provide answers which may analysed and presented in tabulated form. Other forms of closed questions require respondents to select from a range of alternatives. Such questions limit the responses available to the respondent, but enable the researcher to use a simple coding system to analyse results using a computer.

Open questions enable respondents to determine more precisely how they wish to answer. Although more often associated with interviews than postal surveys, open questions may be appended to closed questions in order to allow respondents to elaborate upon closed answers. A common feature of many texts which provide guidance on questionnaire design is the advice that care should be taken to avoid complex and misleading wording of questions or phrasing which is ambiguous and which may produce different interpretations by different respondents (Mann, 1985). Moser (1958) maintained that for virtually any question there are "several possible, and theoretically acceptable, forms" (p.212) and that the researcher will draw upon knowledge of the survey population and subject, as well as past experience and common sense, in order to determine which is most appropriate. Oppenheim (1976) suggests that poor questions often produce meaningless answers or may lead the respondent towards a particular answer. He advocates the use of pilot studies in order to ascertain whether the answers produced indicate that any questions may be flawed.

Wellington (1996) argued that data collected by postal questionnaire "may even be richer, perhaps more truthful, than data collected in a face-to-face interview" (p.56), since respondents may be more articulate in writing or more forthcoming when

anonymity is guaranteed. Oppenheim asserts that "the chief advantage of the mail questionnaire is cheapness" (p.32), since costs are limited to planning and pilot work, printing, sampling and preparing material for posting. Unlike interviews and field work, they do not require travel and maintenance expenditure. However, questionnaires have well-documented limitations (Silverman, 1993; Walker, 1985) and, although they provide a ready source of data, they do not necessarily provide detailed background information. In addition, response rates may be poor and unrepresentative and Oppenheim states that a return of 80% is seldom exceeded, with 40 to 60% being typical. For the reasons indicated above, and in order to provide a triangulation of research methods, in addition to the questionnaire survey, a series of structured interviews with headteachers was conducted in 1990 and further interviews took place in 1998.

Pilot Questionnaire

A pilot questionnaire (Appendix 2) was presented to twelve headteachers from LEAs in different parts of the country, who were asked not only to complete it, but also to comment upon the questions and the ease of answering them. The heads were part of a group which met for a conference in 1990 and were, therefore, not randomly selected, but were an *opportunity sample*.

The aims of the pilot study were to evaluate the questionnaire's layout; the clarity of the instructions; the wording of the questions; and the questionnaire's efficacy in obtaining meaningful responses. As Wellington (op cit., p.55) has averred:

> "A postal survey is not interactive, as an interview is, therefore ambiguity, confusion or sheer lack of communication must be removed before the event rather than during it."

The five Humberside headteachers, who took part in structured interviews in 1990, were also interviewed about their responses to the questionnaire and its design, and were, therefore, involved in the pilot. The heads were pleased to co-operate in the piloting of the questionnaire after its purpose had been explained. It was emphasised that feedback about the layout, clarity and wording of the questionnaire would be appreciated.

It was subsequently decided that, in order to elicit a high response rate, questions requiring respondents to tick boxes or provide figures would predominate in the final version. The pilot questionnaire had included several questions which required such a response, but some of the more open-ended questions, while eliciting a response from most of the heads in the pilot study, were felt to be likely to deter some heads from responding at all. These were modified in the light of heads' comments. Heads felt that the question about collaboration with other schools should be divided into two questions in order to draw distinctions between collaboration with other primary schools and collaboration with secondary schools. It was also suggested that the questionnaire should enable respondents to comment upon their levels of confidence about teaching different subjects in the National Curriculum, and a section on this was subsequently added. Headteachers were provided with space to comment further if they so wished at the end of the questionnaire and some argued that, although the space may not be used by all respondents, the fact that its completion was optional would make heads more enthusiastic about completing the rest of the questionnaire. This was made explicit in the revised questionnaire.

Design of Questionnaires

Having analysed the responses of headteachers to the pilot study, in order to gather quantitative data, a revised questionnaire was designed. The questionnaire was intended for presentation to heads in primary schools of different sizes and was intended to produce an indication of schools' sizes, staffing levels, and their approaches to implementing educational change.

The questionnaires (see Appendices 2, 3 and 4) were sent to headteachers, who were asked to complete them and return them in a pre-paid and addressed envelope. Headteachers were targeted because of their senior positions which enabled them to have an overview of their schools' organisations and to have ready access to data. Letters (see Appendices 5, 6 and 7) were addressed to headteachers by name, in order to ensure that it was they who completed the questionnaires. It was decided that questionnaires should be brief and should not demand lengthy written responses which might deter headteachers from returning them. However, they needed to be sufficiently detailed to enable a picture to be built up of the ways in which schools were managing educational change. Questions asked the heads to provide the names of their schools, as these were needed for record-keeping and to enable comparisons between schools over time to be made.

Details of the schools' numbers of pupils and staffing levels were essential in order to allow the comparison schools of different sizes. It was also helpful to know the extent of headteachers' teaching loads and they were asked to express this as a decimal fraction of 1 (for example, 0.1 would represent half a day and 0.2 a whole day out of a five-day school week). This is a common means of representing time worked in schools and would be readily understood by respondents. In the 1990 survey, respondents were asked to indicate which age groups they taught as a class. This

question was omitted from the 1995 and 1998 surveys, as subsequent interviews with heads revealed that they had interpreted this in different ways, and comparisons would, therefore, not be easy to make over time, even if the question were to be rephrased to be more precise. This problem had not been revealed by the pilot study. The question was intended to reveal which age groups heads had class responsibility for, but was sufficiently ambiguous for some heads to have listed all of the classes with which they came into contact during a week.

At the time of the 1990 survey, the pilot study had revealed that many schools were being funded to provide additional hours of secretarial help to enable them to meet the requirements of the Education Reform Act. Heads were, therefore, asked to state the number of hours of secretarial help which they received and then to indicate if this figure had increased since ERA. If it had, they were asked to state the number of additional hours received. The second and third parts of this question were not included on the 1995 or 1998 surveys, as they were rendered unnecessary, since data for secretarial hours was given in these survey answers and could be used to make comparisons.

The fourth question asked heads to indicate the extent to which their levels of administrative work had increased or decreased since the 1988 Act. This, too, was omitted from subsequent surveys, as it was not thought to be relevant by 1995, given the length of time since the Act.

Heads were asked to indicate which areas of responsibility they were able to delegate to teaching colleagues in all three surveys. This question was intended to provide a general indication of the areas which might be delegated and heads were not asked to

quantify the extent of delegation, although many qualified their responses by adding comments in their replies.

Heads were asked if their schools had teachers with subject responsibilities and were asked to provide details in all three surveys. The question was designed to discover if this was more or less likely in small schools. With hindsight it would have been better to have provided a continuum for heads' responses, since the response formats in this section did not allow heads to indicate degrees of delegation.

Further questions sought to find out if schools were involved in collaboration with other schools for curriculum support, and if secondary schools provided assistance with curriculum development and in-service training. Heads were asked, in each of the surveys, to answer questions on these aspects and to provide details if their responses were affirmative.

In the 1990 survey, heads were asked if they had provided additional in-service training, and/or sought help from advisors or from other schools, in order to implement the 1988 ERA. This question was thought to be irrelevant by 1995, since the ERA would by then have been in place for seven years.

Heads were asked to indicate the levels of confidence which they felt about their schools' abilities to fulfil the curriculum requirements for each of the foundation subjects, using a five point scoring system with answers ranging from *very confident* to *no confidence*. There is no universally accepted figure for the number of categories on a rating scale, but something in the region of between 5 and 9 categories is generally considered appropriate. Several authors, including Oppenheim (1966), suggest that an odd number of categories is used so that one neutral category is available. Based on

views such as these, it was decided to use a five-point scale. This question was used in each survey, but in 1995 and 1998 Information Technology was added to the list, and in 1998 the preamble to the question added *the requirements for the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies*. The NLS was by then in place and the NNS had been announced and details had appeared in schools. It was felt to be important that the strategies, which represented a significant change in the curriculum for some schools, be mentioned.

The final question in the 1990 survey asked if the schools had had to make any significant changes to their curricula or timetables in order to meet National Curriculum requirements. This question was not felt to be relevant by 1995 and was omitted from the subsequent surveys.

At the end of each survey, heads were invited to add comments and further information and space was provided for them to do so.

Procedure

Questionnaires were sent out to schools in June 1990, April 1995, and again in October 1998. The timings of the surveys were intended to coincide with schools being fully aware of significant educational changes including those listed in Table 5.2.

TABLE 5.2: SIGNIFICANT EDUCATIONAL CHANGES IN SURVEY YEARS

YEAR OF SURVEY	1990	1995	1998
SIGNIFICANT EDUCATIONAL CHANGES	• Documents for all NC subjects were in schools. • Many schools managing budgets under LMS. • Schools able to apply for Grant-Maintained status.	• Schools fully aware of the revisions made following the Dearing Report. • All schools now managing budgets under LMS.	• Training for NLS had taken place and the literacy hour was being taught. • Information on NNS was in schools.

The Sample

A research plan was devised which would involve a questionnaire being sent to schools of varying sizes. Wellington (op cit.) averred that sampling decisions needed to be made based upon an overview of the full population from which samples were to be taken. He maintained that:

> "Ultimately some sort of 'directory' or list has to be chosen, and its limitations acknowledged. Given this choice, sampling decisions then follow. Sampling might be random. On the other hand, a definite decision might be made to stratify the sample according to certain criteria, e.g. size, region."
>
> (p.53)

All schools in the sample for the present research were to be primary schools which included children working at Key Stages 1 and 2 of the National Curriculum, and excluded infant and junior schools. Only primary schools were sampled for two reasons:

- It was decided that the sample should be uniform in the type of school which was surveyed;
- Very few junior or infant schools have 100 or fewer pupils and the inclusion of such schools would not have enabled comparisons to be made between them and other similar schools of different sizes. There are no infant or junior schools in Hull, one of the divisions of the LEA which was to be used for the survey.

It was decided to restrict the study to schools within Humberside Local Education Authority. Having worked in the LEA for fourteen years, the author was familiar with the nature of many of the schools and had ready access to information such as school addresses, names of headteachers, numbers of pupils on roll, and so on. The county has a wide variety of schools, in terms of size, geographical location, and socio-economic factors affecting the catchment area. The LEA, which has since been the subject of a Government review which broke it up into four unitary authorities, included a city (Hull) and two large towns (Grimsby and Scunthorpe), as well as several small towns (including Beverley, Brigg, Driffield, Goole and Bridlington) and extensive rural areas in East Yorkshire and what was, in 1990, formerly North Lincolnshire. The LEA was a particularly interesting subject for study, since it was one of 12 authorities which took part in a five-year programme to "improve the quality or range of the curriculum provided in primary schools in rural areas" (DES circular 6/84). Education Support Grants were received and used in part to set up clusters of schools in the late 1980s and, given the focus on clustering in many studies of small schools, this meant that schools in the LEA would be likely to reveal information about the success or otherwise of such collaboration. LEAs differ considerably throughout England and Wales, with many having very few small schools and others, such as North Yorkshire, having a large proportion. The presence in Humberside of a mixture of school sizes and rural and urban areas made it a useful area in which to explore differences and similarities between small and large schools. Permission was granted by officials of Humberside County Council to distribute the questionnaire to schools in the Authority's four divisions. These divisions, which were used as the basis for the four unitary authorities which were formed in 1996, were as follows:

TABLE 5.3
NUMBERS OF EACH TYPE OF SCHOOL IN EACH OF THE FOUR AREAS OF HUMBERSIDE IN 1990

Area of Humberside	Infant	Junior	Number of primary schools	TOTAL SCHOOLS FOR PRIMARY-AGED PUPILS
East Riding	18	15	86	119
Grimsby	22	23	24	69
Hull	0	0	81	81
Scunthorpe	15	13	56	84
TOTAL	55	51	247	353

Schools were selected using the Humberside County Council LEA's lists of schools accompanied by their numbers on roll. Schools in which the headteacher had changed since 1987 were identified by comparing the LEA's directories for 1987 and 1990. These schools were omitted from the survey, as much of the information which was being sought related to changes made as a result of the Education Reform Act. It was felt to be important that heads had been in post before the Act. However, because Hull's schools had been reorganised in 1987 and most schools had appointed new headteachers, it was not felt to be desirable to limit the sample to schools where the head had been in post before 1987, since it was important to include urban as well as rural and town schools and such a restriction would have limited the sample. This resulted in a high proportion of Hull schools being part of the survey, since few headships had changed since reorganisation. The 201 schools represented the three ranges of size which have been used throughout this work: *small, medium* and *large*. The LEA had, in 1990, 66 primary schools with 100 or fewer pupils, 59 with 101-200 pupils, and 122 with 201 or more pupils. The number of schools from each category which was sent questionnaires was, even with the omission of 46 schools, broadly proportionate to the numbers of schools in each category in the LEA. Table 5.4 shows the numbers of schools from each division which received questionnaires.

TABLE 5.4: NUMBERS OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN EACH OF THE FOUR AREAS OF HUMBERSIDE IN 1990 AND NUMBERS SENT QUESTIONNAIRES.

Area of Humberside	Number of primary schools (with KS1 and KS2 pupils)	Number of schools receiving questionnaires and percentage of total
East Riding	86	73 (84.9%)
Grimsby	24	17 (70.8%)
Hull	81	78 (96.3%)
Scunthorpe	56	33 (58.9%)
TOTAL	247	201 (81.4%)

In 1990, in Humberside LEA, there were 67 schools with 100 or fewer children on roll (Robinson, 1990, p.1), representing 19% of its total number of schools for primary-aged pupils. These schools were responsible for the education of around 4200 children and had an average of 64 pupils in each, with the smallest having 24. 59 of the 66 small primary schools (but not one infant school with 93 pupils) were sent questionnaires in 1990.

Government statistics for schools in England are presented below to show the numbers of primary schools in each size group in 1990, 1995 and 1998. The figures show a decline in the number of small and medium-sized schools, by 1032 (27.3%) and 1561 (22.9%) respectively over the eight-year period and a 1747 (16.9%) increase in the number of large schools. The number of schools overall fell by 850 (4.4%), indicating that the variations in numbers of schools in each group was attributable in part to an increase in the size of many individual schools rather than to the closure of large numbers of smaller schools.

TABLE 5.5
NUMBERS OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS, INCLUDING INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS, IN ENGLAND IN 1990, 1995 AND 1998

YEAR	up to100	101-200	201 and over	TOTAL
1990	3777 (19.7%)	6815 (35.6%)	8566 (44.7%)	19162 (100%)
1995	3111 (16.8%)	5582 (30.1%)	9859 (53.1%)	18551 (100%)
1998	2745 (15.0%)	5254 (28.7%)	10313 (56.3%)	18312 (100%)

(Sources: DES, 1991a; DfEE, 1996c; DfEE, 1998c)

The size groups were chosen to represent three different types of school organisation which were revealed in previous research (Waugh, 1984) and were confirmed through discussions with headteachers. These are illustrated in Table 5.6.

TABLE 5.6
SCHOOL SIZE GROUPINGS FOR PRESENT RESEARCH AND ORGANISATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Pupils on Roll	*Probable Organisational Characteristics*
100 or fewer	• Head is almost certain to be a class teacher for most of the week. • All classes will be mixed-age.
101-200	• Head is likely to have some class teaching commitments, but will probably have at least two non-teaching days. • Most classes are likely to be mixed-age.
201 or more	• Head is unlikely to have class-teaching commitments, but may teach different classes for part of the week. • Some classes may be mixed-age, but most are likely to be single-age.

The sample size represents a large proportion of the total number of primary schools in Humberside (81.4%) and 100% of the schools which were deemed suitable for the survey. Given the problem of low response rates associated with postal questionnaires, it was important to ensure that heads could complete the forms quickly, while still providing vital information. Moser (1958) argued that there are various ways to encourage a good response rate and that these include:

- Enclosing stamped addressed reply envelopes;
- assurances of anonymity for respondents;
- a good covering letter; and
- a reasonably short and simple questionnaire.

Each of these criteria was adhered to, but heads were asked to provide the names of their schools for record keeping purposes.

The 1990 questionnaire was four pages long, with the final page being left for heads' comments. The 1995 and 1998 questionnaires were two pages long, with an additional blank page being provided for heads' comments.

Youngman (1978) asserted that a response rate of below 50% must be considered to be of dubious validity and that a rate of 70% is satisfactory if the sample size is large. A relatively large sample size was used, therefore, with an anticipated response rate in the region of 70%.

Youngman (1984) suggested that, when conducting significance tests to detect differences between means, a sample size of at least 15 for each group should be used. He went on to suggest that correlation techniques require a sample size of at least 30. This was taken into account when determining the sample size.

While the questionnaires were designed partly to provide quantitative data, they also allowed headteachers to express views in writing and many did so, especially in 1990 when, perhaps significantly, the ramifications of the 1988 Act were being felt strongly. Typical comments from headteachers have been included in the analyses of responses which appear in later chapters, in order to provide background to statistical data.

Responses

The 1990 survey of 201 schools elicited a response from 158 schools, 153 of whose replies were usable. Unusable replies included one which was returned marked 'Sorry no time' and four which did not include the schools' names or numbers on roll. The percentage of usable responses (76.1%) was satisfactory, given the discussion earlier in this chapter. The rate of response from schools in each area is shown in table 5.7.

TABLE 5.7
RESPONSES FROM SCHOOLS IN EACH OF THE FOUR AREAS OF HUMBERSIDE IN 1990

Area of Humberside	Number of primary schools	Number of schools surveyed and percentage of total	Number responding and percentage of number surveyed
East Riding	86	73 (84.9%)	62 (84.9%)
Grimsby	24	17 (70.8%)	11 (64.7%)
Hull	81	78 (96.3%)	61 (78.2%)
Scunthorpe	56	33 (58.9%)	19 (57.6%)
TOTAL	247	201 (81.4%)	153 (76.1%)

More than half of the responses included additional comments in the 1990 survey. These comments were classified according to the size of the school and then according to the headteachers' responses. The comments tended to be more strident and negative than in subsequent surveys and many heads used the questionnaire as an opportunity to air grievances, particularly about the pace of educational change and its implications for their workload.

For the 1995 survey, those schools where it was known, using LEA directories, that headteachers had changed were eliminated, since it was wished to compare like with like wherever possible. For the 1998 survey, all schools from the 1995 survey were asked to respond, except those where it was known that the headteacher had changed. The accompanying letter reminded heads that their school had been involved in two

previous surveys and emphasised the importance of their response to the research. Telephone reminders were made to heads who had not replied by the end of November. This may account for the very high response rate. Of the seven schools which did not respond, three of the heads were on extended sick leave and one was seconded to work in another school.

Tables 5.8 provides details of sample sizes and response rates for each of the surveys. The distribution of schools according to size, though not typical of that of schools in England and Wales as a whole, is similar to that found in many other LEAs which include both urban and substantial rural areas.

TABLE 5.8: SAMPLE AND RESPONSES FOR 1990, 1995 AND 1998 SURVEYS

	1990	1995	1998
TOTAL QUESTIONNAIRES DISTRIBUTED	201	131	101
SMALL SCHOOLS (100 or fewer pupils)	59	43	33
MEDIUM SCHOOLS (101-200 pupils)	49	27	19
LARGE SCHOOLS (201 or more pupils)	93	61	50
REPLIES RECEIVED	158	111	94
REPLIES NOT USABLE	5	2	0
PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS REPLYING	78.6%	84.7%	93.1%
PERCENTAGE OF USABLE REPLIES	76.1%	83.2%	93.1%
USABLE REPLIES FROM SMALL SCHOOLS	50 (84.7%)	36 (83.7%)	32 (97%)
USABLE REPLIES FROM MEDIUM SCHOOLS	34 (69.4%)	21 (77.8%)	17 (89.5%)
USABLE REPLIES FROM LARGE SCHOOLS	69 (74.2%)	52 (85.2%)	45 (90%)
TOTAL USABLE REPLIES	153 (76.1%)	109 (83.2%)	94 (93.7%)

The data analysed in the present research is largely restricted to those 94 schools which took part in all three surveys. The complete data for all three surveys have been retained and a comparison made between the results for all schools responding in each

year and for the 94 schools whose results have been used. Although slight differences have been noted, there were no statistically significantly different results between the larger and smaller samples for any question.

Ethical Considerations

Heads were informed in writing that their replies would be treated in the strictest confidence and that no school or headteacher would be named in any resulting publications. It was necessary for heads to provide the names of their schools for record-keeping purposes and because the longitudinal nature of the surveys necessitated the researcher being able to identify the same panel sample for future surveys.

Letters, which accompanied the questionnaires, informed heads that they could contact the researcher if they had any queries about the questionnaires or required any explanations. No headteachers did this for any of the surveys. Some did, however, invite the researcher to visit their schools and some of these offers were taken up.

Analysis of Data

The data gathered in the study were statistically analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) for Windows. Different statistical methods were employed according to the nature of the data and these included t-tests, analysis of variance (ANOVA), chi-square and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov two-sample test of statistical significance. A 5% level of significance was used for all tests, indicating a 95% probability of conclusions reached being correct. Moser cautions that the results of tests of statistical significance should be interpreted carefully. Where statistical significance is not found this does not necessarily mean that something which is true or untrue of a whole population has been discovered: "It means only that these particular

samples have failed to demonstrate a difference" (op cit., p.293). This was true of some of the statistics which were produced from the surveys where apparent differences between school types were not supported by confirmation of statistical significance.

Schools were grouped according to their mean size over the three surveys in order to allow for movement between groups. In all, five schools moved between groups as pupil numbers rose and fell. No school changed in size to the extent that it moved up or down by two groups, and three of the five which changed between 1990 and 1995 returned to their former groups by 1998. No school increased in size substantially to change groups, but there were several examples of schools with more than 300 pupils increasing or decreasing numbers considerably between 1990 and 1998. The number of small schools with fewer than 50 pupils fell as the numbers on roll increased in all but two. Only two schools had fewer than 30 pupils in 1998.

RESEARCH DESIGN FOR STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

In order to gain an insight into the effects which educational changes had had upon schools of different sizes, a series of structured interviews was conducted with experienced headteachers from schools which took part in the survey. Headteachers were once again chosen as *key informants* given their status and access to information. The interviews were designed to provide an opportunity to enhance some of the data produced from the surveys. As Bell (1987, p.70) has maintained:

> "Questionnaire responses have to be taken at face value, but a response in an interview can be developed and clarified."

The interviews would also enable the researcher to look at issues which had arisen since 1990, and to discover headteachers' views on how these had affected their

schools. Although there was a consistency in the format and questions in the postal surveys, it was important not to omit some of the significant educational changes which had occurred since 1990 from the research.

Parsons' (1984, p.89) cautionary comments on interviewing techniques were taken into account when conducting the interviews and the emphasis was upon 'probing' rather than 'prompting':

> "Prompting the respondent is a dangerous technique for structured interviews, and should be rigorously avoided. Probing, by contrast, is not only permissible but it is doubtful if anything but the simplest interviews could be completed without it."

It was, therefore, important during interviews to avoid 'feeding' answers to interviewees. In fact, however, the heads tended to be very forthcoming and were both knowledgeable and authoritative when responding to questions.

Powney and Watts (1987) argued that "each interview is dependent on the skills of the interviewer and the willingness of the interviewee" and that the limitations on the information collected in an interview are those imposed by the interviewee (p. 51). It was important, then, to select a sample which would not only be broad and representative, but which would also provide willing interviewees who would be prepared to give up their time and speak candidly.

Brenner's (1981) guidelines were taken into account when considering the style and approach to be adopted. These are quoted in Powney and Watts (op cit., p.42) and are listed below together with the present author's comments in parentheses where appropriate:

The interviewer must:

- read the questions as they are worded in the questionnaire
- ask every question that applies to the respondent
- use prompt cards and other instruments when required (this was not necessary for the present set of interviews)
- only probe non-directively (it was occasionally necessary to elaborate upon questions in order to clarify their meaning and sometimes follow up questions were asked in order to elicit further details)
- make sure that she has understood an answer and that it is adequate
- not answer for the respondent
- not give directive information
- not seek or give unrelated information
- repeat a question or other action when requested by the respondent
- when asked for clarification, give it non-directively
- act non-directively to obtain an adequate answer where it is inadequate

Dean et al (OU, 1979) have emphasised the need for good informants when conducting research through interviews and identified two main criteria for selection:

- they should be especially sensitive to the area of concern
- they should be willing to inform

(cited in Powney and Watts, op cit.)

Given their willingness to participate and their strong interest in the issues to be discussed, the headteachers in the sample fulfilled these criteria. None of the heads objected to any of the questions and none refused to divulge any of the information which was sought.

Design

Interviews were conducted with headteachers representing schools from each of the size groupings. The aims were as follows:

- To assist in interpreting the data produced by the three questionnaires by providing background information on key areas.
- To provide a greater insight into the complexities of school management.
- To discover from heads their perspectives on the effects of educational change upon their schools.

The interviews took place during the second half of the Autumn term in 1998 when schools had begun to implement the National Literacy Strategy, and had just received details of the Numeracy Strategy which was to be implemented in the following year.

The questions were designed to allow headteachers to expand upon their answers and to provide information which was specific to their schools, as well as general viewpoints on educational change. Some questions demanded specific information but many were sufficiently open for heads to be able to expand upon their views.

Apparatus

The interviews were of the respondent type (Powney and Watts, 1987, p.17) in that they were structured and each interviewee was asked the same set of questions. Wellington (op cit., p.27) summarises three degrees of structure in interviewing as follows:

Unstructured	Semi-structured	Structured
some 'control' on both sides	more control by interviewer	most control by interviewer
very flexible	flexible	less flexible
guided by interviewee	not completely pre-determined	guided by researcher's pre-determined agenda
direction unpredictable		more predictable
may be difficult to analyse		may provide easier framework for analysis

The interviews generally fitted into Wellington's *structured* category, in that a pre-determined agenda guided the researcher and the structure of the interviews was largely controlled by the interviewer. However, heads were given opportunities to expand upon points and to talk about issues which were peculiar to their schools, and some

interviews deviated from the order of the interview schedule when heads' responses led them into areas beyond the immediate questions. In this respect, the interviews also had elements of Wellington's *semi-structured* category. It was felt to be a more natural way of conducting the interviews to allow heads the flexibility to do this and this view is supported by the richness of many responses.

In particular, answers to the questions below were sought. The first section of the interview dealt with factual matters which tended to require heads to provide information, while the second section required heads to give their opinions on various issues. The interview was structured in this way in order to put heads at their ease by allowing them to deal with questions which could be answered easily first, and then moving on to more open questions which demanded greater depth of thinking. Denzin (1970) argued that open-endedness in interviews allows respondents to raise important issues which are not contained within the schedule. The inclusion of such questions allowed the researcher to gather considerable background information which informed discussions with interviewees and provided data which enhanced the written discussion.

Questions Requiring Factual Information:

- How long had the interviewee been headteacher of the school?
- What was his or her previous post and what had his or her previous teaching experiences been?
- What part of the school week did the head spend teaching?
- Which age groups did the head teach?
- How many hours of secretarial help were available?
- How often did the head take administrative work home?
- Did the school have teachers with subject responsibilities?
- How was curriculum management organised?
- Did staff play a more or less active role in curriculum development since ERA?
- Which foundation subjects, if any, had required the greatest changes in the school curriculum?
- How confident did the head feel about the school's ability to fulfil the curriculum requirements for each of the National Curriculum subjects?

- Was the head able to delegate responsibility for any of the following areas to teaching colleagues?
    - *administration*
    - *organisation of curriculum*
    - *curriculum planning*
    - *school management*
    - *management of resources*
    - *pastoral care*

- Was the school involved in collaboration with other primary schools for curriculum support?
- How did any co-operative schemes operate?
- Did any of the secondary schools to which pupils transferred provide assistance with:
    - *curriculum development?*
    - *in-service training?*

Questions Requiring Heads to Give Opinions:

- How did the head feel that the nature of his or her job had changed since ERA?
- What had been the most significant factors affecting the school in the last ten years?
- Which educational changes, if any, had benefited the school?
- Which educational changes, if any, had harmed the school?
- Which changes had been the most difficult to implement and why?
- How had the school changed its organisation since ERA?
- Which factors had influenced any changes to the school's organisation?
- Had attendance at INSET by staff increased, decreased or remained about the same since ERA?
- How had the introduction of LMS affected the school?
- When appointing new members of staff, which factors influence the head and the governors?
- Did parents take a more or less active role in the running of the school since ERA?
- Did governors take a more or less active role in the running of the school since ERA?
- What were the head's main concerns at the time of the interview?
- How did the head feel that the school's size affected its ability to manage educational changes?

Pilot Interviews

Two pilot interviews were conducted with headteachers in order to assess which questions were most appropriate and which would elicit information on the topics being studied, and this led to some modifications. The schools used for the pilot, one large and one small, are not featured in the results. The pilot interviews were informal

and open-ended and were intended to ensure that all relevant issues were included in the structured interviews.

The Sample for the Structured Interviews

Prior to the interviews, three surveys had been carried out in 1990, 1995 and 1998 involving over 150 schools, 94 of which responded to all three (see above). The sample was, therefore, a sub sample of those already taking part in the research and was chosen to represent a cross-section of schools according to size and location. A manageable sample of eleven schools was chosen initially, but later a twelfth school, Darrington, was added. Darrington had not taken part in all of the earlier surveys and the head had not been in post before 1988. However, the school merited inclusion since it was small and belonged to a cluster group which was only loosely geographically based. It was also suburban and therefore represented a type of small school which would not otherwise have been represented in the interview sample. The sample was chosen to represent the range of schools which replied to all three surveys. An equal number of heads from small schools and large schools was interviewed, and the sample included schools from the following size groups:

Small schools	5	(41.7% of sample compared with 34% of 1998 survey response)
Medium-sized schools	2	(16.7% of sample compared with 18.1% of 1998 survey response)
Large schools	5	(41.7% of sample compared with 47.9% of 1998 survey response)

Although the sample of medium-sized schools was roughly in line with the size of the response for this group in the 1998 survey, the sample for large and for small schools was slightly different in proportion because the researcher wished to ensure that the number of small schools was sufficiently large to enable comparisons between groups to be made and conclusions to be drawn. Therefore, rather than interviewing four

heads of small schools and five of large schools, which would have reflected the proportions in the survey, five heads of small schools were interviewed. As stated in the introduction to this work, the study was essentially designed to compare large and small schools. The two medium-sized schools provided additional interesting material, and it will be shown later that the two headteachers' responses indicate that one school had more in common with the small schools while the other had many similarities to larger schools.

Details of the schools which took part, together with numbers of pupils and staff, and the headteachers' experience in terms of years of headship, are presented in Table 5.9. The names of all schools have been changed to preserve confidentiality and any resemblance to the names of actual schools is purely coincidental.

TABLE 5.9
SAMPLE OF SCHOOLS WHERE HEADTEACHERS WERE INTERVIEWED

SCHOOL	NO. OF PUPILS ON ROLL	NO. OF TEACHING STAFF	HEAD'S TIME AT SCHOOL IN YEARS	TOTAL TIME AS A HEAD IN YEARS
NEWBY CE	61	2.7	10.5	10.5
LOXLEY CE	64	3.1	15.5	15.5
DARRINGTON	70	3.1	5.5	5.5
KIRKBY CE	93	4.2	10.5	10.5
BARRATT GM	96	4.0	12.5	12.5
CHARLTON CE	135	5.9	18.5	18.5
ST KEVIN'S RC	168	8.0	11.5	11.5
GRIMSTON	234	10.5	14.5	24.5
OAKWELL	284	11.0	15.5	20.5
BORCHESTER	314	11.0	13.5	13.5
MILBURN	323	12.0	18.5	21.5
TURF MOOR	665	24.2	7.5	14.5

NB All names are fictitious.

The schools selected were predominantly ones in which the same headteacher had been in post since before the Education Reform Act, since a view on the changes which the

Act had brought to schools was being sought. However, the head of one of the five small schools had only been in post five and a half years, but had previously been a deputy headteacher and frequently acting head in a large school since before the ERA. The head of Turf Moor had also taken up his position after the ERA, but had been head of a nearby school for seven years previously. While it was comparatively simple to find a representative sample of experienced heads of large schools, this was not so easy for smaller schools where heads are at the lower points of the headteachers' salary scale and often move on to other schools for promotion. The sample, therefore, was likely to fulfil the purpose of the research given that:

- Respondents would be in possession of the information which was being sought;
- it served the purposes of the investigation since it provided a cross-section in terms of location and size of schools;
- heads had already taken part in the survey research and were likely to be sympathetic to the needs of the researcher.

Administration

Care was taken during the interviews to avoid bias and to limit the possibility that interviewer might influence the interviewees' responses. While Brenner (1981) has argued that "To want to interview without interviewer influence is a contradiction in terms" (p.122), it was felt important that heads should be enabled to express their views without perceiving what the interviewer's opinions were. The responses to some questions, where heads in different schools have markedly differing and often contradictory views, suggest that this may have been achieved with some success.

The guidelines were followed wherever appropriate and, in addition, respondents were given guarantees that their responses would be strictly anonymous and that all comments were made in confidence. The candid nature of the heads' responses suggests that this allayed any fears which they may have had (see Powney and Watts, op cit.). The interviewer's position as an academic, who was not employed by any of

the LEAs and had no influence upon the heads' careers, may also have been reassuring for respondents. Powney and Watts (op cit., p.45) have argued:

> "Mostly informants are worried if their peers or their employer will have access to their comments from the interviewer, from someone else present at the interview or in subsequent publication. They are less worried by an academic audience or if they are confident of anonymity."

Heads, probably because they were reassured about the confidentiality of their responses, were willing to be candid about all aspects of their work which related to the interviews.

Interviews were recorded in shorthand note form and then analysed and written up. Wherever direct quotations are recorded, these have been taken down verbatim. It was felt that the use of a tape recorder might prove inhibiting, following discussions with some of the heads in advance of their interviews and the comments of heads who took part in pilot interviews. In particular, given the sensitive nature of some of the issues discussed by heads, note-taking was felt to be less threatening, since heads could be reassured that off the record statements would not be recorded.

Procedure

Before the interviews began heads were reassured that all responses would be treated in the strictest confidence, and that the names of their schools would be changed in the thesis and in any subsequent publications. They were also told that the researcher would be making copious notes and that a transcription of these would be sent to the head afterwards. The purpose of the interviews was explained to heads and every attempt was made to establish the rapport which Smith (1972) suggests should be positive, pleasant, yet business-like.

Interviews lasted between one and a half and two hours and took place in schools. In every case, the researcher was shown around the school and introduced to some of the teaching staff. Interviews were conducted in the headteachers' offices in all cases except at Newby where the interview was held in the school library and Barratt where the staff room was used.

Questions were asked in the order in which they are presented on the interview schedule (Appendix 9). However, some heads' answers were wide-ranging and occasionally more than one question was covered by the same response.

Ethical considerations

After word-processing, transcripts of the interviews were sent to each of the headteachers. Heads were asked to check that they did not feel that they had been misrepresented or misquoted and to return any comments or suggested amendments. Only the head of Newby queried some of the transcript, wishing to qualify some of his comments by providing additional background information. He did not dispute the accuracy of recording, but felt that he would like to provide clarification on a particular point related to the loss of a member of staff.

Content Analysis of Qualitative Data

Patton (1987) argued that analysis and interpretation of qualitative data is a continuous process which begins as field notes are collected. He suggested that there are two primary sources which may be drawn upon when organising the analysis:

1. The evaluation questions that are generated during the conceptual and design phase of the projects, and
2. Analytic insights and interpretations that emerge during data collection.

(p.144)

The interviews produced large amounts of written reports which were analysed in terms of the questions which were devised for the structured interviews, but additional features emerged during the first interviews and it became clear that there would be a need to focus on some issues when reporting. For example, in responding to the question about their main concerns at the time of the interviews, most heads discussed the National Literacy Strategy, Information Communication Technology, SATs tests, target-setting and Ofsted inspections. These areas became categories in themselves and the organisation of data was revised to take this into account. The data were eventually written up under five main headings:

- *The Role of the Headteacher*
- *Accountability*
- *Financial Management*
- *The Curriculum*
- *The Effects of School Size*

Within each section, sub sections emerged from the data so that, for example, *Accountability* included SATs, Ofsted inspections and target-setting. Heads' responses to the interviews were then sorted and analysed and presented within each section and subsection to allow comparison. The sections could then be placed in the context of the research questions. Patton (ibid.) maintains

> "...that the analyst should look for quotations or observations that go together, that are examples of the same underlying ideas, issue or concept. Sometimes this involves pulling together all the data that address a particular evaluation question." (p.149)

and

> "The cardinal principle of qualitative analysis is that causal and theoretical statements be clearly emergent from and grounded in field observations. The theory emerges from the data; it is not imposed on the data." (p.158)

There are clear problems in analysing data gathered from interviews, since decisions have to be made about which data to omit and which to include in subsequent reports,

as well as about the categories in which data will be presented. Ultimately, an element of trust must be created by the author such that "the reader trusts the integrity of the researcher to include all relevant data whether or not it supports the researcher's main hypothesis or argument" (Powney and Watts, op cit., p.191). The general consistency of results from the triangulation of research methods is evidence that the analysis is unbiased and thorough, as is the fact that heads were given sight and veto of the notes made during the interviews.

Discussion

The three methods of research enabled the researcher to gain an insight into the overall picture of schools' responses to educational changes since 1988. The study of relevant literature was ongoing and enabled the researcher to formulate appropriate questions for the surveys and for the structured interviews.

The surveys provided useful quantitative data which allowed the author to gain an overview of schools' responses to a series of externally-imposed changes. The subsequent interviews afforded a greater insight into headteachers' views on the changes and the ways in which they had implemented them.

In Chapters Six, Seven and Eight the results of the surveys are analysed and compared and contrasted with the findings of other researchers. Chapter Nine provides a discussion of headteachers' responses to the structured interviews, although these are referred to in other chapters too. With the support of reference to literature which is related to the post-ERA period, the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data have enabled the researcher to draw conclusions about small schools' abilities to adapt to and implement educational changes in relation to larger schools and to address the other research questions set out at the beginning of this chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL CHANGE SINCE THE 1988 EDUCATION ACT

"Looking back now to the pre-1980 period, it seems quite remarkable that heads and teachers were allowed to get on with their jobs with little interference from non-professionals...Looking back from the perspective of today, it all seems cosy, comfortable and professionally insulated."
(Downes, 1998, p.28)

"The whole tone of the pre-1980 period was that the school knew best and the job of the parent was to make children conform to what the school expected."
(ibid. p.29)

It was seen in Chapter Four that educational reforms have had a significant effect upon primary schools. In this chapter, some of the issues which arise in relation to schools' abilities to implement the changes imposed by the 1988 Education Act, the Dearing Review and other key pieces of legislation will be examined. Reports and research on schools' efforts to change their curricula will be studied, together with some of the initiatives which have been introduced in order to alleviate problems which have been identified. The chapter will go on to explore the development of clustering arrangements between schools and research on their effectiveness. The key elements in the Education Reform Act and other significant reforms will be revisited briefly, to provide a context for examining the ways in which small schools, in particular, have set about adapting to the new demands.

The National Curriculum

Pollard et al (1994) conducted research on educational change from 1989 (Primary Assessment Curriculum and Experience[PACE]) and found that teachers accepted the National Curriculum in principle, but "were suspicious of assessment proposals" (p.229). In 1990, according to the PACE research, teachers had placed *children's happiness* ahead of *basic skills* in their list of priorities, but by 1992 *the development of basic skills* had taken precedence. The pressure to implement the National Curriculum led to a greater emphasis on so-called traditional teaching methods such as whole-class

teaching, and "Overall, teacher control tightened and teacher direction of pupil activities increased" (ibid., p.230).

A somewhat prophetic head of a 216-pupil school wrote in his 1990 response to the present author's survey:

> *"Perhaps your research could show up different emphases (i.e. in National Curriculum implementation compared with the past) in a few years' time, because there is going to be constant readjustment in the years to come."*

Another head asserted that the practical difficulties of implementing the changed curriculum had not been considered in sufficient detail:

> *"The National Curriculum doesn't take place in a vacuum. Who has reviewed the DES building regulations to see that floor space is inadequate to fulfil demands for technology, IT and practical science? Schools were always pint pots. National Curriculum is asking us to get a gallon into the pot."*
>
> (Head of a 156-pupil school in 1990)

The 1990 survey showed that there was virtually no difference in the extent to which schools of different sizes had had to make significant changes to their timetables in order to meet National Curriculum requirements (Table 6.1). Kolmogorov-Smirnov testing confirmed that there were no significant differences between the extent to which small schools and larger schools had had to make changes.

TABLE 6.1
INCIDENCE OF SCHOOLS MAKING SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO SCHOOL TIMETABLE TO MEET NATIONAL CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS (1990)

MAKING CHANGES	SMALL SCHOOLS	MEDIUM SCHOOLS	LARGE SCHOOLS	TOTAL
YES	17 (53.1%)	9 (52.9%)	23 (51.1%)	49 (52.1%)
NO	15 (46.9%)	8 (47.1%)	22 (48.9%)	45 (47.9%)
TOTAL SCHOOLS	32 (100%)	17 (100%)	45 (100%)	94 (100%)

The larger sample response of 153 schools in 1990 revealed very similar results (see Appendix 11), making it clear that school size did not seem to be a determinant of the need to modify the school timetable in order to meet National Curriculum

requirements. The explanation for this may lie in the fact that, as many researchers have claimed, the curricula in large and small schools were broadly similar, even before the 1988 Act. Fullan (1992) argued that strong impediments to changing teachers' practice exist, especially when curriculum change is imposed as it was by the ERA. It may be that many schools continued to operate the curriculum in similar ways to those they had used before the ERA. This view is supported by Galton et al (1998), whose observations of small schools led them to conclude that there was little evidence that many "had done anything other than 'bolt' these new curriculum initiatives onto their existing practice" (p.59). It will be seen later in this chapter that headteachers' levels of confidence about delivering the curriculum across a range of subjects were similar in schools of different sizes in 1990, implying that most schools were following broadly similar programmes.

The Dearing Report (1993), the recommendations of which were accepted by the Government, was intended to reduce the amount of time which schools would have to spend on teaching the National Curriculum and release approximately one day a week for teachers to give attention to other aspects of education. However, Lofthouse (1996) was still moved to comment that, despite the Report's recommendations, "...the total demands of the revised curriculum leave most primary teachers fighting for every minute of time and space that can be conjured up during a school day" (p.175). This view was echoed by several headteachers who appended written comments to their questionnaires in 1995. Among those which typified headteachers' views were the following:

> *"Dearing was all very well. It was necessary to do something about curriculum overload, but it is nonsense to suggest that it has freed up one day a week. We needed an eight-day teaching week to fit everything in already. Now we just need seven!"*
>
> (Headteacher of an 85-pupil school in 1995)

"Sir Ron [Dearing] *has done us all a favour by actually listening to what teachers were saying, but it's not enough. We're still trying to fit a quart into a pint pot."*
(Headteacher of a 504-pupil school in 1995)

"If education was a Monty Python sketch, someone would walk in now and say, 'This is getting too silly, stop it now!'. Unfortunately, it isn't and we're stuck with an over-prescriptive curriculum that we cannot cover unless we do it at the most superficial level. One of my staff has dubbed it the Trivial Pursuit Curriculum because that's the level we have to teach at - a few facts here and a few facts there, but no substance anywhere!"
(Headteacher of a 174-pupil school in 1995)

The comments made by heads tended to be similarly negative whatever the size of the school. However, the National Curriculum seemed to attract headteachers' opprobrium because of its structure and the increased workload associated with its implementation, rather than as a matter of principle.

Local Management of Schools (LMS)

In 1988, schools acquired greater autonomy over the management of their finances, with local authorities being required to pass on a greater proportion of the money provided by central government to the schools, who would then be able to determine which local authority services they wished to purchase. Funding was based upon pupil numbers and average salary costs for teachers, rather than actual costs. The head of a 270-pupil school, who had been seconded to his LEA to support schools during the introduction of LMS, was sceptical about the funding formula:

"Teachers' wages will be a concern if staff stay put. We balance at the moment but redundancies will occur in some schools. Age-weighted pupil numbers are a nonsense in determining funding for a school."
(head of a 270-pupil school in 1990 survey)

Those schools which had more experienced and longer-serving staffs were thus underfunded and at the same time local authorities, with reduced flexibility over the management of finances, were restricted in their ability to provide compensatory funding to small schools to cover their extra costs. Some LEAs, for instance, had previously funded projects designed to help small schools. A number of LEAs had received extra finance through the Rural Schools Support Grant, and small schools had

been provided with lower pupil teacher ratios than their larger counterparts. Formula funding and LMS, Keast (1991, p.73) argued, "considerably reduced the autonomy of LEAs to order the allocation of funds to meet locally agreed priorities". Under formula funding, allocations of funding were based upon pupil numbers, so that the larger a school and the older its pupils, the more money it received.

When LMS was introduced in 1988, only those schools with more than 200 pupils were to have their budgets devolved to them. However, a government circular was issued in 1994 which required local authorities to delegate budgets to all schools. LEAs were allowed to use the funds which remained after delegation to provide a range of services and, if they wished, to meet the inevitably higher costs of small schools. Circular 7/91 (DES, 1991) reduced the amount of money which could be retained by the LEAs, but still allowed them to support small schools at their discretion. Keast's research (op cit.) revealed differences in the levels of support given by LEAs. Devon, for example, provided small schools with 50% of the difference between average and actual staffing costs, while Cornish schools received 90%, and Wiltshire schools with fewer than seven teachers received 100%. The extent to which small schools were compensated had significant effects upon their staffing levels, particularly since many had slightly older and, therefore, more expensive teachers than larger schools (see Patrick, 1990 in Chapter Three).

Thomas and Bullock (1992) studied eighty-one LMS schemes and found that, while all LEAs supplemented the budgets of their small schools, the small schools were losing funding compared with larger schools. This may account for the less positive views on LMS held by some of the heads of small schools who were interviewed (see Chapter Nine). One head of a small school, for example, was annoyed that reductions in funding from LEAs and the government led to problems which were then "*blamed on inefficient schools*":

"They wouldn't have reduced the staffing under the old scheme. We could have persuaded them not to. They would have found the money. LMS has caused constraint because the funding's all in our hands. There's nowhere to go. It's all too tight. There are still the same costs as before plus others such as repairs to the building. There's no real advantage other than some flexibility to vire money between funds. For the first five years there were some benefits, but now the budget has been pared to the bone and there's no flexibility."

(Head of Newby, a 61-pupil school, interviewed in 1998)

Although not all of the heads of small schools were negative in their comments about LMS, the heads of large schools were uniformly positive. However, one of the heads who was the most enthusiastic about devolved financial management led a small school (Barratt GM, 96 on roll), but grant maintained status had been acquired in 1995 and the school had reaped considerable financial benefits from this. One of the other heads of a small LEA school also felt that small schools were losing out financially because of LMS and he too had been forced to lose a member of staff. Being involved with redundancies and redeployment seemed to be particularly difficult for the small school heads, given their close working relationships with their staffs. Some expressed the view that they were being asked to do unpleasant tasks which were previously the preserve of the local authorities.

Downes (1998.), however, writes of heads delighting in finding ways of cutting costs and saving on fuel bills and equipment, and sharing money-saving ideas at heads' meetings. These views are echoed by some of the headteachers whose comments appear in Chapter Nine. A typically enthusiastic head, for example, maintained:

"I'm 101% behind LMS, but we could do with more money. There are no problems with the budget. We've had no cutbacks."

(head of Grimston, a 234-pupil school)

The head of Milburn, a 320-pupil school, was also positive about the benefits of LMS:

"The big difference is premises management. Our place has been transformed since LMS. There's been more building work than in the previous century. The money's been there and we've decided what to do with it."

Although Downes (op cit.) asserts that most heads welcomed LMS, since it gave them greater control over budgeting and allowed them to employ more or fewer non-teaching staff, he points out some of the problems which resulted. The time taken in managing the schools' finances took heads away from "the true educational purpose of the school" (p.26) and pupil numbers became the crucial determinant of funding. Children became *Age-Weighted Pupil Units* (AWPUs), with schools' funding being based upon the numbers on roll. As a result, schools with falling rolls were forced to make cuts, including reducing the number of staff employed. This led, according to Downes, to recruitment drives and "a sudden growth in the production of glossy brochures" (p.27) as schools sought to capitalise on open enrolment to boost numbers on roll. The publication of league tables of schools' examination and test results gave parents information on which to base choices, and Downes concludes that this market-place philosophy led to heads being: "...torn between looking after their own school, in which they now had an enhanced sense of autonomy and pride, and protecting the overall equity of the education system." (p.27)

LMS was a particular preoccupation for many of the heads who appended comments to the 1990 survey. A key concern was the way in which financial management impinged upon some heads' perceptions of their role as leading teachers.

> *"The financial administration is taking the most time. The governors cannot take this burden from the head. We could really do to employ a bursar, but a primary school cannot afford such a luxury. I feel that finance and problems related to it have to be done immediately, so the classroom and the curriculum are taking second place - surely not the right way round!"*
>
> (head of a 242-pupil school in 1990)

Since 1990, the head's teaching load had increased from 0 to 0.3 in 1995, to 0.4 in 1998 (where 0.1 represents one tenth of the school teaching week), while secretarial assistance had increased from 20 to 30 hours. However, the changing nature of her role was reflected in the fact that in 1990 she took administrative work home 'occasionally', whereas this was 'on most days' in 1995 and 'daily' in 1998.

Pollard et al (1994) surveyed 48 heads of infant schools in 1992 and found that, along with curriculum and assessment, LMS was one of the three aspects of change which predominated when heads were asked to state which changes were most and least welcome. 25% of heads stated that LMS was the most welcome change while 29.2% found it the least welcome. Those who were positive about LMS were enthusiastic about the greater autonomy which they felt it gave them, while those who were negative regretted the restrictions it placed on the time available for them to teach. A typical comment was: "It is LMS that has changed my job. A complete reversal, from in the classroom to in the office." (Pollard et al, p.67)

It seems clear that LMS was greeted differently by heads in different schools, just as it is clear that its inception changed the role of the headteacher in all schools. While heads of large schools seem generally to have felt empowered by having greater control over school finances, some of those in smaller schools found this an additional burden which, while it produced some benefits, could at times be particularly onerous. This is an area which will be returned to in subsequent chapters.

Grant-Maintained Schools

The prospect of inducing schools to opt out of LEA control by proposing a programme of rationalisation and closures may have led to many authorities treading very carefully when discussing the future of their small schools. As the head of a 30-pupil school who was interviewed in 1990 put it:

> *"GM has been a godsend for schools like mine. We've no intention of opting out and neither have the other schools in the cluster, but the LEA knows that there is the possibility that we might and so they daren't threaten any closures. They know that if one or two schools go, it could start a landslide and they'd be staring redundancies in the face."*
>
> (Head of Shiredale interviewed in 1990)

Interestingly, one of the schools which was a member of Shiredale's cluster in 1990 was Barratt, which subsequently opted out of LEA control, although it was not threatened with closure.

The introduction of the possibility for schools to become grant maintained was part of a wider move by the Conservative government to diminish the role of LEAs in education (see Chapter Four). With reduced budgets because of LMS, and with the ever-present possibility that schools would leave their control if they made unpopular decisions, the local authorities' scope for influencing their schools was reduced. The TES survey (7.10.1994) of 1007 GM schools received a 51% response rate and reported that 70% of schools stated that 'additional money' was a reason for opting out. The survey also showed that 86% of the schools had received an increase in funding as a result of opting out. However, despite publicity from the Government and apparent financial incentives, by the time the Conservatives lost the 1997 general election, only just over 1000 of the country's 24000 schools had become grant-maintained and many of these were concentrated in areas with Tory-led LEAs. North Yorkshire, which has more small schools than any other local authority in the country, had no grant-maintained schools, while Humberside (now divided into four LEAs), which also had many small schools, had only five. Three of the Humberside schools were 'small' in 1990 and at the time when they acquired GM status. Two had more than 100 pupils by 1998, with one having risen from 51 in 1990 to 127 in 1998, while Barratt increased from 77 to 96.

Although the Government's policy on grant maintained schools might have been deemed a failure, it may have contributed to the salvation of many small primary schools both directly through enabling them to opt out to avoid closure, and indirectly since it inhibited LEAs' attempts to close small schools.

Increased powers for school governors

The ERA gave school governors greater responsibility for all aspects of school life and this responsibility extended from finance and personnel to the curriculum. Shearn et al (1995) found in a survey that governors' interests tended to be focused on personnel issues and that, although the extent to which they had taken on responsibilities varied, "it is the headteacher who has, de facto, an increasing level of responsibility and

power" (p.185). Shearn et al argued that the curriculum became so constrained by the National Curriculum that governors tended to leave this key aspect of school activity to the professionals. The authors concluded that, "for most schools the governors' role seems to be very limited, sometimes being no more than 'supportive' and 'advisory'" (p.187).

These views are supported by the present author's research (see Chapter Nine) which demonstrates that heads tended to find their governing bodies helpful, but generally quiescent and respectful of headteachers' professionalism. Headteachers of schools of different sizes shared similar views about governors. There were few instances of governors flexing their political muscles and it seemed very clear that all of the headteachers felt that they, rather than their governing bodies, were running the schools.

School Size and Educational Change

In 1985, the DES report, *Better Schools* (op cit.), had set out guidelines on school size, recommending that for efficient use of resources there should be at least one-form entry to schools and a minimum of three teachers. It was shown in the Introduction to the present work that the Audit Commission (1990) claimed that there were 900,000 surplus places in English and Welsh primary schools, and proposed closing small primary schools on the grounds that the savings made could be used to fund some larger schools which lacked the resources and staffing to implement the National Curriculum adequately.

The educational changes were regarded as particularly difficult for small schools to implement and their survival seemed threatened. The introduction of a national curriculum which demanded not only expertise in a range of subjects from teachers, but also additional resources to enable subjects such as design technology and science to be taught, seemed to place smaller schools at some disadvantage. This, allied to increased class sizes caused by formula funding, which did not allow for the higher

average salary costs in small schools where teachers have been said to be slightly older and more experienced on average than those in large schools (Patrick, 1991, op cit.), seemed certain to reduce the schools' abilities to implement curricular change effectively. However, there were other statements from the DES and from the Conservative Party which suggested that small schools did have a future. There seems, for example, to have been some admission from central government that small schools were not necessarily disadvantaged in one circular (DES, 1987, 3/97):

> "The assessment of the viability of an individual school is not solely a matter of the number of pupils on roll...Size in itself is not a determinant of the quality of a school: there are a good many bad schools of all sizes. In many small schools, particularly in rural areas, good teachers have done much to overcome limitations of size. Small primary schools may, with appropriately enhanced resources, be able to offer a broad and differentiated curriculum to all their pupils..."

Indeed, the Conservative Party Manifesto of 1987 included the following passage:

> "We recognise the important contribution made by small rural schools to education and to the community life of our villages. We will ensure, therefore, that the future of these schools is judged by wider factors than merely the number of pupils attending them." (p.12)

Such a statement may be interpreted as pre-election pragmatism, since small rural schools tend to be situated in Tory strongholds. However, the Government had demonstrated some commitment by providing resources to projects involving small schools including, for example, the *Education Support Grants* which are discussed below.

There have been three major studies of small primary schools, PRISMS, SCENE and INCSS, each involving Professor Maurice Galton, which have provided much of the data upon which researchers may draw. While INCSS examines small schools' attempts to implement the National Curriculum between 1992 and 1994, the PRISMS research predates the 1988 Act and the SCENE research examines initiatives which took place between 1985 and 1991. A measure of the extent of educational change since the PRISMS study is found in Patrick's (1990, p.39). statement:

> "Responses to our questions on curriculum guidelines, both LEA and school guidelines, suggested that for most of the time most teachers were relatively unrestricted in what they taught and were able to pursue their own curriculum aims."

This curricular autonomy has clearly diminished considerably since the advent of the National Curriculum. Many commentators (for example, Alexander et al, 1992; DES, 1989) suggested that the change in curricular requirements would disadvantage small schools in particular. Galton and Patrick (1990, p.175) were clearly aware of the effects the National Curriculum's introduction would have upon small schools:

> "While it appears to be true that, at present, the small primary school differs in very few aspects from the larger school, its critics might argue that, as greater use of specialist teaching becomes more widespread than hitherto, then the standards in smaller schools will begin to fall behind those of larger ones."

The expansion of the primary curriculum, particularly in the areas of science and technology, led to concerns about teachers in small schools' abilities to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum. Galton and Patrick argued that the "area of gravest concern" was the ability of many small schools, as they were then organised, to improve the learning experiences for pupils "particularly in the area of the science curriculum, and later in the introduction of technology, which at the moment receives even less attention in the primary school than science" (ibid., pp.175-76). They maintained that, without greater co-operation between neighbouring small schools than had previously been the case, there seemed to be little chance that small schools could hope to meet the new demands.

Alexander et al (op cit.) conceded that small schools faced particular problems in implementing educational change, arguing that it was unreasonable to expect that two or three teachers can be expert in ten subjects "to the depth now required" (p.25). They went on to assert that primary headteachers needed to retain general oversight of the curriculum and take a lead in decision-making about curricular matters. However, just as a class teacher could not be expected to possess the subject knowledge needed to teach every subject of the National Curriculum and be expected to keep abreast of all

relevant developments, so headteachers would experience difficulties too. Alexander et al, therefore, recommended that:

> "Except where this is not possible in small schools, headteachers should delegate responsibilities for subject co-ordination and development to other members of staff, though they may wish to retain responsibility themselves for co-ordinating work in one or more subjects." (p.47)

This recognition that the headteacher's role in the small primary school differs from that of colleagues in larger schools is echoed in the Audit Commission's (op.cit.) assertion that lack of size "limited a school's scope in the allocation of curricular and other responsibilities amongst teachers" (p.30, para 72). While this may appear tautologous to heads of small schools, many schools have sought to compensate for their lack of size by various means. In some cases, in two-teacher schools, the curriculum has simply been divided into two parts, with each teacher accepting responsibility for five subjects. Indeed, the present author's interviews with headteachers revealed that part-time teachers, some of whom work for less than one day a week, were sometimes also taking responsibility for curricular areas. At Newby (61 pupils) a teacher who worked for two and a half days each week was responsible for mathematics, physical education and art, while at Loxley (64 pupils) a teacher who worked for two days per week was responsible for history, geography and ICT. All of the school's religious education at Darrington (70 pupils) was taught by one lady who worked for one afternoon each week.

Such arrangements may call into question the effectiveness of the subject leadership which may be offered in some small schools. However, primary teachers have traditionally been generalists rather than specialists (Wragg et al, 1989) and subject specialism is a relatively recent phenomenon. Although Plowden (DES, 1967) and Bullock (DES, 1975) had called for greater use of specialists, it was not until the mid-1980s that government began to advocate their existence with any forcefulness (DES, 1985 op cit.; House of Commons, 1986). Indeed, although curricular specialism and responsibility is now an accepted part of most teachers' roles, the efficacy of subject

specialists was still being challenged in the 1980s. Oliver (1982), for example, asserted that what little relevant data was available for evaluating the effectiveness of subject specialists suggested that "less than 25 per cent of them have any noticeable effect on the practice in their schools, and that only five per cent of them have a strong influence" (p.24). The lack of a tradition of subject specialism in primary schools may be a contributory factor to the way in which subject specialism seems to be regarded in some small schools. Some of the heads who were interviewed admitted that the role of subject leader was nominal rather than actual and that, essentially, each teacher was responsible for the curriculum within his or her classroom. Given the nature of many small schools' class organisation, there would appear to be some logic to this. It might be argued, for instance, that where the previous teaching experiences of the two teachers in a school are limited to, say, infant work for one and junior work for the other, neither will be able to develop a curriculum for a subject to benefit the teaching of the other. This point was made forcefully by one of the headteachers who responded to the 1990 survey:

> *"The variation in confidence is between KS1 and KS2 but I have given the whole school view, e.g. in technology I am very confident at KS2 but 'not very' at KS1. All my responses have to be tempered with the fact that teaching a Y3-Y6 class of 38 reduces my confidence that we can really fulfil requirements in any subject for all the children."*
>
> (head of a 54-pupil school in 1990 survey)

However, despite the reservations of some heads and the doubts expressed by some government agencies (DES, 1985 op cit.; House of Commons, 1986 op cit.), there is a significant body of research (Patrick, 1991, op cit.; Wragg et al, 1989, op cit.; Ofsted, 1998) which demonstrates that teachers in small schools are not only managing to deliver the curriculum as effectively as larger schools, but may also be at least as confident as their colleagues in larger schools about their ability to do so. The INCSS research, for example, found "headteachers of small schools, who were much more knowledgeable about the demands of the National Curriculum than their counterparts in larger schools, because they themselves had to teach a class" (Galton et al 1998, p.58).

The doubts about the effectiveness of subject specialists continue to be expressed, not least by headteachers, but the interviews (Chapter Nine), and follow up discussions which were intended to confirm data, revealed notable examples of pupils' achievement being directly attributed to the effective use of subject specialists. At Turf Moor (665 pupils) 95% of Y6 children achieved level 4 or above in the science SATs in 1998 (compared with 75% in English and 83% in mathematics). This was the best result in the LEA and the head felt that it had been achieved because two specialist teachers had been deployed to work with the children. This is something of a departure from the usual role of curriculum leaders, many of whom tend to assume overall responsibility for a subject without actually teaching that subject to any classes other than their own. However, it is a model which has been replicated to some extent within clusters of small schools, including Darrington's in which a science co-ordinator had been appointed to develop the subject in all of the schools within the cluster.

It is not only the supposed limitations of the teaching staff in small schools which have concerned researchers. The Audit Commission (op cit.) reported in 1990 that small schools had fewer facilities and resources than larger schools. The report expressed concern that a school without a hall would be able to offer only a limited programme of physical education, one of the foundation subjects of the National Curriculum (op. cit. p.30, para 73). This is borne out by the interviews discussed in Chapter Nine in which the heads of three of the five small schools reported having no hall on school premises.

The survey of 224 primary schools by the Audit Commission (ibid. pp.27-28, para 71) concluded:

> "...the national curriculum includes specific stipulations of programmes of study in particular subject areas. Small schools are less likely to have the required range of subject expertise amongst their teaching staffs than larger schools. Responses to the Commission's questionnaire to primary schools in its study LEAs, show that the subject expertise present within the teaching staffs of small schools is less comprehensive than the position in large and medium-sized schools."

This hardly seems surprising given the smaller size of the staffs in smaller schools. However, as has been seen in Chapter Three, research shows (Galton and Patrick, op cit.) that there are few differences between teachers in schools of different size. Other research has shown that few teachers in primary schools have traditionally had scientific or technological backgrounds which might enable them to draw upon their expertise in order to provide a broad curriculum (see Assessment of Performance Unit (APU) 1981, 1983 and Terrell and Gillies, 1986). This situation may have been rectified to some extent by the Conservative Government's funding of 20-day science courses which were designed to develop teachers' expertise in the subject and prepare them to disseminate this to colleagues. The heads of Newby and Charlton, two of the schools in which heads were interviewed for this work, had attended such a course.

The present author's research sought to discover which areas of the curriculum schools were confident about teaching and whether there were differences between schools of different sizes. Headteachers' written comments, appended to questionnaires, often suggested that there was a decline in teachers' confidence about delivering the curriculum. For example, one head wrote:

> *"The National Curriculum has made many staff lose confidence in their ability to teach. They say things like 'Have I been wasting my time for fifteen years?'"*
> (head of a 125-pupil school in 1990)

The survey did not, however, show significant differences in confidence levels in subjects between schools of different sizes at 0.05 levels. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) testing revealed that the only exceptions were English and mathematics, which medium-sized schools were significantly less confident about than other size groups in 1995. Indeed, although not statistically significant, the differences tended to indicate that small schools were often more confident about delivering the range of subjects than larger ones. Tables 6.2 to 6.5 below show the mean levels of confidence for each subject on a five-point scale for each survey, and then the overall mean levels of confidence for all subjects in all three surveys. Heads were asked to

select a level of confidence for each subject and these ranged from *no confidence* to *totally confident*. Heads' responses were given numerical values as follows:

totally confident	*5*
confident	*4*
quite confident	*3*
not very confident	*2*
no confidence	*1*

TABLE 6.2:
MEAN LEVELS OF CONFIDENCE FOR SUBJECTS FOR SCHOOLS OF DIFFERENT SIZES IN 1990

SUBJECT	SMALL SCHOOLS MEAN CONFIDENCE	MEDIUM SCHOOLS MEAN CONFIDENCE	LARGE SCHOOLS MEAN CONFIDENCE	MEAN FOR ALL SCHOOLS
ART	3.66	3.63	3.40	3.53
ENGLISH	4.16	4.00	4.00	4.05
GEOGRAPHY	3.45	3.27	2.93	3.16
HISTORY	3.30	3.18	2.98	3.12
MATHEMATICS	4.03	3.76	3.91	3.92
MUSIC	3.21	3.06	2.76	2.97
PE	3.31	3.19	3.17	3.22
SCIENCE	3.71	3.35	3.64	3.61
TECHNOLOGY	3.10	3.12	3.02	3.07

TABLE 6.3:
MEAN LEVELS OF CONFIDENCE FOR SUBJECTS FOR SCHOOLS OF DIFFERENT SIZES IN 1995

SUBJECT	SMALL SCHOOLS MEAN CONFIDENCE	MEDIUM SCHOOLS MEAN CONFIDENCE	LARGE SCHOOLS MEAN CONFIDENCE	MEAN FOR ALL SCHOOLS
ART	3.66	3.35	3.64	3.60
ENGLISH	4.03	3.71	4.24	4.07
GEOGRAPHY	3.53	3.41	3.67	3.57
HISTORY	3.63	3.59	3.84	3.72
I.T.	3.03	2.71	3.20	3.05
MATHEMATICS	4.00	3.76	4.22	4.06
MUSIC	3.22	3.12	3.36	3.27
PE	3.16	3.24	3.56	3.36
SCIENCE	3.59	3.35	3.71	3.61
TECHNOLOGY	3.25	2.94	3.29	3.21

TABLE 6.4:
MEAN LEVELS OF CONFIDENCE FOR SUBJECTS FOR SCHOOLS OF DIFFERENT SIZES IN 1998

SUBJECT	SMALL SCHOOLS MEAN CONFIDENCE	MEDIUM SCHOOLS MEAN CONFIDENCE	LARGE SCHOOLS MEAN CONFIDENCE	MEAN FOR ALL SCHOOLS
ART	3.81	3.59	3.80	3.76
ENGLISH	4.13	4.00	4.02	4.05
GEOGRAPHY	3.81	3.56	3.70	3.72
HISTORY	4.03	3.71	3.82	3.87
I.T.	2.97	2.41	2.86	2.82
MATHEMATICS	4.19	4.00	4.07	4.10
MUSIC	3.47	3.24	3.43	3.41
PE	3.34	3.35	3.73	3.53
SCIENCE	4.09	3.65	3.95	3.95
TECHNOLOGY	3.47	2.94	3.23	3.26

Even in cases where statistical significance was found, this can be dismissed as being simply the effect of repeated testing. The striking feature is that there is little difference in heads' levels of confidence between schools of different sizes.

Table 6.5 shows that there was no significant change in total mean confidence levels for all subjects over the period and no significant difference between schools of different sizes. School size does not, according to the three surveys, appear to affect levels of confidence in any subject. This conclusion is supported by the INCSS research which led Hargreaves, L et al (1996, p.98) to conclude:

> "What can be stated with some confidence...is that compared to teachers in larger schools, and contrary to the pessimistic views about the ability of small schools to deliver adequately the National Curriculum, the teachers in small schools were generally as confident, if not more so, than their colleagues in the larger schools."

Webb's (1993) research drew similar conclusions and also brought attention to the importance of the headteacher as class teacher in developing knowledge, understanding and confidence.

TABLE 6.5:
MEAN CONFIDENCE FOR ALL SUBJECTS IN 1990, 1995 AND 1998

SCHOOL SIZE	MEAN CONFIDENCE FOR ALL SUBJECTS in 1990	MEAN CONFIDENCE FOR ALL SUBJECTS in 1995	MEAN CONFIDENCE FOR ALL SUBJECTS in 1998
SMALL SCHOOLS	3.60	3.51	3.72
MEDIUM SCHOOLS	3.44	3.32	3.43
LARGE SCHOOLS	3.32	3.67	3.66
TOTAL MEAN	3.43	3.55	3.64

Repeated measures of ANOVA tests showed statistically significant differences over time in geography, history, music and PE, but there is no interaction between school size and levels of confidence. A paired sample t-test on IT (now ICT), which was not part of the foundation subjects in 1990, showed no significant changes over time or between schools of different sizes between 1995 and 1998. Interestingly, there were no significant differences in confidence levels for science or technology in schools of different sizes.

The results suggest that heads of small schools in the sample are no less confident about delivering the curriculum than colleagues in larger schools. Studies by Ofsted (1998) and Richards (1998 and see later in this chapter) appear to confirm that they are justified in this and SATs scores, too, support the view that small schools are delivering the core subjects effectively. Indeed, HMI (DES, 1990) found that the provision of a range of teaching expertise in order to deliver the National Curriculum was a problem which was experienced by schools of all sizes:

> "In both phases, the problems of mismatch between teacher qualifications and experience and the subjects taught are becoming more acute as schools adjust their subject coverage to take account of the requirements of the National Curriculum".
> (p.16, para 101)

It should not, then, be assumed that small schools are necessarily disadvantaged in managing curriculum change. It might be argued that a skilled headteacher, with broad

curricular expertise in a small school, has the advantage over his or her counterparts in larger schools of being responsible for teaching perhaps half the children in the school. Given that heads are presumably appointed at least partly because of their teaching strengths, small school heads should, it might be argued, be among the best classroom practitioners in the teaching profession. Indeed, Bell and Sigsworth (1987) suggest that heads in small schools rely not only on their status to establish the "legitimacy" (p.132) of their role, but also on their classroom performance. Ofsted (1998, 9.1) cite some of the advantages which the small school head may enjoy:

> "Combining leadership with a substantial teaching role can…be a powerful way to influence the process of change. The teaching commitment enables a headteacher to "lead from the front" and to understand the processes involved in curriculum development. It also ensures that the headteacher knows at first hand what pupils know and can do; and it should reveal priorities for spending or training very clearly."

The case for small schools is further enhanced by the research of Forsythe (1983) and Bell and Sigsworth (op cit.) which led to the conclusion in The Rural Schools Curriculum Enhancement National Evaluation (SCENE) Project that small schools: "...enjoy certain advantages, notably in higher levels of engagement by pupils on task and in a trend which suggests their superior academic achievement as measured on standardised tests..." (Galton et al, 1991, p.1).

The introduction to the SCENE report maintained that "patterns of pupil and teacher behaviour are similar to that found in studies of larger British primary classrooms" (ibid, p.1). The report also suggests that it "could be argued...that previously small schools have been successful, in part, because larger ones did not maximise their advantages in terms of the wide range of teacher expertise available" (ibid, p.3).

The PRISMS project, according to the 1991 report, provided some evidence that pupils in small schools tended "to work harder and experience a greater range of teaching styles than pupils in larger schools" (DES, 1991, pp.1-2). Differences between schools were felt to be less significant than the variation which existed between teachers within

schools. This finding was not thought to be surprising, given the similarities in background and training of teachers in small and in large schools.

The report went on to maintain that, as the delivery of the National Curriculum demanded greater co-operation between teachers, "the small rural school which continues to isolate itself from its neighbours" (DES, 1991, p.3) will be at a disadvantage. The implication here seems to be that small schools were holding their own until the 1988 Act forced larger schools to work more effectively. The assumption is that once large schools do work effectively they will out-perform smaller schools.

However, the assertion that children perform better in small schools has also received support following the publication, in 1996, of the first league tables showing primary schools' performances in the Key Stage Two standard assessment tasks (SATs). Although schools with fewer than eleven Year 6 pupils were not included in the tables, many of those which achieved high placings were small schools with few pupils taking the tests. In 1998, children in 22 schools in 'The North' (which included Essex, Gloucester, Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire) achieved 100% results at level 4 or above in all three core subjects. Of these schools, three had only 11 Y6 pupils, six had 12, three had 13, one had 14, two had 16, one had 17, one had 18. The five others had 27, 29, 31, 34 and 41 Y6 pupils respectively (*Daily Telegraph*, 23.2.1999). As the head of Oakwell (284 pupils) put it: *"It's virtually impossible for a large school to come top of the league. You need to have just enough children to be included and have a bright year".*

Ofsted (1998) found that in English SATs at Key Stages One and Two children from schools in the 51-100 band achieved scores on average six per cent higher than those in larger schools. Nevertheless, caution should be exercised when comparing the results of schools of different sizes. Galton et al (1999) discuss the comparisons they made

between the performances of children in large and small schools following the ORACLE and PRISMS studies and commented:

> "...we were aware, because of the social class composition of small schools – the result of a movement of population among the mobile, prosperous, well-educated and articulate middle class from city suburbs to rural villages – it was only to be expected that small schools should out-perform larger ones." (p.160)

In addition to considering the effects of social class upon pupil performance, it is also important to take into account the influence which small numbers can have upon statistical outcomes, as tables 6.6 to 6.11 below indicate. The results for the three smallest schools in one LEA, which featured in all three sets of results by virtue of having eleven or more Y6 children in each year, are presented, together with figures for the three large schools in the same LEA. The schools have been given pseudonyms to protect their identities.

TABLES 6.6 TO 6.11
SATs RESULTS FOR THE 3 SMALLEST AND 3 LARGEST PRIMARY SCHOOLS ELIGIBLE FOR ENTRY IN SATs LEAGUE TABLES IN ONE LEA

TABLE 6.6
KEY STAGE 2 SATs SCORES AT CARROW 1996-1998 (89 on roll in 1998)

YEAR	NO. ELIGIBLE FOR KS2 ASSESSMENT	ENGLISH % achieving Level 4 or above	MATHS % achieving Level 4 or above	SCIENCE % achieving Level 4 or above	Percentage represented by one pupil
1996	14	43	43	64	7.1
1997	14	86	64	79	7.1
1998	15	73	60	80	6.7
Maximum difference	1	43	19	16	

TABLE 6.7
KEY STAGE 2 SATs SCORES AT MOLINEUX 1996-1998 (88 on roll in 1998)

YEAR	NO. ELIGIBLE FOR KS2 ASSESSMENT	ENGLISH % achieving Level 4 or above	MATHS % achieving Level 4 or above	SCIENCE % achieving Level 4 or above	Percentage represented by one pupil
1996	15	40	47	47	6.7
1997	15	73	53	47	6.7
1998	18	61	50	72	6.7
Maximum difference	3	33	6	25	

TABLE 6.8
KEY STAGE 2 SATs SCORES AT FRATTON 1996-1998 (131 on roll in 1998)

YEAR	NO. ELIGIBLE FOR KS2 ASSESSMENT	ENGLISH % achieving Level 4 or above	MATHS % achieving Level 4 or above	SCIENCE % achieving Level 4 or above	Percentage represented by one pupil
1996	16	56	88	81	6.3
1997	11	100	100	100	9.1
1998	21	52	52	57	4.8
Maximum difference	10	48	48	43	

TABLE 6.9
KEY STAGE 2 SATs SCORES AT DALE JUNIOR 1996-1998 (556 on roll in 1998)

YEAR	NO. ELIGIBLE FOR KS2 ASSESSMENT	ENGLISH % achieving Level 4 or above	MATHS % achieving Level 4 or above	SCIENCE % achieving Level 4 or above	Percentage represented by one pupil
1996	133	62	57	52	0.8
1997	131	63	74	74	0.8
1998	135	71	61	75	0.7
Maximum difference	4	9	17	23	

TABLE 6.10
KEY STAGE 2 SATs SCORES AT ST JAMES' 1996-1998 (566 on roll in 1998)

YEAR	NO. ELIGIBLE FOR KS2 ASSESSMENT	ENGLISH % achieving Level 4 or above	MATHS % achieving Level 4 or above	SCIENCE % achieving Level 4 or above	Percentage represented by one pupil
1996	67	87	85	93	1.5
1997	76	89	91	93	1.3
1998	77	86	87	87	1.3
Maximum difference	10	3	6	6	

TABLE 6.11
KEY STAGE 2 SATs SCORES AT HIGHBURY 1996-1998 (623 on roll in 1998)

YEAR	NO. ELIGIBLE FOR KS2 ASSESSMENT	ENGLISH % achieving Level 4 or above	MATHS % achieving Level 4 or above	SCIENCE % achieving Level 4 or above	Percentage represented by one pupil
1996	99	58	57	71	1.0
1997	110	75	68	78	0.9
1998	107	63	60	64	0.9
Maximum difference	11	17	11	14	

(Sources: DfEE, 1996; DfEE, 1997; DfEE, 1998)

The figures for the differently sized schools reveal the effect which the performance of a small number of children can have upon the results of a small school. The fluctuations in scores are much more marked in the smallest schools where one child may represent as much as 9% of the number taking the tests. Thus, Fratton, which headed the league table in 1997, almost doubled the number of children taking the tests in 1998 as parents transferred their children to the school. However, the scores almost halved as the effect of around nine children failing to achieve Level 4 were felt. At Carrow, English scores doubled from 43% to 86% (a 100% improvement) between 1996 and 1997 as a result of six more children gaining Level 4. A similar increase in the number of children achieving the level at Dale would have resulted in an increase of 4.8% (a 7.7% improvement). The tables show that each child in a small school represents a much larger percentage of the total than in larger schools, and this leads to much larger fluctuations in scores between years as the effects of a small number of children are far more significant. This is acknowledged by Ofsted (1998, 9.1):

> "Small schools - and, in particular, very small schools - have small cohorts of pupils in each year group. The results of the end-of-key-stage National Curriculum tests can inevitably fluctuate widely from one year to the next, because the scores of one or two pupils can have a significant influence on a school's results.

It is wise, then, to treat league tables of SATs results with caution and to bear in mind that many small schools do not feature in them because they have fewer than eleven pupils in Year Six.

Richards' Study of Small Schools

Former HMI Richards (1998, op cit.) looked at the work done in thirteen primary schools to question the assumption that small schools could not necessarily deliver the National Curriculum in the depth required (see Alexander et al, 1992). Richards wished to examine the schools' performances in the light of:

> "...extensive evidence from OFSTED inspections to support the view that standards of attainment are rather higher in schools with fewer than 100 pupils on roll than in larger schools, and also some inspection evidence that in both Key Stages 1 and 2 small primary schools are rated rather more favourably than larger ones in respect of (a) the content, breadth and balance of the curriculum and (b) curriculum planning and organization." (p.320)

Between May 1996 and March 1997 an investigation was carried out in the thirteen schools, which ranged in size from 36 to 82 pupils on roll, each with two or three classes and each in a rural area drawing upon families "engaged in farming or other rural and professional occupations" (p.320). The research was conducted through structured observation and in-depth discussion with KS2 teachers. Richards found that all of the schools were providing the "legal entitlement curriculum", with two thirds offering an "enriched legal entitlement curriculum" (p.321) and concluded: "In general the schools were characterized by curriculum planning of good quality which was closely and explicitly related to National Curriculum requirements" (p.323).

Richards found that heads felt able to 'keep a finger on the pulse' of the curriculum, partly through long- and medium-term planning, and partly through their own teaching of most of the curriculum. They accepted that they had a role in monitoring and evaluating colleagues' work, but had little time to do this because of their own lack of non-teaching time. Teachers were given subject responsibilities and attended courses, managed relevant resources and led reviews of policy statements. However, Richards found that the fact that teachers had so many subjects to look after without non-contact time meant that they were largely *dormant co-ordinators* who only became "activated" when a particular need, such as a policy review, arose:

> "This tacit acceptance of a degree of 'curriculum dormancy' was an understandable and functional response to the range of unrealistic demands too often made of co-ordinators in small primary schools." (ibid., p.324)

Small schools had, Richards found, moved significantly towards more subject-based work since the introduction of the National Curriculum, but none of the schools intended further to change the balance of subject and topic work, despite pressures from sources such as the Chief HMI to do so.

Richards found that the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in nearly 90% of the lessons observed, and good or very good in 40%. All classes were mixed-age and virtually all teachers worked as generalists rather than subject specialists. However, Richards found that most schools provided KS2 pupils with opportunities to be taught by teachers other than their class teacher, and "the use of semi-specialist teaching was a marked feature - paradoxically, more so than in most medium-sized or large primary schools" (p.328). The schools deployed a range of strategies to exchange classes and teachers and to make use of teachers' subject interests. Some heads exchanged classes so that they had the opportunity to teach all the children in their schools each week. There were also several instances when the head was relieved of teaching by a part-time teacher. Richards concluded:

> "Overall the use of both generalist and specialist teaching to help provide a balanced and appropriately challenging curriculum in KS2 was a striking feature of most of the schools in the survey. Flexible patterns of staff deployment were the norm, not the exception." (ibid., p.329)

Richards asserted that there were some features of the schools not directly attributable to their staff which helped to explain the 'better' performance of small schools in Ofsted inspections. These included:

- the small number of children on roll
- smaller class sizes
- the nature of the intake ("often comprising a mixture of well-established farming families and 'aspiring' professional ones") (p.330).

However, many of the factors were:

> "...directly attributable to the professionalism of the staff: the confident 'domestication' of the National Curriculum; its selective enrichment; medium-term planning of generally good quality; non-doctrinaire approaches to curriculum organization involving a mixed economy of topic and subject work; an eclectic pedagogy fit for both 'purpose' and 'persons'; in-depth knowledge of children; the sensible use of ability grouping; and flexible patterns of staff deployment involving a measure of semi-specialist teaching."
>
> (ibid., p.330)

Richards conceded that while the sample may not necessarily be representative of small schools nationally, and that not all the schools in the sample exhibited the positive features described, "on a national scale many small primary schools do" (p.330).

Richards' findings, together with the results of Ofsted inspections and SATs tests, and the INCSS findings (Hargreaves et al 1996; Galton et al 1998), suggest that, by 1998 at least, small schools were not exhibiting signs of failing to deliver the revised curriculum. Their success may have been due to inherent advantages conferred by restricted size, the nature of the pupils attending them, the quality of their teaching staff, or a combination of these factors. It may also have been due to their participation in initiatives which were designed to help and support them as they came to terms with the implications of the changes demanded by the Education Reform Act. One such initiative, which predated the ERA: the Education Support Grants, is described below.

The Education Support Grants

The perceived problems of the small school were recognised by central government and funding was provided to foster initiatives designed to develop their curricula. Between 1985 and 1991, fourteen Local Education Authorities received the Secretary of State for Education's approval for over £7m of expenditure on "pilot projects to experiment in ways of enriching the curriculum in small rural primary schools" (Galton et al, 1991, p.vi). More than 600 schools participated in the programme in which most projects lasted for five years and cost about £100,000 per annum each. The expenditure was at first supported by the DES at a rate of 70% until April 1990, when the rate was reduced to 60 per cent. The remaining funding was provided by participating LEAs.

The grants were intended to allow LEAs to "experiment, in ways of replication if successful, with means of compensating these schools for their curricular deficiencies that may occur because of their size" (DES Circular 6/84). Local Education

Authorities were to be encouraged to redeploy a limited amount of expenditure into activities which "appear to the Secretary of State to be of particular importance" (DES. 1984, para 68).

One of the main purposes of the Education Support Grants was to reduce the isolation of pupils and teachers and overcome a tendency for teachers to remain in their own schools with limited contact with other teachers (Galton et al, op cit.).

The SCENE Report (p.6, para 1.9) identified three main aims for the pilot projects:

> "To increase opportunities for teachers' professional development.
> To improve awareness and availability of educational resources.
> To reduce isolation for teachers and children."

That co-operative ventures were necessary for small schools' development seemed incontrovertible, given the report's assertion that: "There was an overwhelming feeling that prior to clustering of schools and the ESG funding teachers in rural schools felt very isolated" (p.83). This was particularly acute for Key Stage 1 teachers where they were the only infant teacher in the school. The junior or Key Stage 2 teachers were often headteachers whose isolation was reduced by the number of meetings they attended. However, the assumption that teachers in small schools endure greater professional isolation than their counterparts in larger schools is challenged by some researchers (see Chapters Three and Seven).

An evaluation of a rural schools' ESG project by Routledge (1989) asserted that teachers' experiences determined that working in small schools limited "...the possibility of everyday challenge and dialogue with an extended group of colleagues..." (p.111). Routledge argued that it was difficult for those who worked in small schools to be released to attend events where staff might share their views with colleagues from other schools because of the limited availability of cover. This view is echoed by one of the headteachers whose interview is reported in Chapter Nine.

The SCENE research team observed classroom work, listened to children talking about their work and their schools, and even accompanied classes on educational visits. Relevant meetings were attended and the team interviewed co-ordinators, support teachers, headteachers, class teachers, governors and parents. Most participating LEAs used the ESG funding to support schools with up to four teachers and fewer than 120 children on roll, but, as Galton (1993) commented, no two LEAs chose to use the money in similar ways.

The timing of the National Evaluation of the ESGs was significant since it took place between 1989 and 1991, not only in the first year of the implementation of National Curriculum Key Stage 1 mathematics, science and English, but also at the time when schools were preparing to manage their own finances as part of the local management of schools initiative. The fact that major initiatives were taking place between 1989 and 1991 was one of the problems encountered by the authors of the SCENE Report. It was difficult to attribute the development of the curriculum in small schools to ESG initiatives. These coincidences made it "difficult for the National Evaluation to identify results specific to the rural schools initiative" (ibid, p.vii, para 3). However, the report maintained that the successful development of co-operative clusters helped schools to implement the National Curriculum and develop plans for introducing LMS.

The findings of the SCENE report which relate to co-operation between schools are discussed in the next section. However, it is worth mentioning at this stage the analyses of the case studies conducted by the research team. It was found that, compared with the survey of curriculum provision for the PRISMS study six years earlier, the schools in the SCENE survey had experienced:

"• an extension of the range of the curriculum to include in particular science, technology and computing;
- an improvement in the quality of children's learning opportunities to include:
- more practical firsthand experience;
- a wider range of resources in use and available for use;
- an improved balance of media used by children to obtain and express information."

(p.viii)

The report maintained that the range of the curriculum "could conceivably have been extended through the mere imposition of National Curriculum", but that "the nature of the activities constituting the extension, and the physical, social and professional resources which supported it, could not" (ibid, p.vii, para 3). The report concluded that the original objectives of the ESGs had been achieved and that they had "considerably enhanced the ability of many rural schools to take on the demands of recent changes in legislation" (p.ix).

The report recommended the establishment of cluster groups and maintained that, where schools co-operated, the National Curriculum had been "accommodated with relative ease" (ibid, p.ix). However, the authors identified a need to involve governors more actively in the management of clusters.

Aims and Objectives for Clusters

Many LEAs have reported on the conditions in their small schools and on the initiatives which they have instigated in order to promote collaboration between small schools (see, for example, North Yorkshire and Norfolk in Chapter Three). It has been shown that such reports often perceive professional isolation to be a problem for teachers in small schools. For instance, Northamptonshire LEA's *Rural Schools Project 1974 to 1982* maintained that one of the disadvantages of small rural schools can be that "Teachers work in isolation" (Addison, 1973, p.15). There was later felt to be a need for action if the National Curriculum was to be implemented effectively. One solution to the difficulties which it was argued by many that small schools would experience in delivering the changed curriculum, was to encourage co-operation between schools for their mutual benefit.

Clustering or co-operation between small schools was not a new idea brought about by the ESG initiative or the introduction of the National Curriculum. Indeed, in 1982 HMI Wynn (Schools Council, 1982) had maintained that peer group isolation in small schools could be overcome through greater links being developed between schools.

Wynn suggested that a sense of wider identity could greatly enhance the experience of pupils in small schools.

Ribchester and Edwards (1998), too, argued that the perceived weaknesses of small schools might be addressed through clustering, although they felt that threats to close schools which were based upon such perceptions were questionable:

> "...closures have been built around a dual critique of educational inadequacies and poor economies of scale, although neither argument has ever proved to be completely convincing." (p.281)

They went on to define clusters and their objectives:

> "Cluster groups consist of proximate schools which work together and co-operate for events and activities for the mutual benefit of each of the participatory institutions. The principal objective is to enhance the learning experience of pupils attending small schools and, in their most mature form, can involve frequent movement of both pupils and staff." (ibid., p.282)

It will be seen later in this chapter and in Chapter Nine that some clusters failed to develop, or declined because of a lack of commitment on the part of those involved.

In this section, the aims of clustering and collaboration will be examined, together with some of the staged models of clustering which are intended to indicate the levels of co-operation which may be achieved. In exploring this, some ideas about clustering which pre-dâte the ERA will be studied.

Galton et al (op cit.) saw clustering as a basis for curriculum enhancement, professional development of teachers, improved awareness and availability of resources and the reduction of rural isolation, and these were the aims which were defined for the pilot SCENE projects. Many LEAs seemed to share this view and Warwickshire County Council (1992, p.11), in a policy document, maintained that: "...clustering can relieve some of the problems of isolation although it requires careful organisation and a high level of commitment from staff and governors".

Galton and Patrick (1990) recognised the need for small schools to co-operate and argued that the introduction of the National Curriculum made it important that small schools began "to pool resources, including staff expertise, so that as a group they provide the same facilities and personnel as found in suburban schools of greater size". However, Galton and Patrick thought it doubtful "...whether the present informal arrangements can ensure this degree of co-operation" (ibid., p.177).

Williams (1987, p.250) argued that clusters allow small schools to:

- "operate from a position of greater strength (resources, staffing etc.);
- minimise the disadvantages of professional isolation; widen the children's horizons;
- overcome problems of distance from libraries, museums and other such centres;
- increase teacher liaison and contact;
- provide relevant in-service training for teachers;
- foster co-operative ventures;
- widen and develop the curriculum;
- maintain stimulation within the wide age range often found in a single class;
- create and identify a unit which the LEA could support in a more realistic, positive and creative way."

This comprehensive list seems to indicate that an effectively-run cluster would mitigate virtually all of the problems which have been identified as being peculiar to small primary schools. Indeed, many of the features of Williams' list would surely be welcomed by larger primary schools too. It is worthy of note that large schools sought the benefits of clustering and collaboration to a greater extent in 1998 than in 1990, according to the surveys carried out for this thesis (see Table 6.12).

Clark (1985) proposed three main aims for clusters which appear to encompass much of what Williams mentions:

"1 To enrich the curriculum of small schools by sharing teacher expertise and resources.
2 To ensure sufficiently large peer groups for the best possible academic and social development of the pupils, and,
3 To enable teachers to share ideas and mutually support each other to provide a richer professional development". (p.80)

Clark advocated bringing the pupils in the cluster together and moving them between participating schools on a weekly basis, so that teachers' varied skills could be encountered by all children during a short period of time. However, there were disadvantages to such an approach, which was found to be unsettling for the children, with work sometimes unfinished, and transport proving a problem. Clark identified a dilemma facing schools which brought children together to work. He maintained that regular weekly co-operation:

> "...gives continuity in project work and easier tracking of progress but adds to transport costs and difficulties as well as putting a greater strain on the teacher organising the work - fortnightly, or less, meeting together gives less continuity and less opportunity for pupils to meet and work together but gives more time for preparation, eases organisation difficulties and makes transport, meals and other practical arrangements easier to cope with". (ibid, p.152-153)

Clark also favoured pairing the four schools in his cluster in order to enable infant and junior departments in pairs of schools to co-operate over a period of a term or a year. While this would mean that not all schools benefited from the expertise of all staff in the short term, it would ensure certain long-term advantages which might include:

"1. More straightforward planning.
2. Greater continuity in the work.
3. Easier organisation of transport, meals and resources.
4. Closer integration between two sets of pupils.
5. Greater trust and professional contact between a smaller number of teachers.
6. Easier evaluation of the work and of children's progress, due to the more limited numbers encountered and the narrower range of contacts." (ibid, p.154)

Clark noted that the COSS (*Co-operation in Small Schools*) groups which were willing to take part in evaluation and initiate change, "thwart the danger of stagnation and the criticism of superficiality and stand the chance of making in-roads into joint curriculum planning and deeper integration, thus actually improving the work in schools" (ibid. p.165).

Physical Education and Games were often found to be an area of the curriculum which showed improvement, and Clark maintained that this was "...possibly due to the greater opportunities for team games provided by a larger group of pupils" (ibid, p.142). One head in Clark's survey felt that there had been "...no singularly improved curriculum area" but that "new breadth" had been brought about by:

> "1. Using other teacher skills.
> 2. Socialising of both schools.
> 3. Use of equipment not available in own school.
> 4. Gearing work to appropriate age level." (ibid, p.141)

Another head in Clark's survey argued that clustering had not broadened the curriculum, but had enriched it by introducing the children to other teachers with greater expertise. There were also benefits deriving from being able to form large groups with a narrow age range, something which larger schools might take for granted, and there were gains in the social and moral interaction of the children.

There are many similarities between Clark's and Williams' aims and those which Reid et al. (1988) reported as the intended outcomes of a co-operative venture between two schools, one with 30 and one with 50 pupils. These were:

> "a) to increase pupil contact with other adults and children, thus helping to alleviate pupil isolation;
> b). establishing of local INSET, thus helping to alleviate teacher isolation;
> c) sharing of resources to include jointly produced material and, where appropriate, curriculum guidelines;
> d) to include the wider community into the venture;
> e) increased involvement through inviting other interested teachers and schools into the cluster." (p.89)

It is interesting to note in this small cluster that there was an ambition to expand and to involve others outside the existing federation. However, Ohlson (1983), a headteacher who had worked in clusters, maintained that the best co-operatives are those where the co-operation is close and friendly and based on mutually recognised needs. This could not be achieved by prescription and he felt that his fellow headteachers were "firmly

against persuading people to co-operate" (p.34). This view coincides with that of Hargreaves, A (1994) whose criticisms of *contrived collegiality* are described in Chapter Five.

Galton et al (1991, p.93, para 5.12) noted that: "Feelings of threat or suspicion had to be relieved before collaborative working was possible". The existing relationships between schools were often revealed to be a significant factor in determining the likely success or failure of clustering arrangements by heads interviewed as part of the present author's research (see Chapter Nine). It is worth noting here that some of the heads reported that clusters had declined as friends in other schools had moved away from the area and been replaced by others with whom strong friendships had yet to be established. The head of Kirkby, for example, had developed strong links with neighbouring schools when a group of heads, most of whom had taken up their posts at the same time or had actually taught at Kirkby, had formed a cluster. This had declined as heads had moved on to new posts and a new partnership had been formed by a large group of schools which fed into the local secondary. This was, however, felt to be too large for effective collaboration to take place and within it there were smaller clusters, one of which was much more structured and formalised than the rest. Kirkby, which was not part of the most advanced cluster, was involved in some co-operative ventures with other schools, but the schools taking part varied according to the subject or aspect of education which was to be discussed. The school was part of a cluster with two other schools, but this was flexible and one of the other schools was less involved now than in the past. However, the head felt that many heads wished to retain autonomy and keep the individual identities of their schools and resisted strong involvement in clusters.

> *"Clusters work well where settled heads have agreed philosophies. There are certain things you want to do in your own schools without involving others. I think, if you have only two teachers, clusters can be much more important."*
> (head of Kirkby (93 pupils), interviewed in 1998)

The school was, at the time of the interview, working with a nearby school, which was not part of its cluster, to develop ICT.

The value of bringing heads and teachers together was emphasised by the SCENE Report, which asserted that it was tempting to speculate that the distribution of resources by ESG staff was less effective in promoting co-operation between schools than the siting of resources in centres or schools. Such arrangements would, the report maintained, "lead naturally to teachers meeting each other and discussing resources and other issues with colleagues from other schools" (op cit., p.71, para 4.7).

Clusters had, according to the SCENE report, the potential to provide "stable structures within which advisory teachers could operate more effectively than they could with separate, individual schools" (ibid, p.146). Schools in clusters could share the cost and use of resources with the result that small, rural schools would have access to specialised, large or expensive equipment. In addition to the benefits of sharing resources, the report averred that with initial help from advisory teachers, resource centres provided the bases for teachers' curriculum support groups and opportunities for children to encounter larger peer groups. The report found that, although co-ordinators and support teachers frequently saw an important part of their role as introducing and encouraging the use of new materials in the classroom, they also played an important part in enabling staff and pupils from schools to meet.

Galton et al (DES, 1991) collected data through classroom observations, questionnaires and interviews, and data was compared with the PRISMS study of curriculum provision in small schools conducted six years earlier. The SCENE Report noted that "The most common change in teachers reported by those responsible for the ESG project was in levels of confidence" (ibid., p.83, para 5.5). Teachers regarded meetings with teachers from other schools as valuable: "...they were able to work together on issues such as observation and assessment, The National Curriculum English document, assessment and record keeping" (ibid, p.87, para 5.6). Indeed, Routledge

(op cit.) looked at the factors which influenced teachers' decisions to attend in-service activities and discovered that 91 per cent of the 95 people who responded to his questionnaire rated "...the opportunity to meet with colleagues from other schools" as a strong factor (p.113).

The SCENE Report stated that the provision of transport through education support grants was generally thought to be "the most important and valuable resource". The report maintained that there was general agreement that the benefits to schools had been "immense" and that "continuation of such schemes was very much desired" (op cit., p.78, para 5.3). It concluded that without the provision of transport many activities would have been impossible.

Another significant benefit of clustering, identified by the SCENE Report, was the reduction in problems for children when transferring to secondary school:

> "In those clusters where junior pupils from different schools had engaged in joint activities, it was generally reported by teachers that pupils transferred to the larger secondary schools with less difficulty than pupils had previously".
> (ibid, p.83, para 5.4)

One of the main aims of the Berkshire submission for an Education Support Grant (see Williams op cit.) was to overcome the isolation which it was felt was suffered by children in small schools who would seldom have the opportunity to work in the size of peer group which they would encounter at secondary school. It should be remembered that, for some children, the transfer to secondary school from a small primary school might be the first time that they had worked in a single-age class and had a large peer group with whom to work and play.

Co-operation Between Schools

Galton et al (1991) revealed that there was considerable variation in the extent to which schools in different LEAs had moved towards co-operation.

> "Some LEAs were described as starting with particularly low levels of staff development and high levels of isolation in small schools. This obviously affected the levels of success which clustering of schools could be expected to achieve in a given length of time." (p.85, para 5.5.2)

Bell (1988), using the term *federation* (a term which has since acquired different connotations for schools: see Appendix 1) rather than *cluster*, maintained that some local authorities assigned each of their rural schools to a 'comprehensive federation network'. He argued that, although federation could be accomplished by prescription, it was more difficult to persuade teachers to embark upon federal activity. The problem which the local authorities faced was, according to Bell:

> "...how an externally conceived scheme can be transported into schools which had no hand in its construction and still capture some of the spirit of co-operation which characterises genuinely organic federations. Unwilling conscripts are unlikely to form flourishing co-operatives". (p.187)

Bell has clearly identified a key problem for those who pursue federation or clustering as the solution to the perceived problems of small schools. This *contrived collegiality* (Hargreaves, A, 1994) appears to be problematical and may explain the lack of success of some of the clusters which were set up largely at the behest of the LEA in Humberside. The INCSS research confirms that contrived collegiality was often doomed to fail. The research team identified four levels of clustering and argued that clusters developed through the levels over time. Attempts by LEAs to initiate new clusters at the more advanced levels "guaranteed neither effective collaboration nor any extension of range or quality of the curriculum" (Hargreaves, L in Bridges and Husbands, 1996, p.24). It would seem that a perception gap exists between the aims and the practicalities of clustering, particularly where curricular expertise was to be shared, ensuring that co-operative ventures were not always successful. The difficulty may lie in a contradiction of perceptions, with the views of those who do not work in small schools, but identify their limitations, conflicting with the perception of some of those who do work in small schools that no problem exists.

The SCENE report (op cit., p.85, para 5.6) revealed that, "It was common for co-ordinators to find reluctance and suspicion among primary staff about working collaboratively with other schools". This reticence may not be surprising, if teachers do not perceive that they are isolated or in need of advice from outside their establishments.

It was not only the teachers who sometimes found co-operation with other schools difficult. According to the SCENE Report children, too, encountered problems:

> "Bringing children together did not guarantee social mixing - the activities involved were a major determinant in the levels of co-operation achieved between school members. Joint activities involved travel and there is a need to set the value of the joint activity against the length of time involved in moving pupils around. Joint residential trips led to new friendships but these could not be sustained as trips were infrequent." (p.94)

A further note of caution in the report concerns school governors who, the researchers discovered, often failed to see any advantage of sharing funds with neighbouring schools and questioned whether budgets were sufficient to support joint activities. For headteachers too, many of whom were presumably the instigators of clustering arrangements, ambition and promotion prospects often affected the balance of clusters. Bishop (1990, p.37) maintained that:

> "The headship of a small school is often seen as a rung on the promotion ladder, from Deputy Head of a Group 6 [now Group 3] to the headship of a Group 2 or 3 [now Group 1], and then to a Group 5 or 6 [now Group 3] headship. In such a context, some heads place great emphasis upon their own autonomy, and they may see co-operation with other schools as a threat to that."

There may, then, be a fear among some headteachers that federations might lead to the loss of some small primary school headships as local authorities see that clusters of schools can, despite being physically far apart, work together for the benefit of the pupils. Some heads, according to Williams (op cit.), felt that the model already adopted in some areas including parts of Wales, whereby one headteacher is

responsible for a group of schools between which he or she travels, may result (see Appendix 1).

The Audit Commission (op cit.) recognised the problem and maintained that if co-operation was to make a favourable impact on the organizational disadvantages of small schools, some schools needed voluntarily to give up some autonomy for the good of the cluster. The most significant result of this would be an effect on teacher staffing, with schools within clusters co-operating to make appointments following identification of the perceived needs of each cluster. Galton and Patrick (op cit., p.177) cautioned against reticence on the part of small schools in changing their staffing policies, arguing that:

> "If each school, its governors, and headteacher, jealously guard their right to make appointments to the staff, on the grounds of what is thought best for the particular school, it will be impossible to develop the necessary expertise within each cluster that will be adequate for the demands of the National Curriculum."

Coopers and Lybrand's (1993) report maintained that the schools themselves had to wish to adopt clustering arrangements and approve of their implications. This view, which coincides with those of Hargreaves, A (1994) and Fullan (1999), is summed up by their assertion that:

> "The experience of co-operation between schools appears to indicate that local arrangements only thrive if they develop out of mutual interest and deliver tangible benefits. They cannot be imposed from outside".
>
> (Coopers and Lybrand, 1993, p.35)

Galton et al (DES, 1991.) argued that the most effective form of external support schools could receive was obtained by generalist teachers providing supply cover, since these teachers released staff to plan and work together, initially within schools and eventually between schools:

> "They provided opportunities for teachers, many of whom had rarely visited another school, to see other classrooms, share ideas and learn from other teachers. Opportunities to form friendships and make social links were essential at this stage in establishing effective teacher support groups." (p.10, para 5.1)

Galton and Patrick's (op cit.) PRISMS research showed that co-operation at some stages of clustering was largely limited to sharing resources and teaching facilities. Planning, where it was done co-operatively, tended to involve only headteachers and clusters, therefore often denying teachers a sense of ownership which is essential if they are to work effectively.

It can be seen, then, that co-operative arrangements are often seen as something of a panacea for solving the perceived problems of small schools (Audit Commission, op cit.; SCENE, op cit.; Williams, op cit.). However, the issue is far more complex than it might at first appear. It has been shown that some small school headteachers do not necessarily feel that their schools are less able to deliver the curriculum than large schools, and small schools have tended to perform well in SATs tests and Ofsted inspections. Added to this, an element of competition for pupil numbers has made some heads cautious about sharing expertise (see Chapter Nine and comments of head the non-participating EAZ school in Chapter Four). The impetus to enter into collaborative arrangements may have been diminished for many heads and involvement may sometimes be marginal rather than wholehearted. Just as the Conservative Government's advocacy of grant maintained status may, inadvertently, have been the salvation of many small schools threatened with closure, so the policy of making schools more publicly accountable and competitive may have led to a decline in collaboration: this despite the Government having backed its support for such arrangements with funding.

Stages in the Development of Clustering

In order to illustrate the range of clustering arrangements which are possible, it is useful at this point to look in more detail at the features of clusters which might be

present at different stages of development. In order to do this, the aims set out for clusters by Reid et al (1988), Wragg (1985), Galton et al (1991), Huckman (1998) and INCSS (Hargreaves, L in Bridges and Husbands, 1996) will be examined.

Wragg (1985) identified the key elements of a well-organised federation, the features of which are common to many elements of Huckman's and the INCSS models. Wragg maintained that federations should offer the following educational possibilities:

(a) joint in-service days for teachers
(b) curriculum expertise
(c) job swaps for a term or a year between teachers within the Federation giving professional renewal and a change of scenery
(d) shared bus trips to places of interest
(e) both inter-school sports (especially small-sided games, like five or six a sides) and regional teams (often a small school cannot field a full eleven or fifteen, but a region can) (p.7)

A 1991 survey conducted by the Exeter Small Schools' Network showed that 70% of small schools were in clusters. Keast (1993) maintains that this figure had risen to 94% by 1992. The Exeter survey showed that schools most commonly came together for in-service training (94%), sport (85%) and sharing resources (72%). However, only 32% made use of their clusters to "increase the pool of teacher expertise...and...less than half made joint purchases or planned expenditure as a cluster" (p.6). Keast suggests that schools have not yet "reached sufficient maturity" as groups to tackle the problem of deploying teachers so that their expertise is used most effectively.

Keast's Survey in 1992 showed that there was strong support for attempts to combine pupils for activities, but that the extent to which it occurred varied greatly. 124 questionnaire responses from 33 LEAs revealed:

> "In 90% of the schools the pupils combined with children in neighbouring schools but for half of the sample it was only on two occasions a term. About a fifth of the schools met up more than six times a term". (ibid., p.19)

There may well be stages in the evolution of clusters and it is, perhaps, unreasonable to expect all federations to achieve maturity within a short space of time. As the report prepared by Coopers and Lybrand's (op cit.) for the DfE maintains, clusters need not be comprehensive from the outset:

> "...schools may find that small scale co-operation for specific purposes (e.g. training) is preferable to attempts to construct large scale arrangements from scratch". (p.35, para 917)

Huckman (1998) looked at six clusters in Wales which involved a total of 32 small primary schools. She discovered considerable variations in the extent to which the clusters had developed and found that only one of the clusters had reached Stage 3 of Galton et al's (1991) analysis of cluster development. Her table indicates the stages:

JOINT ACTIVITIES DENOTING STAGES OF CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT	
INSET	STAGE 1
Concerts/ trips	
Information Sharing	
Limited sharing of premises	
Sharing Schemes of work	STAGE 2
Joint Policy Writing	
Sharing Teacher Expertise	STAGE 3
Sharing School Development Plans	
Sharing Budgets: Curriculum Resources	
Staff	
Premises	

(Huckman, 1998, p.79)

Huckman discovered that heads in the small schools identified *staffing*, including teacher expertise, staffing levels and supply cover, as their greatest budget inadequacy, followed by *a lack of teaching materials*. However, there was limited evidence of schools sharing staff expertise or resources in the clusters. Heads were surveyed on the problems of sharing resources and asked to identify the main obstacle to this. The 32 heads responded as follows:

PROBLEMS OF SHARING PROBLEMS	Number of Responses
Distance between schools	10
Timetabling of usage	8
Attitudes of staff and governing bodies	8
Transport difficulties	3
Time for organising	2
Cost to budget	1

(ibid, p.78)

Huckman argued that a number of management tasks would be presented to heads and governors if successful collaboration was to take place, and suggested that these could be built into a cluster policy for sharing resources and be placed within school development plans. She identified the following elements:

- the task of managing shared resources among schools,
- the development of an inventory of current resources that could be shared (human resources as well as material),
- an analysis of resources required by each school,
- an estimation of costs of resources to be funded,
- the cost of transport,
- the costs associated with organisation and administration,
- the possible allocation of a proportion of the budget for joint purchases - whether this should be based on a formula involving numbers of pupils or a set sum for each school,
- identifying sources for external funding,
- the identification of personnel responsible for organising, etc.
- procedures for monitoring and evaluating the process, and
- developing a culture of collaboration.

(Ibid, p.80)

While the practicalities of clustering give rise to almost inevitable problems because schools are geographically separate, these are problems which schools might reasonably be expected to overcome if they felt that clustering was worthwhile and could benefit them. However, the final point deserves consideration, especially in the light of the present author's findings from structured interviews (see Chapter Nine), some of which indicate that a culture of rivalry and competition between schools can lead to a decline in clustering. The Education Reform Act and the demands which it made of schools may have given many the impetus to collaborate in order to cope with extensive changes, but subsequent developments, such as the publication of

performance league tables and open enrolment, may have been counter-productive. Headteachers' and governors' first priorities are to their own schools and, by encouraging a market place attitude to education, successive governments may have made collaboration and co-operation seem a less inviting prospect (see Chapter Four).

The four levels of clustering identified by the INCSS research were based upon findings from a survey of 53 small schools which enabled the researchers to produce a cumulative cluster score for each school which "took into account its various co-operative links, the frequency of joint activities and the existence of shared documentation..." (Hargreaves, L in Bridges and Husbands, p.24). The levels, which will be used alongside those of Huckman to assign levels for schools in the qualitative study for the present research, are presented below.

Level I schools were loosely attached to at least one co-operative group of schools but "showed negligible commitment to other small schools" (ibid., p.26). The features of Level I or pre-clustered schools were as follows:

Cluster Level I

Governors	some involvement in own school activities
Heads	regular meetings with heads of other schools
Teachers	occasional joint INSET courses
Co-ordination	little or no joint plans or documents
Activities	fairly regular sports events

(ibid., p.25)

Level II schools were more involved with other schools:

Cluster Level II

Governors	regular involvement in own school activities
	occasional meetings with governors from other schools
Heads	regular meetings with heads of other schools
Teachers	occasional joint INSET courses
	occasional visits to other schools
	have led an INSET session
	occasional joint teachers' support meetings
Co-ordination	cluster development plan in planning stage
	shared policy in one or two curriculum areas
	other shared policy statements in planning stage
Activities	occasional joint children's workshops

(ibid, p.27)

Schools which had reached level III "had moved well beyond counting the costs of cluster involvement and were convinced of its benefits which included shared documents, increased confidence, stability, continuity and trust":

Cluster Level III

Governors	regular involvement in own school activities
	meetings with governors from other schools 2-5 times a year
	involved in joint cluster activities
Heads	regular meetings with heads of other schools
Teachers	regular joint INSET meetings
	visits other schools
	lead INSET session
	joint teachers' support meetings 2-5 times a year
	work alongside teachers from other schools
Co-ordination	cluster development plan in preparation
	shared policy in 3 or 4 curriculum areas
	other shared policy statements in preparation
	shared financial arrangements
Activities	fairly regular joint classroom-based activities

(ibid, p.28)

Schools which had reached level IV involved parents and governors fully and collaborated closely:

Cluster Level IV

Governors	regular involvement in own school activities
	regular involvement in joint cluster activities
	meetings with governors from other schools 6-12 times a year
Heads	regular meetings with heads of other schools
Teachers	joint INSET meetings 6-12 times a year
	regular visits to other schools
	lead INSET session
	work alongside teachers from other schools
	joint teachers' support meetings 6-12 times a year
	inter-school exchange of specialist curriculum areas
Co-ordination	cluster development plan in use
	shared policy on most curriculum areas
	shared policy statements in use
	shared financial arrangements
Activities	very regular joint classroom-based activities

(ibid, p.31)

Clusters at the most advanced level were able to focus on learning opportunities for children and cycles of planning, implementation and review were enabling schools to be more critically aware of the implications of teaching the National Curriculum. The researchers discovered, however, that heads and teachers in schools in the less advanced cluster levels were "more likely to express complete personal confidence in their individual ability to cope with the National Curriculum" (ibid., p.32). This raises issues concerning schools' motivations for collaboration. The schools in the INCSS study were not provided with additional funding to enable them to cluster and were not, therefore, mandated to do so. Hargreaves, L et al (1996) found that schools which had limited involvement with clusters were either at an early initiation stage or had decided to be independent. The researchers maintained that:

> "Most of this latter group tended to involve themselves with the cluster only when there was something which they felt was useful. They rarely offered to reciprocate by providing additional expertise for the rest of the cluster members" (p.95)

The research for this thesis revealed an increase in collaboration between 1990 and 1995 followed by a decline from 1995 to 1998. Headteachers were asked if their schools collaborated with other primary schools for curriculum support and were asked to provide brief details if they answered 'yes'. A summary of the 'yes' responses is set out in Table 6.12 below. Analysis is by Kolmogorov-Smirnov testing.

TABLE 6.12:
FREQUENCY OF SCHOOLS COLLABORATING WITH OTHER PRIMARY SCHOOLS FOR CURRICULUM SUPPORT IN 1990, 1995 and 1998

YEAR	SMALL SCHOOLS n=32	MEDIUM SCHOOLS n=17	LARGE SCHOOLS n=45	MEAN FOR ALL SCHOOLS
1990	20 (62.5%)	7 (41.2%)	21 (46.7%)	51.1%
1995	25 (78.1%)	10 (58.8%)	29 (64.4%)	68.1%
1998	20 (62.5%)	9 (52.9%)	31 (68.9%)	63.8%
MEAN FOR ALL YEARS	67.7%	51.0%	60.0%	61.0%

The figures apparently indicate that small schools were more likely than larger ones to be involved in collaboration with other primary schools in 1990 and in 1995, but that

there had been a decline in the number of such ventures by 1998 when larger schools were slightly more likely than others to be part of clusters. However, Kolmogorov-Smirnov testing reveals that, despite this apparent difference, there was no statistically significant difference in the likelihood of schools from different size groups collaborating. This data is in broad agreement with Humberside LEA's own statistics (Robinson, 1990) which indicated that 47 of its 67 small schools were involved in one of 14 cluster groups in 1990. This represents a 70.1% percentage rate of involvement, compared with the 62.5% revealed from the reduced 1990 survey sample of 32 schools. The complete 1990 response for 50 small schools which replied revealed 68% participation in collaborative ventures with other schools. The levels of participation for medium and large schools shown in the larger survey (44.1% and 44.9% respectively) are close to those shown for the reduced samples (see Appendix 11). The data is, therefore, internally consistent, and full and reduced samples are in agreement. Many heads wrote additional comments about their involvement with clusters. The head of one small school which had not been part of a cluster in 1990 commented:

> *"We have 'clustered' in the past and plans are afoot for more co-operation between feeder schools to the secondary, but it always proves very impractical in terms of time, money and enthusiasm."*
>
> (head of 60-pupil school in 1990)

By 1995, however, the school was part of a cluster with others which fed into the local secondary school. This had developed to such an extent that the cluster employed a joint administrative officer by 1998 with financial contributions being based upon school size.

Another school had been involved in a cluster before 1990 but this had declined:

> *"I have joined one other school and we are giving and getting some support with IT. In the past I have been in a cluster with a group of schools but the benefits are almost nil."*
>
> (head of 54-pupil school in 1990)

The school was, however, part of a cluster in 1995 which met monthly and produced joint curriculum policies, but by 1998 the head reported: *"This has declined recently because training for literacy has taken up so much time"*.

There is a certain irony in the decline of clustering arrangements because of the pressure to implement new government initiatives, since it was such initiatives which provided the impetus for many clusters after the ERA in 1988. However, some schools clearly felt that the most recent educational changes could be managed better with co-operation. The head of an 80-pupil school reported in 1998:

> *"The collaboration is with some colleagues in two local schools. We meet fortnightly for mutual support and strategic planning. We also work collaboratively with KS1 planning. With the pressure ever-increasing (e.g. NLS, NNS, NGfL, Ofsted etc.), particularly on teaching heads some kind of support network is vital, both to share common practice and to keep sane."*
> (head of an 80-pupil school in 1998)

One reason for the increase in the tendency for large schools to be involved in clusters may be the initiatives taken in Hull, the most urban of the four LEAs in which surveys were taken. The authority had introduced "family groups" of schools of similar catchment areas and these had been in existence for two years at the time of the 1998 survey. The presence of this initiative and its consequent effect upon the data suggests that the (former) Humberside area may not be typical of other LEAs in terms of clustering. Headteachers described how the Hull clusters worked:

> *"The family group - a socio-economic group- meets half-termly. There are ten schools in it. Three have agreed to share good practice in, for example, the literacy hour and to have exchange school visits for staff."*
> (head of a 267-pupil school)

> *"We have planning groups, co-ordinator groups and steering groups. Most other nearby primary schools are involved."*
> (head of a 234-pupil school)

A further initiative within the same LEA was the funding of an Education Action Zone (EAZ) which was introduced in 1998 (see Chapter Four):

"We are now part of an EAZ. Eighteen schools are involved. We also have regular meetings with nine primaries and a secondary once or twice a term at headteacher, deputy, core subject co-ordinator level to look at SEN, IT and technology."
(head of a 295-pupil school)

The survey and the subsequent interviews (see Chapter Nine) revealed that clusters took different forms, ranging from well-established groups which met regularly, to more informal groupings which met perhaps termly. The former included the following:

"The partnership includes nine schools (7 primary and the secondary and a special school). Heads meet at least twice for half a day each term plus an annual conference. We cover all of the curriculum and mutually supportive management and administration areas. Subject co-ordinators meet as appropriate. There is currently a strong modern languages initiative."
(head of a 135-pupil school)

"There are four schools involved. We have joint policy-writing, enhanced curricular activities in all subjects, joint extra curricular activities, a half day heads' meeting monthly and a full staff meeting termly."
(head of a 51-pupil school in 1995)

The latter school's cluster had been sustained in 1998, with linked ICT days, and a shared artist in residence being employed. Less formalised clusters included the following:

"The pyramid schools meet maybe once a term for each NC subject excluding music, PE and RE but we question the value of the meetings sometimes."
(head of a 352-pupil school in 1995)

However, by 1998 the above school was no longer involved in any collaboration. When contacted and questioned about the reasons for this, the head maintained that a combination of staff antipathy towards the cluster meetings and pressure to implement the National Literacy Strategy had meant that the school was increasingly inclined "to go it alone". The head suggested that competition between schools for pupil numbers had been a factor:

"There's a growing feeling, not just in our school, that we're in competition with each other. Nobody actually comes out and says so, but it's obvious when the SATs scores come out. The first thing my staff want to know is how so and so down the road has done and where we are in the league. I think there's a feeling that if we co-operate with other schools they might pinch our ideas and do better than us in the tests. I know it's pathetic, but it's a fact of life these days."

(head of a 352-pupil school in 1995, speaking in 1998)

Some schools had developed the links which they had with the secondary schools into which they fed, and cluster groups were organised. This afforded the potential for secondary schools, with teachers with subject expertise, to assist primaries with curriculum development. Table 6.13 below shows the extent to which primary schools made use of secondaries in this way. The figures indicate the numbers of schools answering 'yes' to the question: *Do any of the secondary schools to which your pupils transfer provide assistance with curriculum development?*

TABLE 6.13:
FREQUENCY OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS PROVIDING ASSISTANCE WITH CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN SCHOOLS OF ALL SIZES IN 1990, 1995 AND 1998

Secondary schools providing assistance	Small schools N==32	Medium schools N=17	Large schools N=45	Total N=94
1990	7(21.9%)	9(56.3%)**	23(51.1%)	39(41.9%)**
1995	13(41.9%)*	8(47.1%)	27(60.0%)	48(51.6%)*
1998	9(29.0%)*	4(23.5%)	22(48.9%)	35(37.6%)*

* one small school did not respond in 1995 and another did not respond in 1998
** one medium school did not respond in 1990

Kolmogorov-Smirnov testing revealed that small schools were significantly less likely than others to have made use of secondaries for curriculum development in 1990, but that there were no significant differences in other years, although there was borderline statistical difference in 1998, with small and medium-sized schools being less likely than large ones to be involved. This may well reflect the fact that small schools tend to be in rural areas and that distances between some of them and the secondary schools might be a disincentive to collaboration. As one head commented:

"It's twelve miles to the secondary and if we go for an after-school meeting we always get to [the town] just as [a local factory] is turning out. We'd like to be more involved but it just doesn't seem worth the trouble when we've got 1001 other things to do."
(head of a 46-pupil school in 1998)

A further question was intended to discover to what extent schools made use of secondary schools for in-service training and if there were differences between schools of different sizes. Heads appeared to have mixed views about links with secondary schools, with some feeling that colleagues in secondary education had little to offer to primary schools. A written comment made by the head of a 96-pupil school illustrates the scepticism expressed by some heads:

"I think it's downright patronising for secondary teachers to start telling us what to do in primary schools. For years we've tied our syllabuses to theirs, but they've taken little notice of what the children have done with us and have started them all off in the first year as if we didn't exist. Now, suddenly, we've got the whip hand and they should be following on from what we've done and starting the kids at the levels they've reached in the National Curriculum in the different subjects. I don't think they are ready to cope with that sort of differentiation, so I'm sure they can have very little that would be any use to tell us about how to teach anything."
(head of a 96-pupil school in 1990)

However, another school reported strong links with the local secondary school over the eight-year period. By 1998 the school was receiving ICT support from a member of the secondary school's staff and using the secondary's computers. There was also a 4-day visit for Y6 pupils for specialist teaching in science, ICT, design technology and French.

The head of a 290-pupil school praised secondary colleagues' contributions to staff development, but had a cautionary note about the way in which these were sometimes viewed by primary teachers:

"Not only do the secondary staff occasionally provide assistance but they also participate with primary staff in collaborative training. However, 'top down' is not always seen as a healthy philosophy!"
(head of a 290-pupil school in 1998)

Another head (400-pupil school in 1998) reported that her school was receiving help with ICT from the secondary ICT manager who had met with the heads and ICT co-ordinators from primary schools in a pyramid group. The secondary school also planned to have Y6 teacher exchanges.

However, despite some notable initiatives in a few areas, there had been a decline in the incidence of secondary schools providing in-service training for primary colleagues between 1995 and 1998 after an increase between 1990 and 1995. This can be seen in Table 6.14 below. The figures indicate the numbers of schools answering 'yes' to the question: *Do any of the secondary schools to which your pupils transfer provide assistance with INSET?*

TABLE 6.14:
FREQUENCY OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS PROVIDING IN-SERVICE TRAINING IN 1990, 1995 AND 1998

Secondary schools providing INSET	Small schools N=32	Medium schools N=17	Large schools N=45	Total N=94
1990	4(12.5%)	9(56.2%)*	25(55.6%)	38(40.9%)*
1995	12(37.5%)	9(53.0%)	22(48.9%)	43(45.7%)
1998	9(29.0%)**	6(35.3%)	11(24.4%)	26(28.0%)**

* one medium school did not respond in 1990
** one small school did not respond in 1998

Kolmogorov-Smirnov testing showed that small schools were significantly less likely than large schools to use secondary schools for INSET in 1990, but there were no significant differences between schools of different sizes in 1995 or 1998. It is worth noting, however, that small schools significantly increased their use of secondaries between 1990 and 1995 before a non-statistically significant decline in 1998, while medium and large schools experienced a non-statistically significant decline from 1990 to 1998. Some headteachers' comments in 1990 and in 1995 indicated that initiatives were underway or were "in the pipeline", but often the 1998 response revealed that these did not appear to have come to fruition.

The extent to which primary schools forged links with secondary schools often seemed to depend upon the impetus provided by the latter. This was evident from the interviews with headteachers (see Chapter Nine) and from the comments of some heads which were appended to questionnaire responses. For example, the head of a 160-pupil school wrote in 1998: *"We are part of a cluster group but since the new head took over at the secondary school meetings have not taken place."*

However, another head (290-pupil school) wrote in 1998 that since the headteacher of the secondary school had taken over from his predecessor, there had been *"strong initiatives"* to develop links. These had extended to joint sports and social events for children, as well as once or twice -termly in-service courses for teachers led by visiting speakers or staff from the secondary school. While it is clear that the secondary head was a catalyst for collaboration, Hargreaves, L (in Bridges and Husbands, 1996) notes the comments of an LEA inspector who suggested that cluster development usually 'boiled down to the work of one strong headteacher'. However, she concludes that, while such a head might be an essential ingredient, there were other important factors in successful collaborative ventures which included "several like-minded headteachers, the co-operation of staff, and governor support and involvement..." (p.34).

The importance of the presence of a catalyst for change is emphasised by Fullan (1999). At a macro level the catalyst for educational reform in England and Wales has been the Government. It will be seen in Chapter Nine that some heads felt that the top down mandates from central government legitimised their roles as local agents of change. As Fullan has argued, "Policy initiatives that combine rigorous external accountability and mechanisms for focusing on local capacity development are critical for success" (p.19). The presence of Ofsted from 1993 and the publication of SATs scores provided those accountability mechanisms in England and Wales and ensured that schools acted to implement change. This often meant changing the curriculum or at least *bolting on* the new elements of curriculum which had been introduced (Galton et al, 1998). However, just as until NLS and NNS teachers had been left to implement

change within their own pedagogical frameworks, so heads had been able to a large extent to decide how they wished to implement change. Some chose to do this in a largely independent way and spurned strong involvement in collaborative ventures, while others sought collegiality with other schools. There may be some parallels between the conservatism in teachers' pedagogy (see Webb and Vulliamy, 1997) and the reluctance of some heads to challenge the traditional culture of the primary school as an independent unit and enter clusters which developed to the upper stages identified by INCSS. Educational changes in England and Wales were mandated, but the means of achieving them were not.

Discussion

This chapter has shown that schools of different size vary little in their confidence levels when implementing curricular change. There is also considerable evidence (Richards, 1998; Ofsted, 1998; Hargreaves et al, 1996) that small schools are no less able than larger schools to deliver the National Curriculum. However, there is a continuing perception in some quarters that small schools, in particular, are disadvantaged and would benefit from collaboration with other schools. Many schools have become involved in collaborative ventures: some of their own volition and others at the behest of LEAs. However, the survey results suggest that the extent of such collaboration may have peaked in the mid-1990s and that many schools now prefer to manage change independently. Alexander et al (op cit.) felt that co-operation between small schools was inhibited by the fact that each school had its own headteacher and governing body and proposed that:

> "...where conditions allow, we believe that the notion of combining small primary schools should be explored. This would produce a multi-site school with one governing body, one head, one development plan and a single, coherent staffing structure." (p.45, para 150)

This notion (see Appendix I) is in sharp contrast to the policies of some other European countries. For example, in Sweden in the early 1980s, the government moved away from favouring centralisation and the closure of small schools and embraced a policy

of maintaining small schools. In fact, according to evidence presented to the SPA (Basic Education and Teacher Support in Sparsely-Populated Areas Project), the next step was to open new small schools (see Sher, 1981).

While clustering for mutual support may seem a logical and sensible response to accusations of curricular deficiencies in small schools, it is understandable, particularly given the pronouncements of influential reports such as Alexander et al's (op cit.), that many schools may resist moves which they feel might reduce their autonomy or even threaten their future existence. There may well be a justifiable fear that, once schools have shown that they can federate and co-operate, local authorities will take the opportunity to change their status, perhaps encouraging them not to replace headteachers when they leave and promoting the concept of multi-sited schools with one headteacher. However, the reduced influence of local education authorities since 1988 and the independence provided by Local Management of Schools (LMS), may serve to prevent widespread introduction of such institutions. Governors, faced with reduced budgets, may be more inclined to appoint a headteacher and reduce staffing levels than to sacrifice autonomy and enter into a multi-site arrangement with their school as a satellite of another. Nevertheless, increasing problems in recruiting headteachers may force them to reconsider this approach.

An OECD report (1994) maintained that in-depth studies of specific areas had shown that "merging small structures does not necessarily lead to a decrease in the costs of education for public authorities" (p.21). The report suggested that there were indirect cost factors brought about by closing schools. These included hidden costs such as "the increased fatigue, and possible learning difficulties, of the children who have to face daily school transportation" (p.21). School transport could, the OECD Report argued, be costly for local authorities. The report concluded that the organisation of the school infrastructure should to take into account needs, which are often contradictory:

> "maintaining the social ties of the children with their village while developing relations with other children and introducing them to a more complex environment; meeting pupils' educational and extra-curricular needs while controlling costs."
> (p.33)

A solution to the problem may lie in the development of computer networking which could enable children in small rural schools to gain access to the same teaching and learning resources as others in urban areas. The Conservative Government set up the Educational Superhighways Initiative (EDSI) to encourage schools and industry to form partnerships to explore technology available for using the World Wide Web, electronic mail and video conferencing. This mode of working is, at the time of writing, in its infancy, but grants by the Labour Government from 1997 should ensure that all schools are networked by 2002, and may make further developments possible. This could be of particular interest to small schools wishing to ensure that isolation was neither perceived nor actual for their pupils.

A further inhibiting factor in the development of multi-sited schools between 1990 and 1997 was the schools' right to apply for grant maintained status and opt out of LEA control when they were unhappy with council policies. Secretaries of State for Education allowed some schools with fewer than 30 pupils to opt out, even when local authorities' rationalisation plans had determined that the schools should be closed. This is particularly interesting since the Audit Commission had suggested that there were thousands of surplus places in the primary sector (op cit., 1990) and that a solution might be to close many small schools. The TES survey (op cit.) revealed that 10% of GM schools opted out to avoid closure or reorganisation by their local education authority (the GM Schools Foundation put the figure at "less than 6%"). The Government was clearly caught between two policies, in that it sought more efficient use of public funds while seeking to promote an increase in the numbers of grant maintained schools, in the face of reluctance on the part of most parents and governors. This must have been particularly galling for John Patten, the then Education Secretary, who told the 1993 Conservative Party conference "I predict that by 1996 a clear majority of secondary schools and a small but growing number of primary schools will

have opted out. I will eat my hat if what I have predicted does not come true - garnished" (Patten, 1993). There is no record of Mr Patten, who by 1996 was no longer in the Cabinet, carrying out his pledge in view of the fact that the numbers of schools which became GM fell far short of his prediction.

In considering the White Paper's ('Choice and Diversity', 1992) proposal that groups of small schools might collaborate to seek grant maintained status under a single governing body, Dunning (1993) concluded that it would be particularly important for heads to be able to:

> "... identify and pursue common or compatible goals for their separate schools and to be fully committed to mutual support and co-operation since any inclination to pursue individual interests at variance with those of the cluster as a whole could seriously weaken the corporate body with painful consequences for all parties involved". (p.67)

Dunning noted that, should disagreements occur, "...no procedure for the withdrawal of participating schools from a GM cluster has been outlined in the White Paper" (p.68). This may have been an additional factor inhibiting schools from opting out.

The overall picture of schools' responses to managing educational change since 1988 is one of varying approaches and changing trends. While some schools have seen co-operation with other primary schools as being a valuable means of sharing ideas and workload, others have resisted collaboration and have sought to retain autonomy. The decline or stagnation in the numbers of small and medium-sized primary schools engaged in collaborative ventures since 1995, which the present author's surveys revealed, is worthy of note, particularly since the decline followed an increase between 1990 and 1995. While the decline may not be statistically significant, the fact that there has been no increase in collaboration between smaller schools is interesting given the impetus for collaboration which has come from Ofsted, from some LEAs and from the theories of researchers such as Hargreaves, A and Fullan. The reasons for this are investigated in more detail in Chapter Nine, but heads' written comments suggest that the reasons for the decline or stagnation may include the following:

- a perception that there is insufficient time to devote to collaboration when there is pressure to implement change;
- the break up of partnerships following the promotion or retirement of headteachers within clusters;
- a reluctance to sacrifice autonomy;
- an increase in competition between schools following the publication of league tables of SATs scores.

Given the centrality of the headteacher in each of the above and the clearly emerging picture of the head as being a key figure in the management of educational change in schools, the next chapter will examine the changing role of the headteacher following the ERA. In particular, there will be a focus upon the ways in which the headteachers of small primary schools managed changes not only to the curriculum, but also to the ways in which their schools were to be run.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE HEADTEACHER IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS POST-1988

> *"To some extent, the distinctive features which identified the head in a larger school were denied to heads of small schools. As one head said, 'I don't feel like a real headteacher'."*
>
> (Aldridge, 1990, p.135)

The evolution of the headteacher's role prior to the 1988 Education Reform Act was examined in Chapter Two. In this chapter the changes in that role, following some of the most far-reaching educational reforms of the 20th century, will be discussed. The chapter will include an examination of the ways in which the role might vary according to the size of the school in which the headteacher works. In particular, the function of the headteacher and the nature of this role in smaller schools, where the head often has major class-teaching duties as well as being responsible for administration and management, will be explored.

General Issues for Headteachers Post-1988

Carter (1995b) claimed that "one of the great paradoxes" of educational reforms since 1988 was that, although they were justified in terms of market forces and of freedom, "their most obvious product has been a massive increase in central control" (p.131). In fact, the 1988 Act gave the Secretary of State 415 new powers. Aldrich (1995b) maintained that school governing bodies, head teachers and parents also gained power at the expense of the LEAs and teachers (Aldrich in Carter, 1995b, p.131). In Chapter Four, it was shown that heads acquired powers in some areas while, nominally at least, losing them in others. In particular, they gained increased control over school budgets as a result of the ERA. However, the financial and curricular aspects which were ultimately the responsibility of governors were, in fact, generally left to the headteacher (see Shearn et al, 1995, p.185 and Chapter Nine).

A significant problem for all headteachers lies in the defining of their role, particularly at a time when extraneous influences have changed the demands made upon them. Gray (1988), writing as the Education Reform Act was about to be implemented, maintained that the role had changed over the previous few years, with the headteacher having become increasingly identified with the term *management* and less and less with the profession of teaching. Gray presented an interesting analysis of the headteacher's problem:

> "Of course there is a management side to headship but the crux of the matter is how they see themselves, with whom do they identify, how do they wish to be known, what is at the heart of their job. Over emphasis on management is asking to become an extension of bureaucracy...It may seem attractive to wipe the chalk dust from their fingers and don the spurious status of a sub-species of management, but in reality they are distancing themselves from the profession, weakening their influence and losing the respect of the colleagues on whom they rely." (p.15)

Ten years later, with the requirements of the Education Reform Act well-established, Downes (1998) maintained that heads were now expected to have a range of knowledge and skills "unheard of 20 years ago" (p.25) and that:

> "...heads have had to learn about financial management, legal and personnel issues; they have had to become public relations experts and negotiators with industry and government agencies. They have had to acquire an understanding of school maintenance if not the physical skills to carry it out (although even that is not unknown). They have had to acquire information technology skills at a relatively late stage in their lives and they now have to be proficient in data analysis and research methodology." (pp.25-26)

The scope for the role of the headteacher to change increased as each new piece of educational legislation presented new challenges and necessitated management of change. For heads of large schools, the changes may have represented an increase in workload and possibly a reduction in the amount of time spent in classrooms. For heads of small schools, with class teaching responsibilities, the workload increased but there was little scope for reducing time spent teaching. The present author's 1990 survey asked heads whether levels of administrative work had changed since the Education Reform Act. Table 7.1 shows that virtually all heads felt that there had been a great increase.

TABLE 7.1
CHANGES IN LEVELS OF ADMINISTRATIVE WORK UNDERTAKEN BY HEADTEACHERS SINCE ERA

CHANGE IN ADMINISTRATIVE WORK	SMALL SCHOOLS	MEDIUM SCHOOLS	LARGE SCHOOLS	TOTALS
Increased greatly	30 (94%)	16 (98%)	44 (98%)	90 (95.7%)
Increased slightly	1 (3%)	1 (6%)	1 (2%)	3 (3.2%)
Remained constant	1 (3%)	0	0	0
Decreased slightly	0	0	0	0
Decreased greatly	0	0	0	0

Since no heads reported that their administrative burdens had decreased slightly or greatly, these categories were combined for the purposes of statistical analysis. Kolmogorov-Smirnov testing confirmed that there were no significant differences between schools of different sizes and it was clear that the ERA had had a considerable effect upon most headteachers' workloads.

Given the overwhelming view that their administrative workload was increased by the ERA, it would be interesting to see which areas of heads' work were affected by this. Heads who appended written comments tended to cite LMS, assessment, and National Curriculum documentation as particular problems in 1990. Typical comments included:

> *"I feel strongly about my lack of contact time because of mounds of paperwork, reports etc."*
> (Head of 360-pupil school in 1990)

> *"Repairs and maintenance are all questioned and prioritised instead of just being done. I'm doing the job that the LEA used to send a man with a clip board to do."*
> (Head of a 271-pupil school in 1990)

> *"We need more time, money and manpower especially to delve through the amount of paperwork we are supposed to read and digest."*
> (Head of 130-pupil school in 1990)

> *"What about the rain forests we are asked to consider and care about. I've got more than one tree on my table waiting to be looked at!!"*
> (Head of 26-pupil school in 1990)

During 1987-88, when major educational changes appeared to be imminent, Hellawell interviewed 24 primary headteachers about their managerial performance. He found that

there was a conflict of role between teaching as the 'leading professional' and managing the school's administration. Several heads seemed reluctant to relinquish managerial tasks and Hellawell felt that many jobs could usefully be delegated to other staff. There was much dissatisfaction with the increasing administrative burden and some resentment at the then Secretary of State for Education, Kenneth Baker's, statement that he saw headteachers as managers first and teachers second. It is worth quoting at length a typical response of one headteacher, interviewed by Hellawell:

> "That is why I think in many ways the most effective leaders are those who are participating in what is going on in the school, fully in every respect. If you're not taking part in it, how can you fully evaluate the value of it? How can you really say what is going to be effective and what is not going to be effective? How can you advise senior staff on particular innovations that they are coming up with if in a sense you are not part of the process? The Head's role, although it is a manager, in education it is a unique role. I can see in industry and other professions perhaps that a manager can step aside from the work force and manage through administration and manage in that kind of way. In education that is not so, because as a Headteacher you are directly responsible to the children and the parents and the Governing Body, and you really must know those children, and to help the direction in which your school is going you have to be directly involved in it."
>
> (pp.322-323)

Another head, cited by Hellawell, who had been discussing with other Heads his 45% teaching commitment, expressed concern at his teaching load said:

> "I have given it some considerable thought and the way I get over it is by doing a lot of work at night and I seriously think there is going to come a time in the near future when for my own sanity, my own stress health, I maybe have to come to a decision that I will do less at home, more on school time and therefore the children will suffer again...I am now doing less teaching than I would like to...I mean as a Headteacher I think I must obviously be regarded to have certain administrative and managerial qualities that allow me to run a school. But having said that, having come through, one of my prime attributes must be to teach."
>
> (ibid., p.326)

The frustration and concern expressed by this headteacher is reminiscent of that found among many heads in the interviews to be discussed in Chapter Nine. It seems that the necessity to do the job in which the head had presumably excelled prior to his or her appointment, as well as taking on an increasing administrative burden, was a major cause for dissatisfaction.

Hellawell (ibid.) averred that, given the changing role of the headteacher in the primary school, delegation and consultation were essential, but sounded a note of caution, maintaining that increased delegation of managerial functions in primary schools was essential to make the job of headteacher manageable. However, to be done effectively, there would need to be increased consultation and involvement in decision-making, which some members of staff, but not all, would welcome. Hellawell warned that evidence showed that "if consultation is confused with collective decision-making, where decisions are taken by committee vote, for example, then unworkable and highly inefficient organisations are likely to be the outcome" (ibid., p.336). This view is echoed by Fullan (1991, p.136) who argued that such *contrived collegiality* may lead to "the proliferation of unwanted contacts between teachers, which consume already scarce time".

Hellawell's research revealed that headteachers did not wish, generally, to sacrifice their roles as teachers in favour of greater administrative and managerial responsibilities:

> "The majority view by a comfortable margin was, however, that the moves towards making the primary school Head more of an administrator/manager and less of a teacher/leader were a retrograde step. What no Head disagreed with was that the general trend was one of external pressures towards an increasingly managerial role for the primary Head." (ibid., p.324)

An interesting counter opinion was expressed in the 1990 survey by a head who was sceptical about the motivation some heads had for assuming a greater administrative role at the expense of involvement in teaching:

> *"I can't resist it - surely some headteachers are going to use the new era as an excuse for devotion to administration rather than the curriculum. I understand we're passing through difficult paper-full days currently but aren't we in danger of perpetuating the myth unless we direct our thinking into the classroom and the classroom experience. I am feeling it personally - the constant stream of advice on how to organise the curriculum on paper is causing me to be distracted from offering the children rewarding experiences and I have only myself to blame!"*
> (head of a 115-pupil school in 1990 survey)

The opinions of this head, who reported that his administrative workload had 'increased slightly', although not replicated by any of the other heads who responded, are worthy of consideration. While the head's views may be exceptional in suggesting educational change was being used as an excuse for heads to change their roles, they do highlight an aspect of the changing role of the headteacher which many other heads raised. The head's role clearly demanded greater attention to management and administration in the wake of ERA, and the two questions arise which are closely linked to the first two research questions for the present study:

- *Has the role of the headteacher changed to such an extent that many of those who would once have sought and been successful in such posts may no longer be suited to them?*
- *Have some heads relished the change in their role and have they embraced the managerial element willingly?*

It may be that a new type of headteacher is needed with skills in management and administration and an ability to delegate responsibility for the curriculum. However, this may be an option for large schools, but small schools, if they are to continue to exist, will still need headteachers who are able to devote considerable time to teaching as well as to management tasks.

One large school in which the head was interviewed for the present research (Borchester, 314 pupils) had 67.5 hours of secretarial help in 1998, compared with 15 when the head had taken up his post in 1985. At that time he had found himself with *"time on his hands"* and had had to tell the secretary that he wished to open the mail and order resources rather than her. The administrative burden had grown so much since then that the school had faced an administrative crisis when the clerical assistant had found another position and *"an incredible backlog of work had built up"*.

The head of a small school (Newby, 61 pupils) complained that he had become overburdened by paperwork. He also felt that the succession of new initiatives which schools had had to implement had made his job harder:

> *"You just start to win and someone has a daydream while sitting in the bath and it's a statutory requirement the next week!"*
>
> (Head of Newby, 61 pupils, interviewed in 1998)

A recurring theme in some headteachers' responses to the 1998 interviews was the view that the ERA had empowered heads and given them an authority to impose structures in a way in which they had hitherto found difficult. The need to implement statutory changes may have provided heads with licence to develop a management role which involved directing operations in a top-down way (Fullan, 1999), rather than leading by example at a classroom level. The 1990 interviews reflected this in the case of the heads of the two large schools:

> *"It's not a question of not wanting to teach. I'd like to do more in some ways, but the staff would rather I was at the helm steering them through the sea of innovations that threatens to drown us."*
>
> (Head of a 292-pupil school in 1990 interview)

> *"I'm getting past my sell-by date for class teaching these days. The kids aren't the problem. It's CDT and science that would fettle it for me if I was teaching day in and day out...I think you reach the stage where you need to retreat to the office and sort things out so that your staff can do their jobs effectively...I used to be a player-manager: now I'm more of a general manager...If I'm honest, I find life a lot easier being swamped by paperwork than being swamped by kids!"*
>
> (Head of a 316-pupil school in 1990 interview)

Hellawell (op cit.) argued that heads needed to make a conscious effort "to break out of managerial patterns that have been incorporated into the structural features of the vast majority of UK primary schools". Such an effort was going to be essential, Hellawell continued:

> "...if Heads are going to survive as effective managers in the world into which we now seem very clearly to be moving, where Local Management of Schools (LMS) is going to be the order of the day in many schools." (p.333)

One of the choices open to primary heads is to develop collegiate systems within schools in order to share workload and decision-making. Such systems make demands on teachers' time in a culture in which, Campbell (1985) argued, little time is set aside for collaboration and collegiality. The concept of the 'free' period is hardly developed in primary education and opportunities for collaboration tend to be limited to out of school hours. Thus heads' attempts to develop collegiate systems may founder if teachers regard other activities as having greater priority. Such systems may be contrived (see Chapter Four) and be resented by participants, as Hargreaves, A (1994) asserted:

> "Conflicts and misunderstandings...arise when administrators designate preparation time for particular purposes like collaborative planning and overlook how inappropriate and incongruous those scheduled purposes might be for some teachers, given the particular contexts in which they work." (pp.104-105)

Evans (1998) argues that the ERA imposed considerable changes to the role of primary headteacher and that "effective management became a key component of primary headship" (p.417). This led to a proliferation of management courses for headteachers and to a nationally recognised qualification. Evans maintains that these courses have tended to recommend the introduction of senior management teams "as an organizational strategy to help headteachers cope better with their jobs" (p.417). Such structures were, before 1988, almost exclusively confined to the secondary sector, but were now "a widely accepted feature of primary schools" (p.417). They may be practicable in large primary schools, but small schools, with limited numbers of teachers, would find them difficult to develop. However, the view expressed by some of the heads in Chapter Nine and in the appended written comments on questionnaires, suggests that in some small schools all teachers may be part of what is, effectively, a senior management team. The head of Newby (61 pupils), for example, asserted that every member of staff was part of his senior management team, but he felt it unfair that his colleagues had such a heavy workload as a result of the calls on his own time.

Wallace and Huckman's (1996) survey revealed that, in large institutions at least, the notion of team approaches to management has taken a firm hold in the primary schools. However, Evans' study of one school which adopted a senior management team approach led her to question the merits of such approaches. She concluded:

> "Hierarchically based decision making is exclusive. It respects seniority and status, affording them consideration over alternative, sometimes competing, claims of suitability for decisional participation. It overlooks recognition of the value and potential of those who are at the base of the hierarchy. It neglects consideration and utilization of individuality and fitness for purpose. It is myopically selective, it wastes talent and, in doing so, is susceptible to the engenderment of unfulfilment and resentment."
>
> (op cit., p.426)

Hill (1994) surveyed 287 primary headteachers in one local education authority to find out about their levels of job satisfaction and their career aspirations. He found that job satisfaction was derived principally from interpersonal relationships, particularly with children (98.4% identified this), teachers (91.4%), and from the autonomy which their posts afforded them. Paperwork (84%), work overload (72.4%), and low status of the teaching profession (70.4%), were the major causes of dissatisfaction. Hill analysed the results of his survey in terms of school size as follows: up to 150 pupils - small; 151 to 350 - medium; 351 to 600 - large. Although these groupings are at variance with those used throughout this work, it is worth noting some of the areas in which heads of schools of different sizes responded differently in Hill's survey.

Hill found that sources of job dissatisfaction varied little with the size of school. However, heads of smaller schools were more likely than colleagues in larger schools to identify the changing nature of the job, stress and working conditions as causes for dissatisfaction. They were also less concerned about promotion prospects, and slightly fewer identified the low morale of teachers as a source of dissatisfaction than their counterparts in larger schools, although 49.8% of all heads cited this.

Alexander (1984) felt that leadership was not merely a question of style and managing procedures such as staff meetings, curriculum documents and job specifications, but that

its central, fundamental feature revolved around the perceptions of and attitudes to the respective roles of a head and a class teacher. It will be interesting, then, to examine the ways in which this role may have changed following the introduction of the Education Reform Act.

Effects of the 1988 Act upon the Role of the Primary Headteacher

Pollard et al (1994) argued that the reforms introduced by the 1988 Act were imposed with minimal consultation with headteachers, and led to a serious challenge to the hitherto accepted culture of curricular autonomy which schools had enjoyed. Grace (1995) took this further, describing the changes as "turning upside down the cultural world of headteachers" and continued:

> "The long struggle by the teaching profession in England to establish a legitimate sphere for professional autonomy in curriculum and assessment matters appeared to have been nullified to an important extent by the reassertion of central state power over both curriculum and assessment." (p.98)

Mortimore (1991, p.viii) identified the main responsibilities which headteachers were given following the 1988 Education Act:

1. defining the aims and objectives of the school and setting these out in a school development plan;
2. management and organisation of the school and the effective use of all resources;
3. development of a curriculum - within the context of the National Curriculum;
4. general discipline and welfare of pupils;
5. maintaining systems of record-keeping and communicating with parents;
6. establishing and maintaining good relationships within the school as well as with parents, governors and the LEA; and
7. monitoring and appraising the progress of the school and its staff and managing appropriate staff development.

Mortimore pointed out that the 1988 Act added further duties to liaise with the governing body over its role in managing delegated budgets, its power to appoint and discipline staff, and to respond to the possibility of acquiring grant maintained status. Thus, at the same time as heads acquired additional responsibilities, they were also faced with governing bodies, some of which, according to David Hart of the National Association of

Headteachers (1990), were seeking to manage rather than to govern. This view is not, however, borne out by the responses of headteachers whose 1998 interviews are discussed in Chapter Nine, most have whom found their governors supportive.

The 1990 survey revealed that many headteachers in schools of all sizes were finding it difficult to cope with the management of educational change. The head of a 230-pupil school expressed particular concerns about the role in which he was cast as an agent of externally imposed change, and the problems which arose because of staff resistance:

> *"The headteacher in a school has the task of ensuring that the 1988 Act is complied with. The staff cannot reach the Secretary of State, so therefore it is the headteacher who is seen to be causing all the extra work and problems for staff. I know this is simplistic but I find that staff are often this narrow-minded. The headteacher is, I feel, increasingly becoming a force in education, in that he/she has to be seen to be delivering the requirements by law and in many cases the only way to do this is to move the pace of change at a rapid rate. The consequences of this are hardened attitudes, fear, anxiety, a breakdown in 'caring' or a feeling of being 'conned' and an increasingly isolated position for the headteacher from the staff."*
>
> (head of a 230-pupil school in 1990)

This headteacher's comments highlight a particular problem for headteachers who felt they had to change their managerial styles in order to implement change. The power structures within schools may have changed and this appears to have had an impact upon the levels of autonomy enjoyed by heads and by class teachers (see Webb and Vulliamy, 1996b). This view is supported by the research conducted by Pollard et al (1994, op cit.) into the impact of the Education Reform Act at Key Stage One. Forty-eight headteachers were interviewed twice: once in the summer of 1990 and once in the summer of 1992. The researchers found that heads felt they had experienced a reduction in their autonomy and were subject to more external constraints and controls as a result of the Act. Interestingly, the sense of loss of autonomy increased during the period of research. For example, heads were asked how free they felt to act as they thought best in their schools. In 1990, 54.2% said that they felt free to act as they thought best, but by 1992 this figure had fallen to 33.4%.

Pollard et al found that the problem which caused headteachers the greatest fears was related to Local Management of School (LMS), with three quarters of heads describing this as a major source of concern. The head of a small primary school confirmed this by her comments in the present author's 1990 survey:

> *"I think that LMS has caused the greatest problems and increased workload. The way the LEA introduced it means the same work is done by the largest school (with all its support systems) and the very smallest (with practically no support at all). Following so close upon the introduction of the NC first phases was a mistake. NC planning, monitoring and evaluation have taken a back seat to LMS and school budgets."*
>
> (head of a 63-pupil school in 1990)

Some other heads of small schools, whose 1990 questionnaire responses included written comments, were also concerned about the ways in which their roles had changed:

> *"With the added workload of LMS and ERA, I now find that the term 'site manager' is more appropriate than that of "headteacher". This is very sad."*
>
> (head of 90-pupil school in 1990)

> *"The introduction of the 1988 ERA has had a disastrous effect on the school. The workload has increased so much, i.e. introducing the national curriculum and LMS, that I can't cope any more. LMS has reduced my school from 3 classes to 2 and a teacher has had to be redeployed. A minority of mobile parents are taking their children to other schools. To introduce LMS at the same time as the National Curriculum was a major tactical error and has put enormous pressures on staff, particularly small school heads. My secretary couldn't cope with the change and resigned. Lord preserve us from politicians."*
>
> (head of a 54-pupil school in 1990)

The latter school's staffing had been reduced from 3.1 to 2.8 in 1990 and had been further reduced to 2.2 by 1995. Although the number on roll had risen slightly to 56 by 1998, the staffing remained at 2.2.

Grace (op cit.) reported that 22 of the 41 heads involved in his fieldwork "adopted a stance that educative leadership was under threat from the new managerialism in LMS culture" (p.122). Although ten heads felt that the new managerialism could work for the benefit of primary education, only two "unequivocally celebrated the realization that primary school headteachers were in fact managers and should operate on that basis" (p.123).

However, despite the largely negative reaction to LMS expressed by the heads in Grace's and Pollard et al's studies and in the 1990 survey, it should be noted that similar opinions were not expressed to any great extent in the 1995 or 1998 surveys. Indeed, most of the heads interviewed in 1998 (see Chapter Nine) found that LMS had benefited them by allowing them greater freedom in financial management than they had previously experienced. This was especially true for heads of large schools and may be a case of changes appearing threatening and difficult to implement when first introduced, but proving manageable and beneficial as heads came to terms with them and accepted them as part of their roles. The enthusiasm for LMS of heads of smaller schools may have been tempered by the effects which financial management had upon their already heavy teaching and administrative workloads. It is interesting to note that, of the small school heads who were interviewed, the one who was most enthusiastic about managing the budget was the head of Barratt GM who had the lightest teaching load.

The 1988 Education Reform Act, then, marked a change in the kinds of autonomy which schools enjoyed. Prior to the Act, schools had a great deal of control over curriculum content but were, according to Pollard et al (ibid.), "constrained with regard to resources and management" (p.60). They did, however, have close relationships with LEAs which tended to have considerable control over resources and management, but very little over curriculum and pedagogy. The ERA imposed a curriculum, but devolved responsibility for resources and management to schools, and gave them greater freedom to manage staffing. Pollard et al argued, though, that this was "something of an illusion given constrained budgets and the new accountability requirements to parents and governors..." (p.60).

The constraints of managing school finances within an increasingly limited budget seem to have provided headteachers with a dubious kind of autonomy. Their control over school finances may appear to have added to their autonomy, but some appeared to regard their role as acquiring the less attractive features of financial management. One of the

primary headteachers featured in Grace's (1995) research maintained, "We no longer appoint staff on experience and excellence but upon salary level..." (p.148) while another stated, "Heads are faced with problems never imagined, e.g. redundancy. How could I make a colleague of long standing redundant? Why should I have to do it?" (p.149).

Grace's (op cit.) fieldwork led him to draw several interesting conclusions about the changing nature of the headteacher's role. In particular, it is interesting to note the ways in which heads increased autonomy in some areas of management while losing it in others. Their response to the introduction of the National Curriculum was often positive, but Grace suggested that this response was "either autonomy-related or power-related" (ibid., p.99). He went on to assert that, "For some headteachers, the conditions of relative curriculum autonomy predating the 1988 Education Act had resulted in distortions or defects in curriculum and in learning which were professionally indefensible" (ibid, p.99).

Pollard et al (op cit.) argued that the fact that the introduction of the National Curriculum was only one of many changes that affected schools led to added difficulties for headteachers. They drew attention to the way in which changes in curriculum provision and assessment procedures had indirect effects on staffing, organisation, teaching methods and management. This resulted in the divergence of heads' and class teachers' concerns and a growth in managerialism and more "directive change". The research concluded that "There was a strong association between directive management and the extent of change from previous practices" (op cit., p.228). Heads appear to have been able to exert greater authority over staff, within the constraints of statutory requirements, as a consequence of the need to implement change. This view is supported by some of the comments made by heads, particularly in the 1995 survey. A typical example is provided by the head of a 230-pupil school:

> *The staff are encouraged to have an input and we delegate all areas of the curriculum, but when it comes to the bottom line it's my neck on the block if they don't deliver, so if there's disagreement we exchange views and then do it my way! I think they've accepted that.*
>
> (head of a 230-pupil school in 1995)

The sense of urgency which the head's responsibility to be accountable for all aspects of school life engendered was echoed by other heads, four of whom wrote in 1998 of the need to ensure that Ofsted would approve of the way in which the curriculum was being delivered in their schools. An example is provided by the head of a 168-pupil school:

> *"If we get significant weaknesses or go into special measures, the staff will probably still have jobs. I'll get the summons from County Hall and early retirement with no enhancement. That concentrates the mind and means that I sometimes have to tell staff what to do in a way I wouldn't have dreamed of before Ofsted."*
> (head of a 168-pupil school in 1998)

The head's views were based upon the experiences of several colleagues in the same local authority who had been directed to take early retirement following unsuccessful inspections. The fear that headship of a school in the LEA might prove a route to the end of a teaching career might explain the limited numbers of applications which were being received for headteacher vacancies in 1998 (see Chapter Nine).

Grace's (op cit.) research showed that the majority of primary headteachers saw educational leadership as "working to safeguard the interests of children and teachers in a situation which they judged to be inimical to both". This leadership at the individual school-site level often involved mediation "to sustain morale by emphasising the positive aspects of curriculum reform wherever possible" (p.106).

Further changes in the leadership structure were noted in relation to the reduced autonomy accorded to classroom teachers following the Education Reform Act. This, Grace maintained:

> "empowered those headteachers who wished to enact a more directive and controlling style of educational leadership in the future. In these cases, leadership concepts of a more hierarchical and monitoring nature appeared to be emerging" (p107).

Writing one year earlier, Pollard et al (op cit., p.236), in their case studies at Key Stage One, had found a similar trend towards directive, top-down management:

> "Essentially our data showed that, although most primary schools had participative or collegial approaches to management, there was a trend towards more directive, top-down management. This was particularly associated with changes away from established school practices in favour of greater adaptation and compliance with new requirements."

The introduction of the National Curriculum led, according to Pollard et al, to the great majority of headteachers experiencing a reduction in their autonomy and feeling more external restraints and controls. They found that this sense of loss of autonomy grew as their research progressed and that: "Although there was scope for school-based and negotiated developments, the sense of external imposition predominated" (ibid., p.77). However, many heads in the present author's surveys and interviews seem to have accepted the National Curriculum as having benefits for schools, but had reservations about the way in which it was implemented. A typical comment from the 1990 survey was:

> *"In principle I am in full agreement with many aspects of the National Curriculum, but it was introduced too hastily for political reasons and with insufficient funding."*
> (head of a 125-pupil school in 1990)

It seems clear, then, that systems of management in primary schools changed after the introduction of the Education Reform Act in 1988. Hierarchical structures were often introduced and management teams emerged. The necessity to deliver a changed curriculum and to manage funding and assessment may have led headteachers to feel that they needed to set in motion structures which would ensure successful implementation. Such structures, with elements of delegated responsibility, may, however, be more easily introduced in schools where the number of staff enables a hierarchy to exist. Small schools, with a head and possibly one, two or three other teachers would clearly experience some problems in introducing similar systems.

Headteachers' Workloads

One of the objectives of the present author's surveys was to find out if heads' teaching loads had changed and if there were differences between schools of different sizes. There

was borderline statistical significance to show that headteachers' teaching loads had changed over time, but no interaction between groups to show that schools of different sizes had been affected differently. Paired samples t-tests showed no statistical significance between 1990 and 1998, 1995 and 1998, or 1990 and 1995. Table 7.2 shows the percentage of the week during which heads taught in each of the three surveys. The percentages are based upon heads' calculations of their teaching week as a decimal fraction of 1. Thus, 0.1 represents 10% of the week or half a day.

TABLE 7.2
MEAN PROPORTIONS OF THE WEEK DURING WHICH HEADTEACHERS TAUGHT IN 1990, 1995 AND 1998

SIZE OF SCHOOL	1990 mean part of the week in which head taught	1995 mean part of the week in which head taught	1998 mean part of the week in which head taught
small	85%	80%	80%
medium	44%	38%	37%
large	18%	16%	20%

Although not statistically significant over time, the trend was for heads of large schools to decrease their teaching slightly between 1990 and 1995, before increasing it slightly between 1995 and 1998. Small school heads decreased their teaching load between 1990 and 1995 and then maintained the same level between 1995 and 1998, while heads of medium-sized schools decreased their teaching load between 1990 and 1995 and then decreased it slightly between 1995 and 1998.

While it might be expected, given their significantly larger teaching commitments, that heads of small schools would feel most aggrieved at having to reconcile their teaching and administrative roles, disillusionment with the conflict between administration and teaching was by no means confined to heads of small schools, as the comments of the head of a large school testify:

"I used to timetable myself to teach for 0.5 and nothing, other than being called out to meetings, was allowed to interfere. Now it is impossible to teach at all as all that happens is I let people down. Now I wait and see what each day brings. Any teaching is usually to cover for absence or to assist a class with a 'second pair of hands'. The extra secretarial hours were found under LMS but they're still not enough. The only way I maintain any meaningful relationship with the children is by leaving a mountain of work on my desk, to be taken home. If I did not do this I would rarely emerge from my office - not what I understand to be the real function of a headteacher. [head's underlining]"

(head of 286-pupil school in 1990)

In addition to having the heaviest teaching loads, heads of small schools also tend to have less secretarial assistance than those in larger schools, as the figures in Table 7.3 demonstrate:

TABLE 7.3
MEAN HOURS OF SECRETARIAL ASSISTANCE PER WEEK IN SCHOOLS SURVEYED IN 1990, 1995 AND 1998

SIZE OF SCHOOL	1990 mean hours of secretarial help	1995 mean hours of secretarial help	1998 mean hours of secretarial help	Percentage increase between 1990 and 1998
small	14.5	17.2	18.5	27.6%
medium	22.0	25.1	29.1	32.3%
large	28.8	39.6	40.4	40.3%

Repeated measures ANOVA tests were used to compare levels of secretarial assistance across the three types of school in each of the three survey years. Probability levels of the tests were very significant (significant at 0.1% level) indicating that there were significant differences in levels of secretarial help over time and an interaction between school size and the number of hours provided. Different sized schools have been affected differently. Large schools experienced a greater increase in the number of secretarial hours provided than the others between 1990 and 1995, and the percentage increase between 1990 and 1998 increased according to school size, with the largest schools receiving the greatest increases.

However, the supposition that heads with heavy teaching loads and relatively limited amounts of secretarial help would be more likely than their counterparts in larger schools to take administrative work home is not borne out by the results of the surveys.

Heads were asked to what extent they took administrative work home in each of the three surveys and results are recorded in Tables 7.4 to 7.7. Results suggest that this did not generally vary according to school size. The categories of *occasionally* and *never* were conflated because there were too few respondents in each to allow meaningful statistical analysis.

TABLE 7.4
FREQUENCY OF HEADS TAKING ADMINISTRATIVE WORK HOME IN 1990

FREQUENCY	Small Schools	Medium Schools	Large Schools	Total
Daily	9 (28.1%)	7(41.2%)	17(37.8%)	33(35.1%)
On most days	15(46.9%)	7(41.2%)	19(42.2%)	41(43.6%)
Occasionally or never	8 (25%)	3(17.6%)	9(20%)	20(21.3%)
Total	32(100%)	17(100%)	45(100%)	94(100%)

TABLE 7.5
FREQUENCY OF HEADS TAKING ADMINISTRATIVE WORK HOME IN 1995

FREQUENCY	Small Schools	Medium Schools	Large Schools	Total
Daily	9 (28.1%)	8(47.1%)	20(44.5%)	37(39.4%)
On most days	17(53.1%)	8(47.1%)	19(42.2%)	44(46.8%)
Occasionally or never	6 (18.8%)	1(5.8%)	6(13.3%)	13(13.8%)
Total	32(100%)	17(100%)	45(100%)	94(100%)

TABLE 7.6
FREQUENCY OF HEADS TAKING ADMINISTRATIVE WORK HOME IN 1998

FREQUENCY	Small Schools	Medium Schools	Large Schools	Total
Daily	13(40.6%)	5(29.4%)	26(59.1%)	44(47.3%)
On most days	15(46.9%)	12(70.6%)	11(25.0%)	38(40.9%)
Occasionally or never	4 (12.5%)	0(0%)	7(15.9%)	11(11.8%)
Total	32(100%)	17(100%)	44(100%)	93(100%)

* one head of a large school did not respond

The results in Table 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6 revealed no statistically significant differences according to school size in any of the three samples when Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests were applied. This could be due to the relatively small numbers in each of the cells. Accordingly, samples were conflated to produce Table 7.7.

TABLE 7.7
FREQUENCY OF HEADS TAKING ADMINISTRATIVE WORK HOME IN 1990, 1995 and 1998 IN ALL SCHOOLS SURVEYED

FREQUENCY	1990	1995	1998
Daily	33(35.1%)	37(39.4%)	44(47.3%)
On most days	41(43.6%)	44(46.8%)	38(40.9%)
Occasionally or never	20(21.3%)	13(13.8%)	11(11.8%)
Total	94(100%)	94(100%)	93(100%)

The results indicate that there has been a statistically significant increase in the extent to which headteachers take administrative work home over the period, but a chi-square test carried out to identify differences for each year indicated that there is no interaction between groups in 1990 or 1995, but a small difference for 1998. However, in the case of the figures for 1998, more than 20% of the table cells have expected frequencies of less than 5 and test results are, therefore, not reliable.

There is some evidence to suggest that heads' increased workload was beginning to be an issue even before the ERA. Meikle, in 1986, maintained that some local authorities had begun to find it difficult to fill headship vacancies in small schools. Kent County Council was having to advertise headships up to four times and Ealing was sometimes advertising five times before getting a reasonably-sized short list. The lack of enthusiasm for the job was in part explained by financial considerations which meant that deputy heads of larger schools might have to take a salary cut in order to become heads of small schools. One of the interviewed heads (Milburn, 323 pupils) had done this in order to acquire his first headship in 1978, but he admitted that he had seen the headship of a small school as a stepping stone to headship of a large school and had, therefore been prepared to accept a salary cut for three years until being given his present position. However, the increase in administrative duties, allied to increasing class sizes and the impending reforms to the curriculum, and the possibility that a small school may be closed as part of an LEA rationalisation programme, may well have combined to make headship of small schools unattractive as a career move by 1998.

Another issue in 1998 was the training of future headteachers. Bush (1998) examined the potential value of the Teacher Training Agency's *National Professional Qualification for Headship* (NPQH), which was introduced in response to growing demands placed upon headteachers as a result of legislation in the 1980s and 1990s. Although suggesting some amendments which might prove beneficial to the programme, he maintained that this was an important initiative which would "provide the rigour necessary to ensure that the next generation of headteachers is well equipped to lead our schools in the twenty first century" (p.332). However, the qualification might provide a disincentive for potential heads, who may view its long, rigorous programme as too arduous to follow while working as a class teacher. If this proves to be so, and at the time of writing applications for headships are low enough to be a matter of concern for the Government, then in tandem with perceptions about the levels of job dissatisfaction experienced by headteachers, the NPQH might exacerbate recruitment problems.

An additional problem for teaching heads has been increasing class sizes which have, to some extent, negated one of the advantages often cited for small schools. The surveys revealed that pupil/staff ratios changed between 1990 and 1995, and between 1995 and 1998, and a repeated measures of ANOVA showed that there were statistically significant changes over time and interaction between the groups. Heads were asked to provide details of the numbers of pupils in the school and the number of teaching staff including the headteacher. Pupil/staff ratios were calculated by dividing the number of pupils by the number of teaching staff including the head. This was done for all schools in each category in order to produce the mean figure.

TABLE 7.8
PUPIL/STAFF RATIOS IN SURVEYED SCHOOLS IN 1990, 1995 AND 1998

SIZE OF SCHOOL	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	1990 mean pupil/ staff ratio	1995 mean pupil/ staff ratio	1998 mean pupil/ staff ratio
small	32	19.7	21.3	22.6
medium	17	23.2	24.6	23.0
large	45	23.2	25.0	25.5
TOTALS	94	22.0	23.7	24.1

The changes are different for the medium-sized group in which pupil/staff ratios rose between 1990 and 1995 and then fell between 1995 and 1998. The small and the large schools each showed a steady rise in the number of pupils per teacher over the period. However, it should be remembered that the figures for staff included the head and that, given the lower teaching commitments of heads in large schools (Table 7.2), the actual sizes of classes should be marginally greater in large schools than the figures suggest. In small schools, however, where heads tend to be class teachers for much of the week, the figures may provide a truer picture of actual class sizes.

Increases in class sizes and the devolution of responsibility for school budgets may have induced heads to take classes when teachers are absent in order to avoid combining classes, and to save money which would otherwise be spent on supply teaching cover (see comments by head of Milburn in Chapter Nine). The introduction of insurance schemes for supply cover clearly left headteachers with a dilemma: should they opt for cheaper policies which did not provide cover for the first few days of a teacher's absence; or should they take out the most expensive policies which provided immediate cover?

The delegation of budgetary responsibility forced headteachers to consider aspects of school finance which had previously been the province of local authorities. The effective gamble which heads take when deciding which kind of supply cover policy to take out may be seen as a risk with greater consequences for the teaching head in a small school. At least in a large school, where the head has no class responsibility, he or she may act as supply cover by setting aside other duties temporarily. In the small school, the head does not have this option.

Headteachers, faced with having to cover for absent colleagues or reduced time for administration within the school day, appear to have three alternatives:

- they deal with problems when they should be teaching to the consequent detriment of their teaching;
- or they neglect the duties;
- or postpone dealing with them until the end of the teaching day.

Whichever they choose, their standing with outside agencies and parents may be diminished.

Dunning (1993) described some of the distractions which can be particularly frustrating for the teaching head. He suggested that these might include: dealing with accidents, unexpected visitors and telephone calls and unplanned staff absences. These, Dunning argued, may appear trivial, "yet their power to disrupt real professional commitments can, at times, be phenomenal" (p.83).

He went on to contend that these problems are:

> "compounded by the fact that, whether the allocation of ancillary staff is decided by the LEA or by the school itself, the financial provision on which it depends will be related to roll and small units consequently receive less by way of ancillary staff than larger ones despite the fact that much of the routine clerical administration with which teaching heads become involved is distributed to and required of large and small schools in equal measure." (p.83)

Bell and Morrison (1988, p.208) viewed teaching and non-teaching heads as being quite different from each other:

> "...whilst there are clear conflicts and tensions in the role of the teaching head it is inappropriate to regard their (sic) situation from the perspective of the non-teaching head - they are a different animal and operate within different paradigms."

This begs a question, closely related to the research questions for the present research:

- *Can one view heads of small and large schools as performing the same roles?*

Certainly, the greater emphasis on teaching in the smaller school marks the head out as having a function which many heads of larger schools do not have. However, despite having fewer pupils, small schools are still required to have curriculum policies for the full range of National Curriculum subjects, as well as for a multiplicity of other areas such as special needs. They must still produce management plans, exercise budgetary control, and hold meetings of governing bodies. As Razzell (1993, p.7) has pointed out:

> "Statistical returns...take just as long to read in a small school as in a large school. Collecting data takes as long and is done by fewer people who already have a heavier workload!"

One might take issue with Razzell on the subject of data collection, since it must surely be more time-consuming to collect the greater amounts of data related to the number of pupils and staff in a larger school than in a smaller one. However, schools of all sizes tend to have to return the same completed forms and produce the same reports and it seems unlikely that the increase in workload involved in collecting data for larger numbers would be proportionate. Smaller schools may well be disadvantaged here, since the headteacher is likely to spend more time teaching than his or her counterpart in the large school and consequently have less time to devote to administration within the school day.

Delegation

An obvious solution to the problem of the headteacher's heavy workload would seem to be delegation. However, whilst it may be desirable for heads to delegate responsibility to other members of staff, this would seem to be easier to achieve in larger schools, where more people are available to take on additional responsibilities, and where such extra work may be more easily rewarded financially. Small school heads, with small staffs and limited funds available for salary enhancement, may be less able to persuade colleagues of the benefits of having their workloads increased. Thus, those heads who have the greatest teaching loads may find that they are disadvantaged compared with their counterparts in larger schools in their ability to delegate.

Dean (1987) was critical of heads who failed to delegate:

> "If you really believe that you can do most things better than your staff, you should be training them and delegating to them so that they become as competent as you, not doing everything yourself on the grounds that it is quicker or better. You ought also to be suspicious of yourself if all the ideas are coming from you. Everyone has ideas if only you can get at them and the atmosphere of the school and your reception of ideas does much to determine whether ideas are offered." (p.117)

However, many heads seem to feel possessive about aspects of their traditional roles and are reluctant to relinquish authority in some key areas. This view is exemplified by the head of a 352-pupil school in the 1995 survey: *"I make my job more difficult as I have always felt - and intend to carry on - that the head is the curriculum leader in the school. It's the justification for the job!"*

As part of the surveys, heads were asked to state whether they delegated any responsibility for various aspects of work to other teaching staff. The results for administration are shown in Table 7.9.

TABLE 7.9
FREQUENCY OF HEADS DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADMINISTRATION IN 1990, 1995 and 1998

Year	Small schools n = 32	Medium schools n = 17	Large schools n = 45	Total n = 94
1990	5(15.6%)	3(17.6%)	18(40%)	26(27.7%)
1995	5(15.6%)	4(23.3%)	24(53.3%)	33(35.1%)
1998	4(12.5%)	4(23.5%)	21(46.7%)	29(30.9%)

For each year, heads' responses (yes/no) were summarised according to school size and a chi-square test used to identify differences. In all three years chi-square was significant, indicating that heads responded differently in schools of different sizes. The figures show that heads in large schools were more likely than those in smaller schools to delegate administrative responsibilities in each year. Clearly, the presence of a deputy head, and possibly a senior management team, makes this more feasible than in a smaller school where such posts may not exist. The slight decrease in the

extent to which heads of the largest schools delegated responsibility for administration to teaching colleagues between 1995 and 1998 is interesting to note. A variety of factors may account for the results:

- posts of responsibility may already have been in place in large schools in 1990, and heads may have been able to direct responsibilities towards senior teachers;
- a decrease in the number of available posts of responsibility may have made some heads reluctant to ask staff to take on such responsibilities;
- an increase in deputy heads' teaching loads as pupil/staff ratios deteriorated (see Table 7.8 above) may have led to heads delegating less responsibility for administration;
- an increase in the number of secretarial hours may have allowed heads to delegate to clerical rather than teaching staff.

One of the heads interviewed in 1998 suggested that his teaching role restricted his opportunities to manage the school as a head of a larger school might be able to:

> *"When I was a deputy I was acting head for two terms while the head was seconded. He told me to sit back and let work come to me rather than going about looking for things to do. I thought that sounded lazy and I wanted to make a bit of a mark, but I soon found out he was right...I could do that and be efficient because there were staff out there to do lots of the little jobs that I now find myself doing...The trouble is, I also have to teach a class now. I can't wait for things to happen I have to be proactive. In a big school you can watch and take an overview. You can delegate and you can pass things on to subject leaders...Here, I'm a subject leader and a class teacher. Apart from X and Y [teacher colleagues] there's no one to pass things on to."*
>
> (head of Darrington, 70 pupils, interviewed in 1998)

The head quoted by Aldridge at the beginning of this chapter admitted that he did not feel like a real headteacher. At Kirkby (93 pupils), the head was pleased to report that an inspector had told him that an outsider would have found it difficult to identify who the headteacher was. This was felt to be an accolade, since the head wished to encourage sharing of management tasks and a corporate approach. The interviews revealed that heads had different perceptions of their roles, with some feeling that they should take the lead in most aspects of management while others were keen to involve other members of staff. The role of the deputy headteacher is significant here, since the six smallest schools in the interview survey did not have such a post, while the larger school heads were able to delegate to a fellow leading professional.

It is worth considering the route by which heads of small schools reach their post. While many may have held deputy headships, it is unlikely that many will have held such posts in large schools, since a move to a small school headship would represent a demotion in terms of salary. Indeed, senior teachers in large schools would have gained little or nothing financially from becoming heads of small schools before the pay rises for heads which were awarded in the late 1990s. Many small school headteachers acquire their posts on the strength of their qualities as classroom teachers rather than on the basis of having had managerial experience. Heads surveyed by the National Development Centre for School Management Training (NDC) (Wallace, 1988) project reported that, even when they had already been deputy heads, past teaching experience alone was an inadequate preparation for small school headship. Management of external relations and administration were particular problems (Wallace, 1988, p18).

Many headteachers of small schools have, therefore, sound experience of teaching on which to draw when taking up their posts, but often have little experience of school management unless they have worked for a headteacher who delegated significant amounts of responsibility. They therefore need to maintain the standards of teaching which made them attractive candidates, whilst acquiring administrative and management skills which they may have had little opportunity to develop in their previous posts.

A conflict may arise as the new head attempts to resolve different aspects of his or her changed role. Hellawell (1991), whose views echo those of Dean (op cit.), saw a solution to the problem of resolving the conflict between the Head's two roles which is worth quoting at length:

> "If, in reality, it is correct that many Heads and teachers are in broad agreement that primary Heads should preserve to a recognisable extent their roles as 'Leading Professionals', and the overwhelming majority of Heads are convinced at the same time that their 'chief executive' roles are becoming increasingly demanding, is it not the case that Heads should seek to delegate more of their administration to class teachers and maintain a significant teaching role for themselves, thereby retaining a balance between these roles? I am arguing here for something I have found nowhere in the literature: that it is possible to delegate many of the functions of the chief

executive role but that it is impossible to delegate the key aspects of the Leading Professional role. After all, it is self-evident that the Head cannot lead by teaching example if s/he leaves the teaching to others." (p.328)

While Hellawell's argument might be deemed more applicable to heads of larger schools than to those of small schools in which the headteacher has few colleagues to accept delegated responsibilities, it has resonance for the small school head attempting to define his or her role. Nevertheless, scope for delegation in the small school may be limited not only by lack of members of staff, but also, perhaps, by a lack of inclination by staff to accept responsibilities which cannot be rewarded financially.

The surveys in the present study sought to discover if there had been changes in the extent to which subject responsibilities were delegated to teachers, and if there were differences between schools of different sizes. Table 7.10 shows the extent to which schools of all sizes had teachers with subject responsibilities.

TABLE 7.10
FREQUENCY OF SCHOOLS WITH TEACHERS WITH SUBJECT RESPONSIBILITIES

Year	Number of Schools with teachers with subject responsibilities n = 94	Percentage with teachers with subject responsibilities
1990	72	76.6%
1995	92	97.9%
1998	93	98.9%

Each of the surveys showed a high level of schools with teachers with subject responsibilities, but the level was significantly lower in 1990 than in either 1995 or 1998. Closer study revealed that all but two schools in 1995, and all but one in 1998, had teachers with subject responsibilities. However, in 1990 22 schools did not have teachers with subject responsibilities: 20 of the 22 were small schools. Chi-square testing revealed significant differences between small schools and others in 1990, but not in 1995 or 1998 when virtually all schools had teachers with subject responsibilities. Table 7.11 shows the figures for 1990.

TABLE 7.11
SCHOOLS WITH TEACHERS WITH SUBJECT RESPONSIBILITIES IN 1990 ACCORDING TO SCHOOL SIZE

Teachers with subject responsibilities	Small schools n = 32	Medium schools n = 17	Large schools n = 45	Total n = 94
Yes	12 (37.5%)	16(94.1%)	44(97.8%)	72(76.6%)
No	20 (62.5%)	1 (5.9%)	1(2.2%)	22(23.4%)

Many headteachers qualified their responses by adding written comments. These tended to indicate the areas of the curriculum for which staff were responsible, together with details of allowances paid to staff. A typical comment was provided by the head of a 160-pupil school in 1990:

"All teachers have areas of curricular responsibility - none receives any allowance for doing so. Our incentive 'A' allowance is allocated on a temporary basis for specific projects."

Where heads provided lists of subjects and details of members of staff who were responsible for each, it was often the case that the head assumed responsibility for more than one subject, even in some of the medium-sized and large schools. In small schools, all teachers tended to be assigned more than one subject, with the head sometimes having three, four or, in two cases, five.

Heads were asked to state whether they delegated any responsibility for curriculum organisation, curriculum planning, pastoral care and management of resources. Typical appended comments in this section from headteachers in 1990 were as follows:

"I am able to partially delegate responsibilities but with a recently appointed deputy I feel that delegation is inappropriate at this stage (I suspect it will never be in the best interest of the children to fully delegate any area)."
(head of 278-pupil school in 1990)

"I delegate small amounts of each, but not total responsibility for anything."
(head of 123-pupil school in 1990)

"I don't know if delegation is the right word. I only have one full-time colleague (the other does 0.1 of the week). It's not so much delegation as sharing when it comes to the curriculum. I teach and plan the curriculum for the juniors and she does the infants and we get together to ensure continuity between the two."
(head of 38-pupil school in 1990)

In each of the surveys, those heads who added comments tended to qualify their responses by stating that delegation, where it existed, was partial. For example:

"A small school such as ours can only survive with a collaborative approach."
(head of a 115-pupil school in 1990)

"Very much a whole-school approach to these decisions"
(head of 123-pupil school in 1995)

"Colleagues take some responsibility, for example the deputy head for the curriculum, but inevitably, in a primary school where non-contact time is about nil, the responsibility still lies with the head."
(head of 324-pupil school in 1995)

"Never the 'responsibility' but within the senior management team all of these areas are shared."
(head of a 425-pupil school in 1995)

"There is no total delegation but staff do have responsibilities for all but school planning and administration."
(head of a 419-pupil school in 1995)

"I delegate to some extent but not entirely, i.e. delegate does not mean abnegate."
(head of 145-pupil school in 1995))

"I can delegate parts of each but the main bulk is done by myself."
(head of a 71-pupil school in 1998)

"I delegate some in greater depth than others. None wholly delegated."
(head of a 153-pupil school in 1998)

"Probably head-led, but we do promote a corporate approach to all these areas."
(head of 181-pupil school in 1998)

"All are delegated to some extent but I have the overall responsibility and hence the majority of the hassle."
(head of 436-pupil school in 1998)

"Not full responsibility - all done in consultation. especially with deputy and/or senior staff."
(head of a 279-pupil school in 1998)

"In a school of this size I have a senior management team so they share responsibility for these areas with me."
(head of a 437-pupil school in 1998)

"As you'll appreciate, I'm involved in everything as are all the staff. The levels of delegation vary but everyone contributes."
(head of a 73-pupil school in 1998)

The tables below should be viewed in the light of the qualificatory comments made by heads. Comments and subsequent interviews revealed varying degrees of delegation, ranging from virtually complete delegation of responsibility for the curriculum to the deputy headteacher, to delegation of responsibility for individual subjects. Table 7.12 indicates consistently high levels of delegation of responsibility for organisation of the curriculum in large schools compared with small and medium-sized schools. Figures show the number of schools in which responsibility was delegated.

TABLE 7.12
FREQUENCY OF HEADS DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR ORGANISATION OF THE CURRICULUM IN 1990, 1995 and 1998

Delegating responsibility	Small schools n = 32	Medium schools n = 17	Large schools n = 45	Total n = 94
1990	12(37.5%)	6(35.3%)	36(80%)	54(57.4%)
1995	20(62.5%)	10(58.8%)	39(86.7%)	69(73.4%)
1998	17(53.1%)	10(58.8%)	34(75.6%)	61(64.9%)

Chi-square tests of the data for each year revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the extent to which heads of schools of different sizes delegated responsibility for the organisation of the curriculum in 1990 and in 1995, but not in 1998. There is also a noticeable decline in the extent to which this area was delegated in 1998 compared with 1990 and, particularly, 1995. Interestingly, the differences between schools of different sizes are most noticeable between the large and the two smaller groups. Other results indicate a similar trend for delegation of responsibility for curriculum planning. Table 7.13 shows, once again, this is more likely to occur in large schools, although the data for 1995 reveal a significant increase in delegation in small schools.

TABLE 7.13
FREQUENCY OF HEADS DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR CURRICULUM PLANNING IN 1990, 1995 and 1998

Year	Small schools n = 32	Medium schools n = 17	Large schools n = 45	Total n = 94
1990	19 (59.4%)	8 (47.1%)	41 (91.1%)	68 (73.3%)
1995	29 (90.6%)	11 (64.7%)	42 (93.3%)	82 (87.2%)
1998	21 (62.5%)	15 (88.2%)	42 (93.3%)	78 (83%)

Chi-square tests indicated that there were statistically significant differences between the extent to which heads of schools of different sizes delegated responsibility for curriculum planning in 1990, 1995 and 1998. The slight fall overall between 1995 and 1998 can be explained by looking at the figures for the small schools which show that heads delegated this area in almost all schools in 1995, but in only 62.5% in 1998, while heads in medium-sized schools delegated to a greater extent in 1998, and large schools remained at the same high figure.

Heads seem to be less likely to delegate responsibility for school management than for other areas of their work. Those whose interviews are discussed in Chapter Nine often wrote the annual management plan themselves, although some showed it to colleagues before presenting it. In the larger schools, deputy heads tended to have a greater input into the management plan, although the heads were always significantly more involved than any other member of staff. Table 7.14 shows the results of the three surveys.

TABLE 7.14
FREQUENCY OF HEADS DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR SCHOOL MANAGEMENT IN 1990, 1995 and 1998

Delegating responsibility	Small schools n = 32	Medium schools n = 17	Large schools n = 45	Total n = 94
1990	3(9.3%)	4(23.5%)	21(46.7%)	28(29.8%)
1995	9(28.1%)	6(35.3%)	28(62.2%)	43(45.7%)
1998	7(21.9%)	6(35.3%)	26(57.8%)	39(41.5%)

There were statistically significant differences between the extent to which heads of schools of different sizes delegated responsibility for school management in 1990, 1995 and in 1998. Heads in larger schools were more likely to delegate some responsibility than those in smaller or medium-sized schools. This may be explained by the fact that the larger schools have deputy headteachers, while smaller schools tend not to.

While there was a general tendency for the extent of delegation for curriculum and planning to decline between 1995 and 1998, after rising between 1990 and 1998, the trend for management of resources was for continued increased delegation in all but the small schools. This is shown in Table 7.15.

TABLE 7.15
FREQUENCY OF HEADS DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGING RESOURCES IN 1990, 1995 and 1998

Delegating responsibility	Small schools n = 32	Medium schools n = 17	Large schools n = 45	Total n = 94
1990	14(43.7%)	7(41.2%)	32(71.1%)	53(56.4%)
1995	23(71.9%)	9(52.9%)	39(86.7%)	71(75.5%)
1998	21(65.6%)	13(76.5%)	43(95.6%)	77(81.9%)

Chi-square tests revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the extent to which heads of schools of different sizes delegated responsibility for managing resources between 1990 and 1995 and 1990 and 1998, but not between 1995 and 1998, against a general increase in delegation of resource management over the period.

Table 7.16 indicates the levels of delegation of responsibility for pastoral care.

TABLE 7.16
FREQUENCY OF HEADS DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR PASTORAL CARE IN 1990, 1995 and 1998

Delegating responsibility	Small schools n = 32	Medium schools n = 17	Large schools n = 45	Total n = 94
1990	16(50.0%)	8(47.1%)	34(75.6%)	58(61.7%)
1995	25(78.1%)	7(41.2%)	36(80.0%)	68(72.3%)
1998	16(50.0%)	8(47.1%)	37(82.2%)	61(64.9%)

Chi-square tests demonstrated that there were statistically significant differences between the extent to which heads of schools of different sizes delegated responsibility for pastoral care in 1990, 1995 and in 1998. An interesting feature of the responses is the fact that there was very little change in the extent to which large and medium-sized school heads delegated, and small schools delegated to the same extent in 1998 as they had in 1990. However, most small school heads delegated in 1995, while only half did in 1990 and 1998. Large schools were consistently the most likely to delegate.

Heads of small schools appended written comments may explain the lack of delegation by some. One head felt that the problem was inherent to small schools and wrote:

> *"I think lack of delegation is the major problem in a small school. The danger is that you end up rushing from one subject to another and don't manage to consolidate your plans."*
> (head of a 58-pupil school in 1990)

However, other heads of small schools felt that they operated a highly co-operative style of management which involved all staff members. For example, the head of a 64-pupil school wrote in 1990:

> *"As a three-teacher school it has been necessary to work as a team on every aspect of school organisation. I am fortunate in the fact that the other members of staff are supportive and capable of contributing to these matters."*
> (head of a 64-pupil school in 1990)

In 1998, the head of a 51-pupil school asserted that the lack of numbers of staff could actually increase rather than reduce levels of delegation:

"We're a two-teacher school therefore we undertake much of curriculum planning, school planning, management of resources and pastoral care between us."

It would seem that delegation is more prevalent in larger schools than in small schools, but that, where heads of small schools do delegate, teachers become part of what is effectively a senior management team. It may be that delegation in a small school is less tangible, with more ad hoc arrangements being made than in large schools where responsibilities are more likely to be assigned and rewarded. It was evident from visiting schools that heads in small schools often received support from staff which might not have been forthcoming in a larger school from main scale teachers. For example, in three of the small schools teachers assumed responsibility for dealing with enquiries and taking assemblies during the interviews. In larger schools these responsibilities fell to clerical staff or to the deputy head respectively. In addition, main scale teachers, without posts of responsibility, assumed the head's role during headteacher absences in small schools. Further discussion of the differences between the roles of heads in different sized schools focuses on the teaching head.

The Teaching Head

Jones & Hayes (1991, p.214) writing after 'in-depth' conversations with seven headteachers maintained that: "The plight of the teaching Head seems to have been particularly acute as they (sic) have attempted to deal with the overflow of legislation whilst taking responsibility for a class".

Teaching heads might be divided into two categories: those who applied for a post knowing that they would be involved in teaching a class for a substantial part of the week, and those who did not originally have a class responsibility, but acquired one as a consequence of falling rolls or decreasing budgets.

Aldridge (1990) identified problems for heads as they came to terms with roles more complex than those of other class teachers. He suggested that heads may allow the

difficulties to be exaggerated "as a means of signalling that they have a role as heads as well as a role as teachers". He maintained that, "while heads may be the victims of their position, they may also be victimizing themselves in so far as they do not take steps to keep their management role separate from their teaching role" (Aldridge, in Galton and Patrick, 1990, pp.135-36). Aldridge even propounded the notion that heads of small schools often encourage interruptions to their teaching in order to reinforce their role as heads and show other staff that they are dependent upon the headteacher for validation.

Dunning (op cit.) saw difficulties for the teaching head whose new management commitments may be "as demanding as those of non-teaching heads in larger units where the increase in managerial responsibilities has tended to be matched by the burgeoning of professional hierarchies in the form of management teams established to allow the sharing or delegation of aspects of those responsibilities". He argued that many heads of small schools, in contrast, still have little time set aside from class teaching in which to attend to other demands and lack the support of promoted colleagues, "yet are held fully accountable for all aspects of their school's performance" (p.82).

Wallace and Butterworth (1987) reported that while heads of small schools have no management tasks to perform which were unique to them, "achievement of their management tasks is affected by factors which in combination are specific to the context in which they work. It is possible that the relative order of importance of the management task areas may also depend upon school size" (p.58).

The present author's research suggests that some heads, who are forced to take on teaching responsibilities as rolls fall, feel particularly threatened. One head of an inner city school reported in 1998 being especially apprehensive about teaching the National Curriculum, something which she had never had to do before. This prospect had encouraged her to apply for headships of larger schools in order to avoid class teaching. While it is tempting to argue that this head should be capable of assuming class teaching duties easily, given her experience and her role in curriculum planning, it is

understandable that a head may feel insecure about taking on work which colleagues had spent a number of years coming to terms with. The head was especially concerned that her efforts at teaching might compare unfavourably with those of her staff. Her reaction might be viewed in the light of Southworth's (1987, p.63) view of the head's teaching role as it impinges upon the teaching of colleagues:

> "...on becoming a head the person may feel that their teaching is of such an order that it is worthy of emulation by others...The head is not just the leader of the school, s/he is now the leading exemplar of the school."

This teaching role is clearly more evident in the small school where the head has no choice about whether to assume class teaching responsibilities. This may have implications for the head's ability to provide an example of teaching which may influence colleagues' implementation of curricular changes. In many ways this may seem to be an advantage peculiar to small schools, since the head should be able to make changes within at least one area of the school, his or her own classroom, without recourse to staff sub committees and other management structures (Webb, 1994; Ofsted, 1998). The head's own practice may also influence colleagues, although some research (Reid et al, 1988) has suggested that this may not always be the case. However, the head will need to have sufficient subject expertise to carry out change and any weaknesses in the head's teaching might undermine his or her position. This was evident from the comments of the headteacher of a small school who was interviewed in 1990.

> *"I love teaching and I like to think I'm a good practitioner, but I'm also aware that colleagues and parents put my teaching under a microscope in a way that never happened when I was just a class teacher. It's not that they're looking for faults, it's more that I'm supposed to set the tone for the rest of the school."*
> (Head of 70-pupil school interviewed in 1990)

An interesting contrasting view was offered by the head of a large school, interviewed in 1998, who took on considerable amounts of class teaching:

"I make no bones about it: I haven't a clue when it comes to ICT. I do a lot of teaching but not much of it involves computers. The staff all know what my weakness is and I don't mind admitting it. In some ways I think that makes them feel easier about sharing their own weaknesses."

(Head of Milburn, 323 pupils, interviewed in 1998)

Perhaps the key to presenting oneself as a successful teaching head is to concede to some fallibility while ensuring that good practice is evident in those areas which one teaches well. It would seem that the teaching head needs to excel in the classroom while sustaining a leadership and administrative role. This has implications for heads of small schools in particular since they do not have the luxury, enjoyed by heads of large schools, of being able to choose whether to take on class teaching responsibilities. The more general responsibilities of the small school head are examined in the next section.

The Headteacher in Small Primary Schools

Dunning (op.cit., p.81) examined the changing roles of headteachers and concluded:

"Superficially, the role of practising class teacher set in charge of one or few colleagues and a correspondingly small pupil roll, while at the same time being responsible for all the processes of a particular school, is one which has changed little for a century. Yet this superficial description ignores the extent and complexity of the accumulation of developments affecting both the teaching and headship elements of the dual role and the teaching head responsible for a small school in the 1990s undertakes a task markedly different from that executed by his or her counterpart as little as a decade ago."

The headteacher in the small school, who already has fewer colleagues to whom he or she can delegate responsibilities, has a further problem associated with the school's size: the secretarial assistance provided for schools is largely dependent on school size and, as the three surveys indicate, heads of small schools are likely to receive considerably less assistance than those in larger schools. The head, therefore, has to spend a greater amount of time teaching than his counterpart in a large school, but may have his or her teaching interrupted because the school secretary is unlikely to work full time.

Given the range of problems which the small school headteacher encounters, Hill's (op cit.) analysis of the intended retirement ages of headteachers is hardly surprising. His research revealed that heads of large schools were markedly more inclined to retire at a later age than heads of smaller schools, with more than a quarter of heads of large schools wishing to continue after they were aged 60. Hill accounts for this as follows:

> "It could be that, because they are older, they are less willing to face the change of identity which the end of their working life denotes. It could be a reflection of the lower incidence of stress and work overload which these heads reported..." (p.233)

It can be seen, then, that as well as being less well-paid than colleagues in larger schools, heads of smaller schools tend to feel the strains of their workloads to a greater extent. It would seem logical to assert that this is due to the dual role of teacher and administrator/manager which they adopt to a far greater extent than they would be required to in a larger school. Research for this thesis shows the variation in the time spent teaching between heads of small and large schools is considerable. This clearly has implications for small school heads' abilities to manage their schools effectively, which Wallace (1988) suggested included:

- "limited possibilities for delegating management tasks
- the need to develop within a small staff the expertise needed to provide a broad curriculum
- major impact on pupils by one teacher over several years
- limited range of people to draw upon for professional dialogue
- limited facilities and material resources
- classes with a wide age range and few peers of any particular age
- likelihood that buildings are old
- high cost of providing education for each pupil
- limited non-contact time for heads to carry out management tasks during the school day
- concern about falling rolls and the possibility of closure" (p.17)

Two of the problems highlighted by Wallace are particularly worthy of discussion here. The "limited range of people to draw upon for professional dialogue" would appear to be an obvious problem both for heads and class teachers in small schools. However, as can be seen in Chapters One and Six, many small schools have made great efforts to form

cluster groups for mutual support. The surveys showed that smaller schools were, in 1990, more likely than larger ones to seek help from other schools in order to implement the Education Reform Act, and were significantly more likely to collaborate with other schools for curriculum support in 1990 and 1995 (see Chapter Six). This suggests that heads in small schools were not necessarily deprived of professional dialogue and, indeed, some may have found that regular cluster meetings afforded them greater opportunities to compare notes with other headteachers than were enjoyed by some colleagues in larger schools. However, the 1998 survey showed that small schools were slightly less likely (though not statistically significantly) than larger schools to collaborate with other schools, and that there had been a decline in the number of small schools involved in such arrangements so that, after an increase in 1995, numbers returned to 1990 levels in 1998. A number of different factors may account for this:

- some heads of small schools may have become more confident about delivering the National Curriculum and managing finances by 1998 and may not have felt the same need to collaborate;
- the impetus to collaborate in order to resist possible closures may have diminished as the threat of closures was reduced (only one school in Humberside closed between 1990 and 1998 and it is significant that one small school, which was badly damaged by fire, was rebuilt while pupils were taught in an old school in another village for a year);
- an element of competition between schools may have led some heads to become unwilling to share ideas;
- clustering initiatives from the LEAs may have declined after reorganisation in 1996 (until reorganisation, a small school headteacher had been seconded each year to support all small schools in the LEA).

It is interesting to note the growth of cluster groups among larger schools revealed in the 1995 survey. Perhaps heads in such schools had begun to note the benefits of collaboration and mutual support which have accrued to their counterparts in some smaller schools. An alternative explanation is that the new Kingston-Upon-Hull LEA initiated family groupings of schools, all of which were large or medium-sized (designated 'small' by the LEA). This would clearly skew the results for large schools. since all Hull schools would be part of clusters. However, many large schools in other areas of the former Humberside LEA also joined clusters between 1990 and 1998, so the increase cannot solely be accounted for by the 'Hull factor'.

The limitations on non-contact time with pupils for heads of small schools to carry out management tasks is clearly problematical. Small school headteachers who were interviewed revealed a range of coping strategies which included carrying a mobile telephone in the classroom and having children take turns to answer the office telephone when the secretary was not working. Many heads admitted to carrying out management tasks whilst they were responsible for a class, and some complained that visitors seemed to expect to see them whether they were teaching or not. Some even welcomed visitors during teaching time and regarded seeing members of the community as an important function of the village school. The head of Newby (61 pupils), for example, did not like to turn away parents or villagers.

> *"Schools should offer a service to the community. I'm a bit of a traditionalist. It used to be the vicar and the schoolmaster who were all important. There's still a bit of that. I had an old widower in the other day who just wanted to talk to someone. I had to explain that I was teaching in the end, but I couldn't just turn him away."*
>
> (Head of Newby, 61 pupils, interviewed in 1998)

The idea that schools had a role in serving the whole community was a recurrent theme among heads of both small and large rural schools and was often alluded to, even though it was not part of one of the interview questions.

Wallace (op cit.) maintained that a rural situation often gives rise to certain issues:

"• schools may be far from their neighbours and in-service training centres
- release of teachers for in-service training requires external provision of supply cover as there is often no 'non-contact' time available
- schools frequently have a high profile in the community
- their immediate environment is a major educational resource whose potential use depends on curriculum expertise of staff
- where heads are promoted from urban situations they are likely to find the context of their new job very different from their recent past experience." (p.17)

The final point is of particular interest here. It would seem that professional guidance from more experienced heads and from local authority advisers might be one solution.

The heads in the National Development Centre (NDC) survey maintained that they received most help from informal contact with other heads and suggested that other means of support, especially for new heads, could include:

"• the opportunity to contact, visit or receive visits from an experienced head who would be available on request as a mentor
• a take-over period when a newly appointed head could work alongside the outgoing head, before taking up the new duties
• a tour of County Hall and detailed briefing on administration and support services
• provision of a folder of regularly updated administrative information" (ibid., p18)

The NDC advocated the use of advisory teachers and project co-ordinators whose tasks could include:

"• negotiating their input with heads and staff in a situation where they had no formal authority to influence the work of the school
• integrating their work within a school's development plan
• evaluating the work of staff in order to diagnose their learning needs
• developing a sense of teamwork amongst those with whom they were collaborating
• arranging for development to continue if they were to withdraw. (ibid., p20)

The importance of changing managerial patterns in order to release the head from some of his or her burdens is highlighted by Dunning (op cit.) who cautions that heads' status with parents and governors may be affected if they take on excessive workloads at the expense of performing parts of their roles well:

> "No matter how sympathetic parents, governors or LEAs are inclined to be, no headteacher is given sanction to manage a school inefficiently because he or she also has to undertake a significant teaching load. Nor will ineffective teaching be accepted as a price to be paid for the head's concern with management issues." (pp.82-3)

The reluctance of some headteachers to delegate is a recurring problem. As discussed earlier, this may be understandable in a small school where the head is unable to offer salary increments in return for class teachers assuming greater responsibility. However, the requirement that schools ensure that each subject area and other aspects of education,

such as special educational needs, be the responsibility of a member of staff must make it easier for heads to devolve duties, given that teachers' contracts now require them to accept increased responsibilities. Mortimore et al (1988, p.282) make the point that the sharing of tasks is vital if schools are to develop successfully:

> "The principle...is clear: the headteacher cannot think of the school as her or his school, but must recognise that all who are involved share some ownership in its well being."

Discussion

The headteacher of the small school is, then, faced with particular problems as he or she comes to terms with educational reform. While all headteachers will encounter difficulties, the small school headteacher must manage changes in administrative structures with limited clerical assistance, and must contend with curricular changes while being responsible for teaching a class of children. In an increasingly competitive educational environment, parents may sympathise with the headteacher's predicament, but may also feel inclined to transfer their children to other schools if they do not feel that they are being offered a satisfactory service. Dunning (op cit., p.82) contended that:

> "Few other role holders in the school system will have experienced such an expansion of responsibilities and such limited change to the framework of their role as teaching heads in small schools."

If small schools are to defend themselves against accusations that they are not viable, it may be that consideration will need to be given to the framework of the teaching head's role. As Craig (1990, p.2) asserted: "In all the changes that will take place during the next decade, the key figure will be the headteacher". If heads of small schools are to assert their influence over educational change and are to retain some degree of autonomy, it may be that their roles will need to change.

There would appear to be a number of ways in which this could be achieved, many of which may be restricted by financial implications. Two solutions are considered below:

i) Changes in Internal Organisation

Heads might reduce their teaching loads by increasing class sizes for parts of the school day and using part-time teachers to cover for them. For example, a school with 70 pupils and 3.2 teachers, one of whom is the head, could have three classes, one of which (the head's) had only around 15 children. These children could join the class closest to their age group for three afternoons each week and be taken by the 0.2 teacher for two mornings thus freeing the head from class teaching responsibilities for half of the week. This time could be used for administration on the two mornings and for supporting colleagues on three afternoons. With parental assistance, which seemed to be readily available in each of the small schools in which headteachers were interviewed, the large class with which one teacher would work on one or two afternoons could be involved in activities which, while part of the National Curriculum, would not be difficult to manage with a wide age range. These might include art work, some aspects of design technology, silent reading and some forms of information retrieval. Some schools run reading partnership programmes in which older children are paired with younger ones to support each other's reading and these could take place too. On one or two of the afternoons the head could work alongside the teacher in a team teaching role which would aid professional development for both, as well as enabling the children to have the benefit of working with two teachers.

ii) A Collegiate Approach

A more radical venture which would need to be introduced at local authority level would be to appoint managers of, say, three neighbouring small schools at deputy head or senior teacher level and appoint a headteacher to oversee all three schools. This person, together with a bursar employed by all three schools, could manage most of the administration and finance as well as co-ordinating a clustering arrangement which could involve teacher exchanges to spread subject expertise. The presence of a figurehead in each school could placate those parents and governors who might be sceptical about the effects of a loss of autonomy for their local schools, while the benefits of shared expertise and co-operative planning could enhance learning for children in all of the schools. The managers of the

schools would be able to serve what amounted to apprenticeships for headship, and the enhanced salaries offered might encourage teachers to regard small schools as a possible step on the promotion ladder. An important additional advantage to such schemes could be a reduction in the inter school rivalries which some heads have suggested have inhibited the development of co-operation since 1995. The cost of such schemes need not be significantly greater than would be the case if three schools operated independently. The cluster head's post would be additional, but the cost would partly be offset by a reduction in salary costs associated with employing three deputy heads rather than three heads in the schools. Further savings could be made if the cluster head were to teach for, say, half a day in each school in place of part time teachers. This could enable staff with curriculum expertise to be released to support colleagues in their own and the other schools. Administrative costs would also be reduced if the bursar were to take on some of the secretarial duties which would normally be done in each school. Bulk and joint purchases of equipment could further reduce costs.

An obvious implication of such a radical scheme is the fact that it would require either a change in role for existing heads with consequent salary implications, or the need for LEAs to delay implementation until headships became vacant and could be filled by managers. Nevertheless, the fact that such schemes have been attempted and that some elements of them have been propounded by headteachers, indicates that the perceived role of the small school headteacher differs from that of the large school head.

The next chapter will return to the role of the teacher in primary schools, in order to look at the ways in which this has changed following the introduction of the 1988 Education Reform Act. This is a particularly important area to explore, given the fact that headteachers play such a significant part in class teaching in small schools in particular.

CHAPTER EIGHT

PRIMARY TEACHERS POST-1988

"The situation that primary teachers found themselves in was that a centralized curriculum, which they had played no part in developing, was to be imposed upon them, which incorporated an ideology to which many did not subscribe, subject knowledge which many did not hold, and a formal assessment system in which many did not believe."

(Bennett and Carré, 1995, p.188)

The previous chapter showed that headteachers' roles have been greatly affected by the educational reforms introduced from 1988. In this chapter, the effects of the ERA and subsequent legislation on primary teachers will be explored. Research has demonstrated that headteachers have borne a considerable additional burden as a result of the ERA but, although they may have had to act as the principal agents of change within their schools, they have not borne the burden alone. Class teachers, too, as Bennett and Carré asserted above, have had to change their ways of working. Since headteachers in small schools, in particular, are involved in class teaching for much of the school day, an understanding of the ways in which educational reform has affected teachers will provide an important insight into some of the problems which many heads face when implementing educational change.

This chapter will look at any evidence that teachers in small schools have been affected differently from their colleagues in larger schools. It will be shown that all primary teachers have faced changes in their working practices and conditions of service in a number ways. The role and status of teachers have been challenged and differ markedly in 1999 from what they were in 1988, and this may have implications for the ways in which small and large schools are able to implement change. The next section explores some of those changes which have affected the role and status of all primary teachers.

Changes in Role and Status

The Education Reform Act and other legislation in the late 1980s and early 1990s represented, for many teachers, a significant challenge to their established teaching orthodoxies. Nias (1989) argued that English primary teachers adhered to whole-school perspectives and were interested in co-operation and collaboration, but were still atheoretical and classroom-focused in their attitude to other aspects of their role. This phenomenon she termed *bounded professionalism.* The autonomy which many previously had over the content of the curricula which they provided for their pupils was severely reduced, and in its place they found themselves faced with a government-imposed national curriculum.

This reduction of autonomy has interesting parallels as well as contrasts with the experiences of headteachers outlined in the previous and following chapters. While heads were constrained in curriculum development by the requirement to deliver a prescribed syllabus, many felt empowered by being able to direct the curriculum in a way which had been resisted by teachers in the past. Heads also had some freedom to manage budgets and, as a result, had increased authority in determining salary levels, posts of responsibility, continuation of contracts and allocation of resources. Teachers were required, as part of their contracts, to work at the direction of the headteacher for a maximum of 1265 hours per year including training days, and to assume curricular responsibilities when required (Teachers' Pay and Conditions Act, 1987). Heads, therefore, seemed to gain greater authority over their staffs at the same time as teachers lost considerable autonomy over what happened in their classrooms.

During the post-1988 period teachers have also had to face changes in their pension rights, with the opportunities to retire early being reduced. By 1999, pay rises were being differentiated in favour of primary headteachers, leading teachers' union leaders to complain about a lack of fairness. Nigel de Gruchy of the National Association of Schoolmasters/ Union of Women teachers (NAS/UWT) commented:

> "I don't begrudge head teachers a pay rise, but singling out the poor infantry in the classroom will sour the entire green paper consultation exercise. The structure is highly divisive and the psychology behind it is unbelievable."
> (quoted in Smithers and Hencke, 1999, p.2)

There has also been a move in some areas to allow class sizes to rise by employing fewer teachers and more classroom assistants. According to official statistics (DfEE, 1996a), the number of educational support staff in primary schools more than doubled in the early 1990s, while the number of teachers in primary schools rose by only 3.2%. Moyles and Suschitzky (1997) suggest that "the government has positively promoted this as a way forward in reducing adult/child ratios at Key Stage 1 and improving teaching quality" (p.21).

In addition, as will be shown later in this chapter, there has been an increase in school-based rather than higher education-based initial teacher training and this, too, has added to some teachers' workloads.

Schools have also been inspected by Ofsted at least once every four years, and those which have not received satisfactory reports have been revisited and their results publicised. Galton and Fogelman (1998) found that teachers felt themselves to be under pressure and that "primary education is now less fun for pupils than it once was" (p.135). They discovered that the opportunities for developing relationships with pupils had diminished, and that children with learning difficulties were "particularly vulnerable under the current pressurized system" (ibid. p.135).

Ball (1990) asserted that the ERA was founded on "a profound mistrust of teachers" and that its intention was to reduce the number of areas of discretion open to them. The curriculum and testing were, he maintained, "the belt and braces of central control", while the market provided "a further carrot and stick mode of constraint" (p.214).

Many heads whose interviews are discussed in Chapter Nine or who completed surveys, expressed concern about the effects of educational change upon their staffs. A typical example in the 1990 survey suggests that the curricular changes had had a damaging effect upon teachers' confidence:

> *"It has been clear that my previously vibrant staff have been over-burdened with the sudden increase in new developments. It has sapped their morale to such an extent that one member is taking early retirement. In fact, we all feel somewhat inadequate, whereas prior to 1988 we all felt the children received a competent level of education. It is clear to me that if the changes had come in on a more gradual basis the staff's confidence would not be sapped to the extent it is at present."*
>
> (head of a 75-pupil school in 1990)

It would seem that the orthodoxies with which many teachers had developed their careers were being challenged by curricular changes and the necessity for children to gain good scores in SATs tests. Even styles of pedagogy, which it had been asserted would not be prescribed by government, were being questioned (Ofsted, 1995).

Pedagogy

Richards (1993) found that, a year after the 'Three Wise Men' report (Alexander, Rose and Woodhead, 1992), "...in all year groups in all primary schools, the class-teacher system remains the dominant mode" (Richards, 1993, p.234). However, he pointed to this approach being questioned in some schools and the presence of "a significant minority" of schools in which semi-specialist teaching took place. Richards conceded that, "There is strong resistance to, and a growing recognition of, the importance of semi-specialist teaching, especially at Key Stage 2" (ibid), and added that Ofsted had found that "financial limitations rather than 'ideological' objections, are increasingly cited as inhibiting its development" (Ofsted, 1993, p.19 in Richards, 1993).

Alexander et al (1995) anticipated that there would be a growing homogeneity in primary pedagogy as teachers became increasingly familiar with the National Curriculum and as "the established power structures of primary education are modified or dissipated" (p.261).

Teachers' ways of working have been challenged, often very publicly, and alternative methods of teaching proposed. The statements made by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, Chris Woodhead, have often been critical of teachers and have led to unfavourable coverage in the media. In his 1995 Annual Report (Ofsted, 1995, p 7), Woodhead's tone was almost desperate:

> "Why...does the percentage of unsatisfactory lessons remain, year after year, so high?... Why is it that in too many primary schools 'learning by doing' is preferred to 'teaching by telling' to the point where sitting pupils down and telling them things becomes almost a 'marginal' strategy?"

In 1996 a study of 45 Inner London primary schools (DfEE, 1996) examined reading in Year Two in a one-day snapshot study in LEAs with high proportions of children with English as a second language, and challenged the methods which many teachers had used throughout their careers. The report emphasised a need to move away from individualised reading with children reading to their teachers, and towards whole class and group activities with increased direct teaching of reading. The findings, which were based upon a methodology which was strongly criticised by many (for example, Mortimore and Goldstein, 1996), were felt to be sufficiently important for the Chief Inspector to arrange a series of regional conferences for teachers, teacher trainers and other educators. The report can be seen, with hindsight, as a significant precursor for the National Literacy Project, which piloted a changed approach to literacy teaching, and the National Literacy Strategy which the Government wished to see introduced in all primary schools in September 1998, and which will be discussed later in this chapter and in Chapter Nine.

Teachers were, then, not only being asked to change the ways in which they worked and the content of what they taught, they were also, as Pollard et al (1994, p.4) asserted, "...being asked to change in ways that for many of them were in fundamental conflict with deeply held professional convictions concerning how best to provide for the learning of young children". In particular, according to Pollard et al, the

requirement to undertake Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) demanded considerable extra work if all recording requirements were to be met. and this "represented the most novel and potentially alien part of the 1988 Act's requirements" (ibid, p.4).

Despite what Pollard et al describe as "the often overwhelming problems of implementation" (p.225), it was not until 1993 that teachers showed some resistance to the SATs and the extra workload imposed upon them. The action was initiated by secondary English teachers who objected to the assessments at KS3, and was developed when a court case was won and it was shown that teachers' workload had become unreasonable because of the assessment process. This was perhaps the only example of teachers showing significant resistance to an element of educational reform since 1988. Pollard et al's extensive (PACE) study sums up the changes to teachers' work:

> "Overall, teachers' work intensified, but many teachers were unwilling to give up their expressive commitment to pupils and their 'extended' view of their professional role. New, external models of accountability were accepted but teachers retained their previous, internalized sense of commitment. There were diverse strategic responses. These ranged from compliance, through incorporation, active mediation and resistance, to retreatism. During our study, most teachers seemed to favour incorporation, but the 1993 action against assessment was one of resistance." (op cit. pp.228-9)

Initial Teacher Training (ITT)

Perhaps recognising the conservatism which underlay many teachers' approaches to implementing change, the Government set about changing the ways in which teachers were trained. Teacher training courses became much more tightly controlled and frequently inspected, and in 1998 a national curriculum for initial teacher training was imposed. Even before that, different routes to qualified teacher status were being introduced, including those which were based either exclusively or largely in schools. The *articled teacher* scheme, which was piloted in 1990, was strongly school-based, with only a small proportion of each course being based in higher education and trainees receiving limited payment in return for their teaching in school during training.

The *licensed teacher* scheme (DES, 1989) was available for people who did not necessarily have degrees but who had completed two years of study in higher education and had some experience of working with children. Many teachers questioned the effects such schemes would have upon their professional standing. A further proposal, subsequently abandoned, to introduce a so-called "Mum's Army" of new teachers with two A level passes and 'experience of children' to teach at Key Stage One, diminished the status of the teaching profession, according to Evans (1997), since it suggested that the skills required to be a teacher were not necessarily acquired through comprehensive training.

In 1995, School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) programmes were introduced to replace articled teacher programmes and were based in schools, but validated by higher education (SCITT-TTA, 1995). These alternatives to more traditional methods of training were, it has been argued (see O'Hear, 1988, Lawlor, 1990, Hillgate Group, 1989), intended to curtail the 'malign influences' of teacher trainers who persisted in preaching the values which had led to educational decline and resistance to change among teachers with child-centred ideals. Whatever the justification for them, they represented further additions to the workloads of the teachers who were involved.

The Curriculum

The National Curriculum represented a departure from the topic-based approaches to curriculum planning which many teachers had employed. The new curriculum demanded specified levels of subject knowledge from pupils which, in turn, demanded greater knowledge from teachers. Edwards and Ogden (1998, pp.735-6) summed up the underlying ideology which some commentators felt was changed by the introduction of the National Curriculum:

> "...arguably the sociocultural roots of the community of practice in UK primary school teaching lies as much in attention to the physical and emotional development of young children as in attention to their intellectual development."

The Education Reform Act may be viewed as an instrument which changed teachers' priorities and focused their attention on the curriculum and learning outcomes to a greater extent than on the child. Indeed, the term *child-centred*, which had become synonymous with good practice from 1967 when the Plowden Report (DES, 1967) appeared, began to acquire pejorative overtones for the political Right. A Tory minister even complained that there was "too much painting and happiness" in primary classrooms.

The National Curriculum and the accompanying statutory requirements seem to have induced changes in attitudes as well as in pedagogy. Francis and Grindle (1998) surveyed teachers in one diocese on two occasions, 1982 and 1996, to measure their responses to a set of 77 educational objectives. They found that classroom teachers had "moved back further in favour of aspects of traditional teaching style" (p.277). Teachers were, they argued, less enthusiastic about progressive methods than educational administrators and this was illustrated by the teachers' responses in 1982 and 1996. For example, 52% of teachers favoured regular timetables for lessons in 1982 compared with 64% in 1996; 68% favoured regular spelling tests in 1982 compared with 81% in 1996, and 74% thought children should know multiplication tables by heart in 1982 compared with 81% in 1996. It would appear that the majority of teachers adhered to so-called traditional methods in 1982, but that this majority had increased in the wake of the educational changes of the late 1980s and 1990s.

Some of the subjects which were part of the National Curriculum had previously received limited attention in many schools, and some teachers lacked even O Level qualifications in them. At the time of the introduction of the National Curriculum, the only O Level subjects demanded for new entrants to initial teacher training were English and mathematics. Science has subsequently been added for applicants born after September 1979. The topic approach had allowed teachers to focus on their subject strengths and omit reference to those subjects in which they lacked knowledge or expertise. In addition, teachers were expected to have a more sophisticated

knowledge of areas of subjects in which many may previously have felt comfortable. The Cox Report (1989), for example, had acknowledged that many teachers lacked a knowledge of English grammar (see Chapter Four). It should be noted that many of the teachers employed at the time of the ERA had been school pupils at a time when thematic approaches to learning were common and had not, themselves, experienced a subject-based primary curriculum. Moreover, they may not have received any formal teaching on English grammar. Many may also have qualified before the 1970s when candidates for teacher training were not required to possess even 'O' Level qualifications in mathematics.

Teachers' own subject knowledge has been the source of concern and of research since the 1988 Act (see Alexander et al 1992, Bennett & Carré, 1993 and Bennett et al, 1994). In science, for example, Summers and Mant (1994) reported that "Examination of the research evidence shows clearly that there is a mismatch between National Curriculum expectations and what, at the moment...primary teachers know and understand." (Summers, M and Mant, J, 1994, p.183) They went on to assert that "The research evidence to support the view that primary teachers lack understanding of science concepts is overwhelming" (p.184).

Alexander et al (in Alexander, 1995) argued that the National Curriculum "exposed and tested three aspects of primary teachers' expertise" (p.220). These were:

- subject knowledge, especially in science and technology;
- ability to diagnose and assess in the manner required by the statutory orders;
- capacity to modify classroom practice to deliver content, outcomes and assessments required.

Teachers were, then, faced with a need to change practices, teach a different curriculum and cope with subjects which some may not previously have had experience of teaching or, indeed, learning. There was a pressing need, in the wake of the 1988 ERA, for in-service training if teachers were to be able to implement the new curriculum successfully.

In-Service Training

Heads were asked, in 1990, about the additional in-service training undertaken to help them to implement the ERA. Using the four original categories of *very often, quite often, once or twice* and *never*, 50% of table cells had figures lower than 5. The categories *once or twice* and *never* were, therefore, conflated.

TABLE 8.1
FREQUENCY OF SCHOOLS UNDERTAKING ADDITIONAL IN-SERVICE TRAINING TO HELP THEM TO IMPLEMENT THE ERA, IN 1990

FREQUENCY	Small schools n = 32	Medium schools n = 17	Large schools n = 45	Total n = 94
very often	9 (28.1%)	4 (23.5%)	21 (46.7%)	34 (36.2%)
quite often	18 (56.3%)	10 (58.8%)	21 (46.7%)	49 (52.1%)
once or twice/never	5 (15.6%)	3 (17.6%)	3 (6.7%)	11 (11.7%)

Analysis of Table 8.1 shows no statistically significant differences between the three size groups. However, when small and medium groups are combined and compared with large schools a significant difference emerges. Large schools were more likely than other sizes of schools to have undertaken additional in-service training for their staffs in order to help them to implement the requirements of the Education Reform Act. It may be that larger schools were better placed to provide in-service training because of their larger budgets, or it could be that they were able to make use of the range of expertise within the school to provide their own in-service courses. Such internal courses might more readily be called in-service training in a large school, where a staff of ten or more people may be involved, than in a small school where two or three people may come together to discuss a curriculum issue. Case studies conducted by the present author in 1990 (Waugh, 1991) revealed that some small schools were holding regular meetings of teachers to discuss the curriculum, but were not referring to these as in-service training. One large school, on the contrary, applied the nomenclature *in-service training* to staff meetings which were led by staff with curriculum responsibilities. This leads one to treat the findings reported

in Table 8.1 with some circumspection, since it may be that INSET was perceived to be something different in small and large schools.

Leverhulme research (Bennett and Carré, 1993) revealed that teachers' perceived levels of competence in mathematics and English fell between 1989 and 1991. Bennett and Carré suggested that this may have resulted from their greater awareness of their own capabilities as they gained a deeper understanding of the statements of attainment in the National Curriculum. In science, however, teachers' perceptions of their competence increased during the same period. This presumably reflects a growing confidence which resulted from greater experience of a subject area which was previously given little attention in many primary schools and which, therefore, may have held mysteries for many teachers when it was first introduced as a core National Curriculum subject.

Alexander, Rose and Woodhead (1992) in their *Three Wise Men* report maintained:

> "Teachers must possess the subject knowledge which the statutory orders require. Without such knowledge planning will be restricted in scope, the teaching techniques employed by the teacher will lack purpose and there will be little progression in pupils' learning." (p.30)

One solution to the perception that teachers lacked subject expertise was for the DES to require teacher training institutions to admit to post graduate certificate in education courses (PGCE) only those people who held degrees in recognised National Curriculum subjects. This restricted access for candidates who possessed degrees in, for example, social sciences, modern languages, philosophy and psychology. However, some commentators questioned the value of a degree as a basis for subject teaching in primary schools. Richards (1994, p.41) stated:

> "It is important to acknowledge that however strongly or weakly developed, subject expertise will vary in terms of its direct relevance to teaching primary aged children. To take two extreme examples, a first degree involving extensive study of medieval English is likely to be far less relevant to primary teaching than the A level study of geography or history."

Bennett and Carré (1993) suggested that two main problems arose in relation to staffing and delivering the National Curriculum: attracting specialists, particularly in sciences, to the profession; and "whether the sizes of primary schools make it possible to staff them in ways which will enable the curriculum to be adequately covered" (p197). The problem of attracting sufficient specialists to cover the curriculum is a perennial one. Applicants for teacher training who hold science or mathematics degrees are rare. One course, known to the present author, has a policy of interviewing all scientists and mathematicians who apply, but still managed to recruit only three scientists and one mathematician in 1996.

Subject Specialists in Small Schools

Bennett and Carré (ibid.) raised the issue of primary school size and possibilities for recruiting staff with curricular expertise. It would seem logical to argue that smaller schools would be particularly disadvantaged here, since their very lack of numbers of staff would preclude a broad spread of expertise, even if suitably qualified staff were available. However Ofsted (1997) found that most of the best examples of the use of subject specialists were to be found in *very small* or *very large* schools. The very small schools which HMI visited as part of the Ofsted research had around 60 pupils and three teachers, while the very large schools had more than 450 pupils and at least 15 classes. The report maintained that small schools were "able to arrange for the exchange of expertise with relative ease" and that they "also recognise the telling impact which the use of a specialist can make in a short space of time" (p.7). Large schools were more likely to have some teachers without class responsibilities who could be deployed as subject specialists. Ofsted also found that large schools were "more likely to have access to a wider range of expertise" (ibid., p.7).

The Ofsted report included case studies of schools, including one with three full-time teachers which the inspectors claimed was "fairly typical" of the responses which small schools made to the challenge of providing "a broad, high quality curriculum in a small rural primary school" (p.17). The school had in place arrangements for exchanging

teachers between classes for some lessons, in order to allow each member of staff to make use of his or her subject expertise. Limited use was also made of parents and members of the community "to extend the curriculum or plug gaps".

While the inspectors cautioned against underestimating the pressures faced by small schools, they noted the "telling impact" which specialists could have in a short time at little cost in such schools.

The Teaching Head

The role of the headteacher as a class teacher in small schools may be influential here. Since such heads were presumably appointed partly on the strength of their teaching skills, on the assumption that a significant element in their role would be class teaching, it would seem probable that they would possess skills and expertise of a high calibre. Given the lack of salary inducements for deputy heads to take up small headships, it seems likely that most would be recruited directly from the classroom and would, therefore, be able to meet curricular challenges directly in small schools. This is borne out by the findings of Hargreaves, L et al 1996 and Webb, 1993 (see Chapter Four). Ofsted (DfEE, 1998, 9.1), too, concluded that the head of a small school has certain advantages in implementing educational change:

> "Undoubtedly the dual role of headteachers of small schools, combining a considerable class teaching commitment with management responsibility, makes great demands on those headteachers, especially at times of major policy shifts. Nevertheless, the substantial teaching role enables headteachers to have a more direct influence on curriculum development and a closer working understanding of the processes of change..."

In small schools, where the head is also a class teacher, there may be expected to be particular problems for other teachers who will have restricted opportunities to receive guidance from the leading professional. This was exemplified by the headteacher of

Newby (see Chapter Nine) who regretted that he was unable to get into colleagues' classrooms to support them as they attempted to implement the NLS.

However, the head of a small school who is responsible for teaching a large proportion of the pupils may have certain advantages in ensuring that change actually occurs. As Norris (1988, p.216) maintained:

> "It is teachers who translate the curriculum into educational action in classrooms and schools. It is teachers who interpret and give life to the curriculum specifications of governments and ministries."

Where the teacher in question is also the headteacher, there may be certain benefits, as will be shown in Chapter Nine. Norris suggested that although teachers deliver the curriculum in their own classrooms and schools, "they do so not in circumstances of their own choosing or design" (p.217). This might apply less to a teaching head who, despite being restricted to some extent by the external constraints of a statutory curriculum, has greater autonomy to create a school environment and school approach to the curriculum than a class teacher without senior management responsibilities. This view is supported by Somekh (1995) who concluded a review of research on the management of change in small primary schools for the Scottish Office by stating that there was some evidence in England and Wales that:

> "...small schools are better able to manage curriculum change than larger schools, beçause teaching heads provide better curriculum leadership than non-teaching heads, and joint curriculum planning (in the absence of subject leaders) is an effective means of staff development." (p.35)

The National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy

Galton and Fogelman (1998) expressed concern about more recent developments, such as the introduction of literacy and numeracy hours, which further reduce teachers' scope for flexibility and their ability "to make professional judgements about what is most appropriate in the context of their school" (ibid. p.136).

1998 saw the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy which, for the first time, specified the pedagogical styles which were to be adopted in order to deliver a curriculum initiative. The Strategy was based upon literacy hours which were to be teacher-led and which included extensive whole-class teaching. The Framework for Teaching (DfEE, 1998, p.10) was specific in its requirements:

> "...the Literacy Hour offers a structure of classroom management, designed to maximise the time teachers spend directly teaching their class. It is intended to shift the balance of teaching from individualised work, especially in the teaching of reading, towards more whole-class and group teaching."

It seems clear that the advocates of the NLS recognised that its success is depended upon the development of teachers' skills.

> "The ability of primary teachers to teach literacy is by far the most important factor in whether or not children learn to read and write well. If all primary school pupils are to read and write well, then all primary teachers need to learn how to teach literacy well."
>
> (DfEE, 1997c, p.19)

The Literacy Task Force lamented "that there has never been a major initiative to enable all primary teachers to learn the most effective methods of teaching literacy and how to implement them" (p.19). The NLS's answer to the problem was the production of attaché cases of training materials which provided local authority literacy consultants and English co-ordinators with guidelines, overhead projections, videos and tape recordings to enable them to train teachers in the new methods.

The Strategy was to be implemented rapidly with the framework being published in early 1998, the extensive training packs in the Spring, and actual implementation to take place in September 1998. By the time schools broke up for the summer vacation in 1998, headteachers, literacy co-ordinators and *literacy governors* had attended courses and some had begun to 'cascade' their training to colleagues. Guidance for small schools and mixed age classes appeared in the Autumn, after the initiative was supposed to have been implemented, and comprised three and a half pages of an

appendix to the framework for teaching. The guidance was limited and much of it consisted of descriptions of the possible situations in which teachers might teach.

The Literacy Strategy was clearly defined in terms of year groups and school terms. It presents potential difficulties for small schools, and it is clear from the structured interviews reported in Chapter Nine that some heads do not intend to implement it as the Government intended. Similar problems were envisaged for the Numeracy Strategy which was to be implemented in September 1999. However, there is some evidence to suggest that some small schools are being particularly proactive in their work on the NLS. The view of the head of Milburn (323 pupils, see Chapter Nine) that small schools were taking a lead in implementation is worthy of note. What is clear from the interviews, and from heads' written comments in the 1998 survey, is that the introduction of the NLS has increased teachers' workloads considerably.

Teachers' Workload and Conditions of Service

Campbell and Neill (1994) studied 326 primary teachers and analysed their working practices during 1991. They discovered that the average working week was 50 hours and that 10% of teachers worked more than 60 hours a week. Teachers in small schools worked longer hours than other teachers in the study and "spent significantly more time on organisation during the week and on lesson planning" (p.93).

In 1998 the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) conducted a survey of members in primary schools gaining a 51% response of 1878 teachers in 1016 primary schools. The survey, which took place from April to June, used a six-page questionnaire and the findings were based upon the 1514 full-time classroom teachers (excluding deputy headteachers and part-time staff) who replied.

The survey clearly indicated high levels of dissatisfaction among teachers with many aspects of their roles, and these were generally higher than in other benchmark surveys of other professions from the Opinion Research Corporation. It found, for example:

- 86% of full-time primary teachers felt they had insufficient time to do their jobs properly.
- 70% thought that the amount of time they spent doing their jobs in term-time was unreasonable.
- 62% felt under uncomfortable pressure for more than half the time because of their workloads.
- Only 20% were satisfied with the amount of work they had to do and only 45% were satisfied with their jobs (both lower than in all other organisations surveyed by ORC).
- 56% felt their headteacher was doing "a good job overall" (again, lower than for all other organisations [the comparative term was 'manager'])

(ATL, 1998, p.3)

The members were asked to prioritise the changes which they would like to see and their top choices were:

- Smaller class sizes (44% of respondents)
- More non-contact time (16% of respondents)
- More support staff in the classroom (14% of respondents)
- Fewer demands on time outside the school day (13% of respondents)

The report stated that the smallest schools (100 or fewer pupils) were under-represented in the survey in relation to national figures, while the largest (400+) were over-represented.

While the report and survey must be treated with some caution, since only one teachers' organisation was involved, it does give an indication of the aspects their role which primary teachers were finding problematical. Taken together with other research such as that by Campbell and Neill (1994); Pollard et al (1994) and Galton and Fogelman (1998), it suggests that teaching in primary schools has become a less attractive prospect than may once have been the case.

A summary of the government's green paper (DfEE, 1998) outlined proposals for a new pay structure for teachers with appraisal of performance "as the basis for professional judgements on pay and career development" (p.13). The paper proposed the introduction of additional pay for Advanced Skills Teachers (dubbed "Super Teachers" by the media) and for a "fast-track system" to attract able graduates and

accelerate their progress through the profession. In a departure from previous practice, teachers were provided with questionnaires to enable them to outline their views on the proposals and were given up to four months during the school year in which to do so. It will be interesting to see if small schools, which have traditionally been able to award few if any salary increments, will be provided with the additional finances to enable them to employ Advanced Skills Teachers on relatively high salaries.

Discussion

The many changes which have been made to teachers' working practices since the 1980s have had a profound effect upon education in primary schools. With virtually no resistance, successive governments have been able to impose changes to the curriculum, pay structures, teachers' responsibilities and, latterly, teaching methods. At the time of writing, further changes are proposed which will continue the move to create a teaching force quite different from that which existed in 1988. There are, however, certain continuities which are evident from comparing the situation before 1988 (see Chapters One, Two and Three) with that which pertained in 1998. It has been argued that many teachers did not make radical changes to what they taught and simply 'bolted on' the new curriculum to the old (Galton et al, 1998). In addition, teachers continue to teach in conditions very similar to those before ERA and there are still opportunities to work in isolation from others, even if they no longer have the same degree of autonomy to determine what they teach. The needs of teachers in small schools have continued to be neglected and this is particularly evident in the NLS and NNS documents which, initially, did not acknowledge that many teachers would have to deliver year-group-based syllabuses to mixed-age-group children.

Nevertheless, teachers have had to face a multiplicity of changes to their working practices, and have also continued to been criticised by the media, politicians and, particularly since 1994, the Chief Inspector of Schools. Crawford (1998) argued that teachers had been held responsible for economic and industrial decline because they 'failed' to provide school-leavers with the skills which employers expected. Blame for

sporting failures by national teams has even been laid at teachers' doors because of the reduction in competitive team sport which followed industrial action in the 1980s, and the increased pressures to deliver the statutory curriculum at the expense of extra-curricular activities.

The conception of the teacher's role has changed as educational changes have been imposed. Woods et al (1997) argued that the state had "unilaterally redefined the concept of the 'good' teacher" (p.49) and note that teachers are now expected to have managerial, collaborative and assessment skills as well as subject knowledge.

Although applications for primary PGCE courses continued to exceed places in the late 1990s, the decline in applications for undergraduate teaching courses led to A level requirements being among the lowest for any degree course. The Government was forced to launch a national advertising campaign to attract people into the profession in 1998 as teaching vacancies increased, and in 2000 introduced a £6000 payment for all PGCE students, both secondary and primary.

The indications are that few of the new teachers who may be recruited as a result of such campaigns are likely to find themselves working in small primary schools in the near future, if the heads whose interviews are reported in Chapter Nine are typical. All felt that newly qualified teachers were not suitable for working in small schools. It may be, then, that if these views affect selection policy, teachers in small schools will continue to be generally more experienced than those in other schools (see Patrick, 1991) and this could account for their success in implementing curricular change reported by Richards (1998 and Ofsted (1998).

It was shown in Chapter Three that teachers in large and small schools tended to work in broadly similar ways before the ERA (Hargreaves, L, 1990). It has been further demonstrated that, since the ERA, small schools seem to have implemented curricular changes effectively (Ofsted, 1998; Richards, 1998). The research suggests that

teachers in small primary schools would appear to have certain advantages as well as disadvantages in implementing change, compared with their peers in large schools:

Advantages

- Teachers in small schools may retain some autonomy over methods of delivery and teaching programmes, because they are usually the only members of staff in the school teaching certain age groups. Heads may, out of necessity, defer to their expertise with the age groups, since the heads themselves may have little or no experience of teaching such pupils and they have major teaching responsibilities themselves.
- The limited number of staff in a small school may find it easier to work as a cohesive unit to manage change, since they do not have to set up sub-committees to examine aspects of curriculum as might be the case in a large school. This is an advantage cited by some of the heads whose interviews are discussed in the following chapter.
- Teachers are likely to be familiar with all of the children in a small school and be aware of the needs of individual children who are not in their classes as well as those who are.
- The slightly smaller class sizes in small schools may help to foster a greater knowledge and understanding of individual pupils' needs and may enable teachers to give greater attention to them.
- Headteachers make up a significant proportion of the class teaching force in small schools and may be able to effect change within their own classrooms and set an example to colleagues.

Disadvantages

- Inevitably, teachers in small schools will have to assume responsibility for more curriculum areas than those in large schools and this may increase workload.
- Teachers in large schools often have colleagues who teach parallel year groups and who can be a source of advice and resource-sharing, and whose pupils may act as a

yardstick for the performance of their own class. Change can be implemented jointly by teachers within phases or year groups. This is not possible in small schools unless they enter into collaborative arrangements with other schools.

- Planning can be shared where more than one teacher works in a year group. This is not possible in a mixed-age system in a small school.
- Posts of responsibility are more likely to be available in large schools with salary enhancements to reward additional responsibilities and to induce teachers to accept them.
- The fact that the headteacher in a small school is also a class teacher may prove difficult when implementing curriculum change, if the head is also burdened by administrative work and is unable to devote sufficient time to managing change within the classroom. Where this is the case, colleagues may be set a poor example and this may affect their own attitude to changes.

It is clear that educational change has affected teachers in all schools regardless of size. Teachers in small schools may be disadvantaged in some ways in their ability to manage change, but small schools do seem to offer some benefits to teachers which are not available to teachers in larger schools. In Chapter Nine some of these advantages and disadvantages will be explored further as the results of a programme of structured interviews with headteachers are examined.

CHAPTER NINE

INTERVIEWS WITH HEADTEACHERS

It has been seen in previous chapters that schools have had to contend with a number of changes to their curricula, financial management and organisation since 1988. In addition, they have become increasingly accountable to parents, governors and outside agencies such as Ofsted.

Much of the research which has been described suggests that schools of different sizes have responded similarly to the changes, but that there are areas in which there are significant differences. It was shown in Chapter Six, for example, that small schools were just as confident as large schools about delivering the curriculum. However, Chapter Seven revealed that heads of small schools were generally less likely to delegate responsibilities to colleagues than their counterparts in larger schools.

This chapter examines headteachers' views, as expressed in interviews, on four key areas:

- the headteacher's role in management,
- the curriculum,
- finance, *and*
- accountability.

It will also look at heads' main concerns in late 1998, and there will be an examination of the effects of school size upon headteachers' abilities to manage educational change.

A series of structured interviews was conducted with twelve headteachers in October and November 1998 (see Chapter Five for a description of the methodology). The interviewees were a representative opportunity sample of experienced headteachers from schools which responded to the 1990, 1995 and 1998 surveys (with the exception

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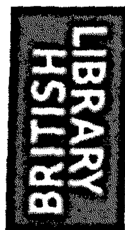

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roles, and Hill (1994) discovered that the heads in the smallest schools in his survey were most likely to be dissatisfied about stress, workload and the changing nature of their roles. The surveys conducted for the present research demonstrated that heads felt that their workloads had increased greatly and that many had become dissatisfied with their roles. There was an increase in the extent to which heads took work home, even though the first survey showed that almost 79% already did this daily or on most days.

The heads in the present study were interviewed about their perceptions of their roles in 1998 and the ways in which these had changed since 1988, in the wake of what Grace (1995) described as "a cultural world turned upside down" for those heads who "defined their role strongly in terms of its potential for curriculum and educational leadership" (p.98). All were well-qualified to discuss this, given their previous experiences, including the head of Darrington who had only been a headteacher for five and a half years, but had been a deputy, and often acting head, throughout the period and felt able to discuss the changing role of the head.

It was shown in Chapter Seven that heads of primary schools introduced a range of management structures in order to enable them to manage the changes brought about by the Education Reform Act. In large schools, hierarchical structures with systems of delegation were feasible, while in smaller schools with fewer teachers, delegation was not always possible. This was noticeable in the 1990 survey which revealed that, while virtually all large and medium-sized schools had teachers with subject responsibilities, only 37.5% of small schools did. By 1995 and 1998, however, the situation had changed and all but two schools in 1995 and one in 1998 had teachers responsible for subjects. Although large schools remained more likely than small schools to delegate responsibilities in most areas throughout the period, most heads of small schools delegated some responsibilities for most aspects of their work.

Headteachers who were interviewed tended to be disenchanted with the pace of change and a perceived lack of consultation. They adopted a range of strategies in order to

meet statutory requirements. The head of Oakwell (284 pupils) summed up his views on the management of change in primary schools as follows:

> *"In primary schools you tend to have a go with a great deal of enthusiasm, but there is a constant fear about what's going to land on the desk next. Secondary schools whinge first, but primaries leap in with both feet. That's not necessarily healthy."*

He felt that teachers had been let down by the breaking of the promise not to make any changes to the curriculum for five years following the Dearing Report. He argued that the new government in 1997 introduced the literacy and numeracy strategies far too quickly and without sufficient trialling or consultation:

> *"Everything is all-embracing. All schools must do everything. The attitude of government is that 'Everybody needs this'. There is no account taken of differences between schools or that resources are not sufficient."*

Four heads stated that relationships between teachers and the DfEE were strained and there was resentment that the pace of change, which they felt had slowed towards the end of the previous parliament, had quickened following the election of a new government. The head of Kirkby (93 pupils) did not feel that it was possible to pace curriculum developments as he would have wished, and argued that changes had to be made too quickly and without proper development - *"It's like being in a coconut shy and you're the coconut!"*.

Heads in schools of all sizes often found a conflict arose between their desire to teach and the need to undertake administrative duties. This was especially true for heads in small schools, one of whom, at Kirkby (93 pupils), commented:

> *"When you concentrate on management, your class teaching goes and when you concentrate on teaching, management goes. It's paralysis by set up."*

The head of Milburn (323 pupils), who tried to teach whenever possible, maintained:

> *"There is no time to do all the things you would like to do or simply want to do. It's all things that have to be done. It's all responding to essential legal requirements."*

The *"production of evidence"* was at the heart of his role and this was especially demanded by the Government and its Ofsted inspectors. It was no longer sufficient to say that something was happening in the school, *"everything has to be shown to be happening and that means evidence and evidence means paper"*.

All heads asserted that their roles had changed considerably since the introduction of the ERA. Their principal complaint was that there was too much paperwork and that this took them away from the areas in which they had strengths. The head of Charlton (135 pupils) asserted:

> *"Administration is unbelievable in terms of the amount of paper connected with what we're expected to do. Everything is so prescriptive. The changes have gone too far and they're not based on good practice in the classroom or on empirical evidence. A lot of it just doesn't impinge upon us as a learning establishment. There's no relationship between what happens in school and what I'm asked to produce."*

The head of Oakwell (284 pupils) felt that his job had changed since ERA and, in particular, he now had to deal with far more paperwork. He had to make a conscious effort to get into the classroom and to do clerical work at other times, and it was no longer possible to do as much teaching as he would have liked, since papers would pile up if he did. He did not feel that all the administration was necessary and complained: *"We've become obsessed by target-setting and percentages"*.

Administrative work was rarely taken home by the head of Newby (61 pupils) who preferred to stay late after school or arrive early. This had been a conscious decision, as had his resolution to leave the school each lunchtime for half an hour to eat his lunch sitting in his car in the countryside. He felt that these strategies had helped to reduce stress and he had been happier since implementing them.

The head of St Kevin's (168 pupils) said that she had gradually come to terms with the administrative burden and had done this partly by reducing the amount of time she spent in the classroom. She regretted this and felt that the job she now had was not the same as the one she took on when appointed. Indeed, her limited work in the classroom made her feel vulnerable when she had to take over a class in the event of a staff absence.

> *"Although I know all about the statutory requirements as a head, I'm not doing the job at the chalk face every day like my colleagues. If anyone wanted to, I'm sure they could catch me out about some of the things I'm now naive about as a teacher."*

The head of Grimston's (234 pupils) job now demanded more administration than before ERA and, in particular, he had to do more reading. He admitted that it was difficult to read everything that came in to the school. The number of forms had *"quietened down"* recently, but he regretted that his administrative burden did not allow him enough time to teach as often as he would have liked:

> *"You can only judge what happens in classrooms if you go in and teach. It gives you an insight. You can tell how a teacher works with her class when you go in and take the class yourself."*

He admitted to having become "a bit dictatorial", but justified this as follows:

> *"You make decisions because if you don't you get nowhere. If you're too democratic, you waste a lot of time. Most teachers are not bothered about having a say. They just want to get on with it."*

This approach accords with Webb and Vulliamy's (1996b) finding that "the nature of the reforms and the pace of change require the institutionalisation of increasingly directive and controlling mechanisms" (p.456). Indeed, the pressures to meet deadlines and to deal with increasing amounts of paperwork were illustrated by complaints from schools in one LEA about the Authority's attitude to them, which three claimed were summed up by a letter, which the LEA had sent to all schools, listing the occasions when their schools had returned documents late.

Three long-serving heads of large schools (Grimston, Borchester and Milburn) maintained that the impetus of a prescribed curriculum would have helped them to have provided greater direction for staff when they had first taken up their posts before ERA. The introduction of a statutory national curriculum had enabled them to impose structures which had been resisted before ERA (see Webb and Vulliamy, 1996b).

At Barratt GM (96 pupils), the head felt that he had needed to take *"drastic action"* to enable him to implement changes adequately. The school had opted out of local authority control and become grant maintained on 1 January 1995. It had since undergone an extensive building programme, with two classrooms being added as well as extra cloakrooms and a kitchen. Approximately one third of the children came from outside the school's catchment area and this was partly as a result of a poor Ofsted report on a neighbouring school.

The head enjoyed being free from local authority initiatives so that he could *"concentrate on the school's perceived needs"*. GM status was due to end in April 1999 when the school would become a *Foundation School*. This new category catered for ex-GM schools and allowed local authority schools to gain the same status if they so wished. The head, while he was very positive about the benefits which GM status had brought to his school, stated that *"The politics of GM stank, but we got a result"*. His governors and parents had been persuaded to opt out because the financial benefits were great and because the school had been poorly-resourced and based on a split site. It was now on a single site and the old school building, which had previously housed two classes and the dining hall, was no longer used by the school. The acquisition of GM status had been the most significant factor affecting Barratt in the last ten years:

> *"It's given us more freedom and flexibility to manage finances and to free up the budget to focus on curriculum, teacher time and resources. It also means that I am not as burdened by admin. as I used to be. The extra cash has paid for a big increase in hours for my secretary who is now the School Manager."*

In fact, despite having only 96 pupils, Barratt's head received 38 hours of secretarial assistance: more than all the other heads interviewed except those at Borchester (314 pupils) and Turf Moor (665 pupils). GM status did, the head admitted, require some additional administrative work, but this was offset by a reduction in administration demanded by the LEA. As a result of having passed on many administrative duties to his secretary, the head of Barratt GM, unlike the heads of most of the other schools, said that he almost never took administrative work home.

Borchester's head (314 pupils) took administrative work home on most days and said that he could easily take it home every night, but sometimes decided not to. If he did not take work home regularly he would *"not be able to keep on top of it"*. The head said that the Education Reform Act of 1988 had created so much work that he and a colleague from another school had found themselves spending evenings and weekends working together to produce budgets for both of their schools. The head stated that:

> *"Matters came to a head when we found ourselves, two experienced headteachers with vast teaching experience, trying to work out how many sheets of toilet paper were needed each year for each of our schools. That's when we decided that office work was for office staff and I went to the governors and told them I needed more administrative assistance."*

The head of Turf Moor (665 pupils) said that he began work at 7 a.m. and finished at 6 p.m. and then took work home. He estimated that he worked a 65-70 hour week and felt that his role was unrecognisable compared with what it had been before ERA. The biggest change had been the devolution of the budget which now amounted to over £1m per annum. He also felt that he was now much more publicly accountable, which he did not mind, but argued that some aspects of accountability were unrealistic. He cited performance tables which had *"caused a massive change to school ethos"*.

> *"A competitive element has come between schools. You find yourself looking at new children when their parents bring them in and wondering what they'll get in the SATs, because there's such a pressure to deliver the results."*

The head of Milburn (323 pupils) identified government legislation as being the major factor influencing changes to the school's organisation and to his role. Current preoccupations were the literacy and numeracy strategies which "*would affect the organisation of teaching and learning significantly*". Health and safety was also a growing issue:

> "*You've got to run your school like a factory now. There's COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) and things like that. You've got to look around the school constantly for potential hazards. None of this is anything to do with what's delivered to children educationally.*"

Some responsibility for administration was delegated to the deputy headteacher at Milburn, but not to other members of staff. Teaching staff did take on responsibility for areas such as the organisation of the curriculum, curriculum planning, management of resources and pastoral care, although the head assumed ultimate responsibility for all of these. School planning tended to be done by the head, who then sought the advice and opinions of the deputy and a senior member of staff.

At St Kevin's (168 pupils), the head lamented the fact that the deputy had a full-time teaching commitment which restricted the amount of time he had to take on additional duties. The head had tried taking the deputy's class in the past in order to allow him time for management tasks and curriculum development, but headteachers' meetings and "*unexpected events*" had frequently meant that the arrangement had had to be changed at short notice, and it had been decided to abandon it.

Summary

There was, then, some dissatisfaction with the way in which heads had had to adapt or change their roles to implement educational changes, and there were particular problems for heads in small schools who had to resolve the problem of teaching virtually full-time and managing and administering their schools. The head of one small school, Barratt GM, was exceptional in that he had made use of additional funding to alleviate many of the problems which his colleagues in other small schools

encountered. For heads of small schools, a key factor in making their jobs difficult was a lack of funding available to relieve them of teaching duties or to pay for additional secretarial support. This restricted their opportunities to gain an overview of what was happening in their schools and to work alongside colleagues. Although all headteachers complained about their workloads, and there was little evidence to suggest that any worked for considerably more hours than others, it was clear that the role of headteacher in a small school differed in many ways from that in a large school. The heads in the two medium-sized schools each exhibited different characteristics, with the head of Charlton (135 pupils) having more in common with the small school heads, while the head of St Kevin's (168 pupils) was similar to the large school heads.

Essentially, the small school heads differed from those in large schools in the following ways:

- They had considerably greater teaching loads (although the head of Milburn, a large school, was an exception to this in that he took on a great deal of teaching to cover for staff absences);
- They felt a greater sense of conflict over their dual roles as teacher and school manager;
- They seemed to regard themselves as part of the teaching staff to a greater extent than their colleagues in larger schools, and less as directors or managers.

However, the increase in the powers of governors, which followed the 1988 Act, might be expected to have a further effect. It would be interesting to discover whether governors' ultimate responsibility for schools and their greater authority would restrict headteachers' abilities to make decisions and to manage schools as they saw fit. This is the focus of the next section.

The Role of Governors

It was apparent from the comments of Shearn et al (1995) in Chapter Seven that, while theoretically and legally governors had increased powers following the introduction of the ERA, in fact it was headteachers who, in most cases, continued to manage schools. Heads were asked if they considered that their governors were more involved in the

running of their schools since ERA, and to discuss the nature of governor involvement. Table 9.2 indicates the extent of governor involvement in each of the schools, based upon headteachers' responses. The responses were graded and then sent to headteachers to confirm that they were an accurate representation of their views.

TABLE 9.2
HEADS' VIEWS ON THE LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT OF GOVERNORS IN RUNNING SCHOOLS

SCHOOL	NO.ON ROLL	EXTENT OF GOVERNOR INVOLVEMENT	EXTENT OF ANY INCREASE IN GOVERNOR INVOLVEMENT SINCE ERA
NEWBY CE	61	✓✖	✓
LOXLEY CE	64	✓✖	✓
DARRINGTON	70	✓	✓
KIRKBY CE	93	✓✖	✓
BARRATT GM	96	✓	✓
CHARLTON CE	135	✓	✓
ST KEVIN'S	168	✓	✓
GRIMSTON	234	✓	✓
OAKWELL	284	✓✖	✓
BORCHESTER	314	✓	✓
MILBURN	323	✓✖	✓
TURF MOOR	665	✓	✓✓

Key to headteachers' responses
EXTENT OF GOVERNOR INVOLVEMENT
✓✓ Strong involvement
✓ Fairly strong involvement
✓✖ Some involvement
✖ Little involvement
✖✖ No involvement

EXTENT OF ANY INCREASE IN GOVERNOR INVOLVEMENT SINCE ERA
✓✓ Strong increase
✓ Fairly strong increase
✓✖ Some increase
✖ Little increase
✖✖ No increase

All heads felt that governors tended to be more involved in the running of schools since ERA, but that they rarely challenged the heads' decisions. The increased powers for governors were not really asserted in most cases and governors tended to defer to

heads. The heads' responses did not indicate that school size was a factor in determining the extent of governors' involvement in schools.

Some schools found it difficult to recruit governors because of the workload associated with gubernatorial duties, but others had lots of applicants. The head of Oakwell (284 pupils), noting the increased expectations placed on governors, commented:

> *"I don't know why anyone would want to be a governor now with all the paperwork."*

The head of Grimston (234 pupils), discussed the way in which meetings had changed:

> *"Governors' meetings used to take 45 minutes, but now last around two and a half hours. We usually discuss the curriculum and the areas which governors are each involved in. Some schools find it difficult to recruit governors. We've just announced a vacancy and we've had six applicants so far!"*

Heads tended to be positive about their governing bodies and most felt that governors tended not to influence the running their schools any more than before ERA. They had, according to the head of Loxley (64 pupils), more responsibilities but no more expertise or time. The governors had, he suggested, to rely upon his expertise and judgement, as there were no teachers or ex-teachers who were members of the governing body apart from himself and the staff teacher-governor.

> *"Usually it's a question of them saying to me 'What do you think we ought to do?' so in that respect they are dependent on me."*

This was a view echoed by the head of Darrington (70 pupils):

> *"They let me run the school. They want the job done but they want to be consulted on the main issues such as finance. They are involved up to a point, but they believe the head should manage the school. If I did anything stupid they'd act and if they disagreed with me I wouldn't stand firm against them."*

At St Kevin's (168 pupils), the governors seemed to exert a stronger influence over the head than in other schools. The chair of governors, a priest, had been "*strongly instrumental*" in recruiting the deputy head from another Roman Catholic school,

leaving the head with less say in the appointment than she would have liked. She did, however, approve of the appointment. The governors did not interfere in the foundation or core subjects of the curriculum, but were very influential in Religious Education, with the Chairman taking some assemblies and coming into school regularly to work with classes. The head, although slightly critical of some aspects of governors' involvement, argued that the governors *"had every right"* to exert a strong influence over the school and she welcomed the help and support which they gave her. In particular, they had been very supportive when an Ofsted report had criticised some aspects of her school management.

The head of Barratt (96 pupils), the grant maintained school, felt there had been no increase in parental involvement since ERA but governors were much more involved in the running of the school, especially since it became GM. The head described the governing body as being *"much more alert"* and aware of the school's finances and buildings. He regarded them as *"the driving force for the school"*. There had been considerable controversy when the debate about opting out was at its height, but the governors and some parents who had opposed the move had now left and those who had joined the governing body were pro-GM status. The head felt that meetings were business-like and *"the agenda is relevant to the school and not dictated by the LEA. There is greater ownership of change in a GM school"*.

Governors at Charlton (135 pupils) had been more active since ERA, but were not able to find the time to fulfil all that was demanded of them. The head said that it was *"quite a task to keep them informed"*. Governors were now more aware that they had influence, *"but they don't really flex their muscles"*. The head felt that he was allowed to run the school, but that he had *"to compromise a bit sometimes"*. He did not object to this and said that his chair of governors was *"excellent"* and often made useful points which caused him to reflect on possible decisions: *"He can control me intellectually sometimes"*. There was an annual conference with governors to produce

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were negative about governor power. Grace argued that heads were defensive in their response, not simply because greater governor power threatened their "entrenched cultural interest", but because they were "sceptical of the good faith and intentions of government reform" which had been imposed in a "dictatorial manner" (p.87). It may be that, by 1998, heads had come to terms with the extension of governors' potential powers and had accepted the situation as educational reforms had become part of well-established practice. An alternative explanation is that most governors were simply unable to keep up with the pace of reform and the accompanying documentation and gave heads freedom to navigate a passage through it, while offering tacit or virtually complete support to them. There did not appear to be any difference in governor involvement according to school size. The extent to which governors were involved in the running of the schools seems to have far more to do with the attitudes of the headteachers and of the governors than with the size of schools.

Parental involvement

In discussing parental involvement in their schools, most heads referred to examples of parent associations raising funds for the school, and parents working with children to support teachers. Some heads stressed that many parents were very keen to put schools under close scrutiny when deciding where to send their children. It was evident that most schools had made considerable efforts to make their entrance halls and offices attractive and welcoming, partly, some admitted, because this was the area of the school from which parents and other visitors gained their first impressions.

Bell and Sigsworth (1987) maintained that small rural schools were extraordinarily accountable to their public and that they, more than any other type of state school, were sensitive to the aspirations of parents for their children. However, many governmental initiatives in the last twenty years have been designed to ensure that all schools are strongly accountable to parents. The responses of heads who were interviewed did not suggest that small schools were any more accountable to parents than larger schools. Most involved parents in helping in classrooms and were eager to keep them informed about developments in the schools. Parental involvement tended to be at a voluntary

level helping in classrooms under the guidance of teachers and did not generally appear to have changed since 1988.

The reservation of places on governing bodies for parents was intended to enhance parental influence over schools, as was the requirement to hold an annual meeting for parents to discuss schools' progress. If parent power was to be a key element in the Government's drive to raise standards, then one might expect to find parents exerting considerable influence over the running of schools. In fact, the interviews indicated that parents were generally no more involved in running schools than before ERA, except for those who were parent governors. Some schools reported that parents were more involved in assisting teachers in the classroom, and there was an instance of a parent running an extra-curricular club.

Table 9.3 provides an indication of the extent of parental involvement in each of the schools, based upon headteachers' responses in the interviews.

TABLE 9.3
HEADS' VIEWS ON THE EXTENT OF INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS IN RUNNING SCHOOLS

SCHOOL	NO.ON ROLL	EXTENT OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	EXTENT OF ANY INCREASE IN PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT SINCE ERA
NEWBY CE	61	✓	✓✖
LOXLEY CE	64	✓✖	✓✖
DARRINGTON	70	✓✖	✓✖
KIRKBY CE	93	✓✖	✓✖
BARRATT GM	96	✓✖	✓✖
CHARLTON CE	135	✓	✓
ST KEVIN'S	168	✖	✓✖
GRIMSTON	234	✓✖	✓✖
OAKWELL	284	✓✖	✓
BORCHESTER	314	✓✖	✓✖
MILBURN	323	✓✖	✓✖
TURF MOOR	665	✓	✓

Key to headteachers' responses
EXTENT OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT
✓✓ Strong involvement
✓ Fairly strong involvement
✓✗ Some involvement
✗ Little involvement
✗✗ No involvement

EXTENT OF ANY INCREASE IN PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT SINCE ERA
✓✓ Strong increase
✓ Fairly strong increase
✓✗ Some increase
✗ Little increase
✗✗ No increase

Although most heads felt that parents took notice of SATs scores when deciding where to have their children educated, one had never experienced a parent enquiring about the results. The head of Kirkby (93 pupils) felt that parents played no greater role in the school than before ERA and other subsequent educational changes, and said that they had always been involved in the school. He argued that the majority of parents were happy with their children's education and wanted them to learn at their own pace. He had never known parents to ask about league table positions when visiting the school when considering where to send their children: *"Parents tend to look around a few schools and then choose the nearest one to their home"*.

The head of Grimston (234 pupils) had found that parents had become increasingly prone to complaining about trivial matters. They were more demanding and he found himself dealing with parental problems or complaints for half an hour each morning before school. He summed this up as follows:

"Parent power is a pain in the neck!"

The publication of league tables of SATs scores had played a significant part in increasing Grimston's numbers on roll. Many parents, according to the head, looked at the league tables first and then at the schools. His school had come near the top of the league in previous year and was likely to be around the same position in the current

year. Parents made decisions about buying houses based upon the results and pupil numbers had risen as a result.

The heads of Borchester (314 pupils) and Darrington (70 pupils) each reported that their schools attracted parents from outside the local authority, partly because of their test scores and partly because parents perceived that schools in their LEA were superior to those in the neighbouring urban LEA. Each year there were appeals to the LEA by parents whose children had to be refused places because of overcrowding. The LEA seemed generally to support the parents, and this had created problems for the urban LEA which claimed to be losing hundreds of pupils annually and had many empty classrooms, while the rural LEA was financing building programmes to provide more classrooms.

St Kevin's (168 pupils), too, attracted pupils from different areas of the city by virtue of its Roman Catholic status. Parental involvement was strong for social events such as bingo nights, and for religious festivals, but very few parents came into the school to work with children and the head had had to persuade someone to fill a vacancy for a parent governor because no-one had come forward.

Parents were quite strongly involved at Charlton (135 pupils) and the head ran discussion groups on a range of subjects. All parents were invited to these and the head .was very keen that parents should be active within the school. The School Association also ran workshops on different topics.

Parents now took a more active role at Oakwell (284 pupils) and many were keen to come in to help and to find out what was happening in the school. The head welcomed this, but was less keen on increased parental awareness in other areas such as league tables and targets. He wondered if some parents had the depth of understanding *"to really understand and interpret these"* and felt that the school had a role in helping them to do so. *"We need to educate parents as well as children"*.

The head felt that there was a strong feeling of support for local schools from parents, even though sometimes this was not deserved: *"Parents want their local school to be good. If they move schools they're very supportive and almost will the school to succeed to vindicate their decisions"*. There was not, he felt, nearly as much criticism of schools from parents as there was from the media.

Parental involvement in the running of Milburn (323 pupils) had not increased since ERA, according to the head:

> *"It's made no difference to parental involvement. We've got four parent governors, but they act as individuals on the governing body."*

Parents had become more involved in the running of Turf Moor (665 pupils) in recent years and many helped during the school day. There was a room set aside for parents and parent governors were regular visitors. The head regarded parents as *"our biggest resource"* and felt that they should be kept fully informed about what was happening in the school. He emphasised the value of having good relations with parents and stressed the importance of demonstrating to them that the school was succeeding. He volunteered that, given the choice between a good Ofsted report and a high placing in the LEA league tables, he would choose the latter because parents took far more notice of the tables than the reports.

Summary

Headteachers who were interviewed tended to see parents as having an important role in helping within schools and in supporting the schools' activities. There were several examples of fund-raising efforts which had brought in thousands of pounds for schools. Borchester's parents association, for example, had raised so much that it was now legally required to adopt charitable status and half of all money raised had to be for specific items. However, there were few examples of parents exerting great power within the schools, and even those who became parent governors seemed not to have challenged headteachers' autonomy. Relationships with parents tended to be cordial

and parental involvement was predominantly limited to fund-raising and unpaid classroom assistance.

There did not appear to be any significant differences in the extent of parental involvement between schools of different sizes, although heads of larger schools were more likely to suggest that prospective parents took notice of SATs results. The fact that many of the small schools did not have sufficient Y6 pupils to have their results published may be one reason why some of the heads felt that results did not affect parents' decisions. However, some did feel that competition existed between schools and that this had had a detrimental effect upon attempts to collaborate with other small schools. This is the subject of the next section.

Clustering and collaboration with other schools

The Education Reform Act and subsequent educational changes gave impetus to movements to encourage schools to co-operate and collaborate. In particular, small schools were often provided with financial assistance to form cluster groups through initiatives such as the Education Support Grants. Galton and Patrick (1990) and Galton et al (1991), among others, produced research which testified to the efficacy of clustering in assisting small schools with curriculum planning and development, and in reducing what some commentators argued was the isolation of the teacher in such schools. However, the surveys revealed that after increasing between 1990 and 1995, the incidence of collaboration between schools declined or stagnated between 1995 and 1998. It would, therefore, be interesting to find out if this trend was also apparent among the heads who were interviewed. Table 9.4 represents an attempt to quantify the extent of collaborative involvement with other schools for those which were part of the present sample. The schools' involvement is graded according to Huckman's (1998) 3-point scale and the four-level scale used in INCSS, both of which are presented in Chapter Six. Matching schools to the levels presents some problems, particularly where schools exhibit elements of more than one stage as is the case with Darrington and Charlton, but it provides a useful device for indicating the extent to which schools collaborate.

TABLE 9.4
SCHOOLS' INVOLVEMENT IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHER SCHOOLS

SCHOOL	NO. ON ROLL	STAGE OF CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT (See Huckman, 1998)	LEVEL OF CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT (See Hargreaves, in Bridges & Husbands, 1996)
NEWBY CE	61	1	1
LOXLEY CE	64	1	1
DARRINGTON	70	2*	2*
KIRKBY CE	93	1	not yet at 1
BARRATT GM	96	1	not yet at 1
CHARLTON CE	135	2*	2*
ST KEVIN'S	168	not yet at 1	not yet at 1
GRIMSTON	234	1	1
OAKWELL	284	1	1
BORCHESTER	314	1	1
MILBURN	323	1	1
TURF MOOR	665	2	2

*with some elements of 3

Most of the schools were involved in some sort of collaborative work with other schools but, with three exceptions, this was limited and in some cases in decline. No school met the criteria for level 4 of the INCSS gradings, but Darrington and Charlton were involved in some shared financial arrangements and there were joint development plans and regular meetings, as well as termly INSET courses, indicating that some elements of level 3 were present and that progress was being made towards the upper levels. Some heads argued that there was insufficient time to devote to cluster groups, and that they or their colleagues in other schools were too preoccupied with their own school to become heavily involved with others.

Secondary schools were increasingly involved in some areas, giving a lead and addressing issues of importance to them. Some heads approved of this, but the head of Oakwell (284 pupils) felt that the cluster group was:

"...too often directed by the secondary school. The primaries don't pick up the gauntlet. We tend to go to find out how we can help the secondary school and help their agenda and not ours. This should be the other way round. We should be telling them what we do."

The head of Kirkby (93 pupils) felt that many heads wished to retain autonomy and keep the individual identities of their schools and so resisted strong involvement in clusters.

"Clusters work well where settled heads have agreed philosophies. There are certain things you want to do in your own schools without involving others. I think, if you have only two teachers, clusters can be much more important."

Newby (61 pupils) had been part of a cluster with other schools, but this was now *"disappearing"*. The head claimed to have been involved in clusters before they had become *"fashionable"*, but now found schools less enthusiastic. Links with other schools were now mainly sporting, whereas in the past they had been *"curriculum driven"*. Staff changes had been a major factor in the decline of the cluster, with most of the group of friends who formed it having moved on to other schools. The KS1 teachers did still meet occasionally, however. The head felt that there were other reasons for the decline:

"We used to have joint Baker days. Now there isn't the same desire to share. There's this 'it's our plan' attitude. It's all about status, who gets the best Ofsted and the best results in the SATs, and who can recruit the most pupils. Competition has crept in, but we're not competitive at this end. People are becoming insular through choice. So many of them no longer see themselves as part of a partnership unless it suits them. I need and value support from colleagues. You can become very isolated."

Collaboration with other schools was limited for Loxley (64 pupils) and confined to a partnership with feeder schools to the local comprehensive. However, the head did not feel that this was very effective:

"It's not an immensely successful partnership because of increasing pressure on heads. I can't remember the last time all seven schools were represented. One head of a small school never attends the meetings and another rarely comes. It's fallen apart a bit. At a recent meeting there were only four of us."

The head saw other problems within the partnership because four of the schools were large and suburban and had different interests and priorities from the three small schools. The problems of clashes of personalities within collaborative groups was raised by the head. For example, the head of a large school within the partnership, who had recently left her post, had been *"obstructive to new ideas"* and this had led to others staying away from meetings. There had been some limited in-service work but this had not always been very successful. Loxley had no partnerships with other primary schools, either formal or informal. Those which had existed mainly for sporting and social activities had declined because of a lack of transport. The head found that few parents were able to take children to other schools during the day, as most of those who had cars worked full-time. He did have some contact with the nearest small school in the partnership, but this was limited to the heads calling on each other occasionally and there was no joint planning, curriculum development or sharing of resources.

Darrington (70 pupils) was, however, part of a *"strong partnership"* with five other small schools which collaborated in many ways. The cluster was only loosely geographically based, and there were many other small schools, nearer to Darrington than those in the group, which were not part of it. The school was nominally part of a pyramid group with schools which fed into a secondary school four miles away. However, the school's unusual pupil population, most of which was drawn from outside its LEA, meant that parents no longer sent their children to this secondary school, preferring to send them to one of three secondaries in the nearby town. As a result, the head no longer joined in with the pyramid schools' activities, but devoted considerable time to the small schools' cluster.

The LEA had provided grants for the cluster, and £3000 had recently been given to appoint a part-time science co-ordinator, who was released for a total of twenty-five days from her school to visit all of the other schools and to work with staff and pupils. In the previous year, all Y5 pupils had been given mock SATs tests to provide a benchmark for science performance against which to measure progress which might result from the co-ordinator's appointment. The grant had been conditional upon the schools providing performance indicators.

The cluster met at least twice-termly, with additional meetings arranged when necessary. Initiated by three heads, it had been operating for four years and had grown as other schools had expressed interest. Heads of each school took turns to chair meetings and host them for a term. There was some joint policy-writing and this was an area which was developing, with science being seen as the pilot for future work in other subjects. There was a great deal of sharing and swapping of materials and ideas, and the head felt that this was helped by the fact that none of the schools rivalled any of the others for attracting pupils because of the schools' locations.

The cluster also organised activities for pupils and there had been pantomime visits, some residential trips involving two or three schools at a time, and sports meetings twice-termly on Saturdays. In the previous year, the cluster had paid for an artist to go to each school to work with children, and a joint exhibition was presented at the nearby town..

Barratt GM (96 pupils) collaborated with other grant maintained schools (there were four in the local authority) and there were some curriculum in-service programmes. Much of the collaboration was done by telephone. The school was also nominally in a cluster with two other schools which were under LEA control, but this cluster had *"fallen by the wayside"* since one of the heads had left and his replacement had not been enthusiastic about such arrangements. More recent developments had seen the use of e-mail to enable schools in the GM group to collaborate.

St Kevin's (168 pupils) had not been involved in any clustering arrangements until 1998, apart from an annual in-service training day with the local secondary school and termly meetings with other Catholic schools at which *"general issues"* were discussed. There was no joint planning or curriculum collaboration, however. It was now part of one of the LEA's family groups of schools, but this was currently *"weak"* and had *"not really got off the ground yet"*.

Charlton (135 pupils) was involved in a partnership with the local secondary school, six other primaries and one special school. Heads met at least twice a term and there were annual conferences for all teachers in the schools, with outside speakers and a focus on different themes. There were also separate meetings for teachers with subject responsibilities. All curriculum areas were covered and there was mutual support for management and administration. The schools funded the payment of a combined secretary, with contributions being based upon school size. The focus at the time of the interview was on modern foreign languages and the National Literacy Strategy. The primary schools were currently involved in a pilot project to teach French, and all teachers had been receiving training to deliver the same programme. Prior to the initiative, three of the schools had taught French and the others had not. The secondary school, which provided the training, wanted all of the schools to teach the subject and it had been argued that other subjects could be covered through the medium of French. In particular, there were opportunities for children who had not mastered concepts such as telling the time to learn this in another language without feeling stigmatised. It had, according to the head of Charlton (135 pupils), been easy to persuade teachers of the value of teaching French in their primary schools when they had realised that such possibilities existed. The partnership was *"very much driven by the secondary school"* and the head felt that it was the secondary's commitment to it that made it work. Indeed, one of the deputy heads at the secondary school had been given responsibility for co-ordinating the partnership.

The head of Grimston (234 pupils) reported that there was less collaboration with other schools than there had been in the past. The school had links with different schools, but worked with another local school of similar size and shared NLS training and held occasional joint staff meetings. The arrangement had come about through the heads' friendship and had not been contrived or mandated by the LEA. There was also a cluster based around the local secondary school, with an LEA advisor having been given the responsibility of advising the cluster. There were termly meetings for heads and deputies, but activities were otherwise limited. There had been a science in-service course recently, but only two schools had been represented. The head felt that some of the small schools found it difficult to attend meetings on different subjects, because their small staffs meant that the same people would be attending virtually every session. One of the schools in the group had only 15 pupils and two teachers, and the head of Grimston felt that, though the head of the small school was enthusiastic about collaborating with other schools, her full-time teaching load and other responsibilities made it difficult for her to play an active part.

Borchester's head (314 pupils) had found, through informal links with other heads, that others shared the same problems which he had experienced. In particular, he cited a conversation three years after the inception of ERA when he had admitted to a headteacher friend that he was considering early retirement because of his overwhelming workload. His colleague had admitted that he too had problems, although each had, apparently, felt that the other was able to cope and had disguised difficulties out of fear of being regarded as inadequate. This had proved to be a turning point for both men and each felt that other heads should be prepared to concede that problems were serious. The Borchester head stated that he would like to formalise some of the mutually supportive arrangements further and he was currently involved with the local secondary school in attempting to develop a stronger pyramid partnership.

The largest school in the survey, Turf Moor (665 pupils), was one of those most strongly involved in a clustering arrangement. The school was involved in one of the city's eight *"family groups"* of schools of similar types, and this had been a successful means of collaborating over the previous two years. The schools had worked together on planning, assessment, target-setting, and bench-marking, and were to combine for in-service training in the future. Assessments were now *"much more uniform"* and this helped when children moved schools within the city. Deputy heads and heads were involved and there was money available to involve subject co-ordinators in the following year.

Summary

Collaborative arrangements were, then, still in operation for most schools, but only Darrington, Charlton and, to a lesser extent, Turf Moor were involved with clusters which approached levels 2 or 3 of Huckman's (op cit.) and the INCSS models. The interviews revealed that many heads saw the advantages of clustering, but found that local arrangements were only partially successful. The role of the secondary schools seems to be significant for some heads, with some being happy for them to take a lead, while others resented the extent to which secondary schools' needs dominated some meetings.

There appears to be little correlation between school size and headteachers being positive about collaboration. Indeed, although many of the clustering initiatives described in the research (see Chapter Six) were financed by central government and local authorities in order to encourage co-operation between small schools, it would seem that larger schools are just as likely to be involved in collaborative ventures.

Discussion on School Management

Overall, then, the picture which emerges of the headteacher's role in primary schools is one of dissatisfaction about the manner in which change has been imposed and disillusionment with a workload which is regarded as unreasonable. While parents

may be more influential over what happens in schools indirectly through their ability, to some extent, to choose the venue for their children's education, there is little evidence that they are directly involved in the running of schools. Governors, too, have a potentially increased influence over the running of schools, but do not appear to exercise this to any great extent. In each of these areas, there does not seem to be any strong distinction between the views of heads of small and large schools.

The heads' roles clearly differ because of the extent to which they are involved in teaching classes of children, and this affects the time which they have available for managing their schools during the school day. For small school heads, the teaching load may prevent them from gaining an overview of what is happening in other classrooms and from stepping back from their own direct involvement in teaching to place the work done in their schools in a wider context. If this is the case, it is somewhat disquieting that some small schools are not taking full advantage of the benefits which collaboration with other schools could afford them. It is ironic that some of the features of accountability which were introduced in an attempt to raise levels of achievement may have led to a decline in co-operative ventures which might have improved educational provision.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Conner (1999) asserted that the issue which had created the greatest tension for primary schools since 1988 had been assessment. Teachers perceived the publication of assessment data in raw forms as unfair, particularly as these have been produced in league table form since 1996. James (1996) argued that government interest in assessment was focused on the role it could play in accountability, and that schools had the task of ensuring that assessment also fulfilled a role in enhancing learning. In this section, the views of headteachers on those aspects of education policy which have made schools accountable to parents, governors, local authorities and the Government itself will be examined. Table 9.5 provides an indication of the headteachers' attitudes to different aspects of accountability, based upon their responses during the interviews.

TABLE 9.5
HEADTEACHERS' ATTITUDES TO DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF EXTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY

SCHOOL	NO.ON ROLL	PUBLICATION OF SATs TEST RESULTS	TARGET-SETTING	OFSTED INSPECTIONS
NEWBY CE	61	✗✗	✗	✗
LOXLEY CE	64	✗✗	✗✗	✓✗
DARRINGTON	70	✓✗	✗	✗
KIRKBY CE	93	✗✗	✗	✗
BARRATT GM	96	✗	✗	✗
CHARLTON CE	135	✗	✗✗	✗
ST KEVIN'S	168	✗	✗✗	✗
GRIMSTON	234	✗	✗	✓✗
OAKWELL	284	✓✗	✗✗	✗
BORCHESTER	314	✓✗	✗	✗
MILBURN	323	✗	✓	✓✗
TURF MOOR	665	✗	✓	✗

Key to headteachers' responses
✓✓ Positive
✓ Mainly positive
✓✗ Neutral
✗ Mainly negative
✗✗ Negative

SATs Scores and League Tables

Most heads were concerned about the publication of SATs results. Heads of small schools which had sufficient pupils to be included in the tables were particularly aggrieved that, with so few children, it only required two or three to have learning difficulties for results to change dramatically from one year to another. This was particularly noticeable for Loxley CE which, although not included in the league tables, would have very poor results in one coming year because it had five out of six pupils in one year group with special educational needs.

One school, which was not part of the present survey but which was cited by two heads, had been top of the LEA's league table when its eleven Y6 pupils had all achieved level 4 or above in all core subjects in one year, but had fallen to 82nd in the following year because some children had learning difficulties. Heads in small schools

pointed out that such swings were less likely in larger schools where two or three children could not have such a significant effect on the overall results. The fluctuations which are possible where the results of a small number of pupils are published was illustrated in Chapter Six (see Tables 6.6 - 6.11).

The general dissatisfaction with league tables and the publication of SATs scores was summed up by the head of Newby (61 pupils):

> *"They've gone over the top with statistics. SATs scores have changed things enormously. We're no longer interested in kids, we're interested in scores!"*

The head of Darrington (70 pupils) was also critical about the publication of SATs scores and the way in which they were recorded in Ofsted reports. His school had had a return of 0% entered for girls at Y2 achieving level 2 in the previous year's SATs, but this had been because there were no Y2 girls in the school. However, the report did not make this clear and a cursory reading of the results would reflect badly upon the school.

Test results had played a significant part in increasing the number on roll at Borchester. There had been 160 pupils in 1985 compared with 314 at the time of the interview. 50% of the children came from outside the school's catchment area, many of them from a neighbouring urban LEA. Although the admissions limit was 42, this was regularly exceeded as parents appealed to the LEA to allow them to send their children to the school. This presented some logistical problems for the head, since appeals were held during the summer vacation and he was never sure how many children would arrive at school when term began. The school's SATs scores were also the best in the immediate area and the head stated that *"75% of parents who make an enquiry have either researched the results or the Ofsted report"*. He found that parents often made decisions about where to buy houses when moving into the area based upon the school which they wished to send their children to. However, there was no longer a guarantee that all pupils from the catchment area could be admitted, although the head did

concede that *"the Government says that if there's demand you can meet it"*. This rather confirms West et al's (1998, p.188) views:

> "In a largely unregulated environment there has been growing concern about the extent to which the admissions process can be considered to be equitable, transparent and publicly accountable."

The head of St Kevin's (168 pupils) was particularly concerned about SATs scores which had placed her school near the bottom of the city's league tables for Y6. She argued that the efforts which were being put into helping children who had a chance of achieving level 4 were detrimental to those of low ability who had no chance of reaching that level. She devoted her own teaching time to the former, but felt that she was being pressured to get children to achieve levels of performance they would find it difficult to sustain after the tests. The LEA had set what the head felt were *"over-ambitious targets"* for schools because it was currently being inspected by Ofsted.

> *"There isn't a culture of academic achievement in most parts of the city and we have to fight against that. You get parents taking children out of school to go on holiday during the SATs tests. We lost two who could have got level fours across the board last year and with our results as they are, we just can't afford that."*

The head of Turf Moor (665 pupils) argued that SATs had had a detrimental effect upon the education of many children and upon the curriculum:

> *"They've narrowed the curriculum too. We've lost some fundamental things which I thought were sacrosanct. We may be pushing the more able, but I worry about the less able. If children don't reach level 4 they count for nothing. That's not right. We should be celebrating their achievements not branding them as failures. A points system would be better so that everyone contributed."*

Summary

Heads tended to be negative about the publication of the test scores rather than about the tests themselves. Many welcomed the opportunity, which the tests offered, to monitor the progress of pupils and of their school over time. There were, however, expressions of concern about the effect which the National Literacy Strategy might

have upon the English results, since some heads did not feel that adequate attention was given in the literacy hour to some aspects of English which were tested.

Apart from repeated expressions of concern from the heads of smaller schools about the effects which two or three children's results could have upon their overall standing, there was little difference in attitude to the publication of SATs results between heads of schools of different sizes. The publications of SATs scores in league tables was almost universally disliked, and the validity of the league positions was questioned. However, despite their opposition to the league tables, some heads of large schools were very keen that, given the existence of the tables, their schools should be well placed in them.

Target-Setting

A recent addition to the assessment demands alreay placed upon schools was the requirement to set targets. The DfEE (1997) maintained that target-setting helped schools to focus upon children's performance and allowed schools to see "where they were heading" (DfEE, 1997, p.6). The targets set by the schools had to be approved by the LEAs, and the discrepancies between heads' targets and the LEAs' generally higher ones had led to several disputes.

Although target-setting aroused considerable anger in some heads, it did not provoke universal disapproval, but was felt to be ill-conceived in its present form. It was a particular concern for the head of Oakwell (284 pupils). The LEA had been given a target of 89% of children achieving level 4 or above in SATs by 2002 and it, in turn, had presented targets to schools. The school had been given what the head regarded as a *"totally unrealistic"* target of 98% which, he felt, simply created unnecessary pressure. In order to achieve 98% all but one Y6 pupils would have to achieve level 4 or above. The head argued that *"we need rigour but this is nonsensical"*.

The head of Charlton (135 pupils), whose disapproval was so strong that he had refused to submit targets to the LEA in the approved manner, argued:

> *"We're being asked to meet ridiculous targets which are set through a number-crunching exercise. In some years we can achieve them, but when you have three statemented children in Y6 working at level one and you have to achieve a target which doesn't allow for three children like that, what do you do?"*

SATs scores had generally been good and had placed Charlton high in the LEA's league tables, but had varied from year to year. The head's targets reflected his knowledge of the children in the school, and he had predicted that in 2002 performance in SATs would be lower than in other years because of the number of children with learning difficulties in the current Year 3. The LEA's targets did not take this into account and the head felt that children with special needs would suffer as a result, because teachers could be forced to try to get them to reach level four when they simply were not ready to achieve it.

Recent meetings of Charlton's cluster had been centred on target-setting and transfer arrangements for pupils moving to the secondary school. Target-setting had led to problems and the partnership had agreed at a meeting that none of the schools would submit their targets for SATs results to the LEA because they felt that unrealistic demands were being made. However, it had recently emerged that all but two, one of which was Charlton, had actually sent in their targets and this had led to considerable controversy which the head hoped would be resolved at a forthcoming meeting. The other school which had not submitted targets was small.

The head of Loxley (64 pupils) did not object to target-setting but did not like having targets published so that people could judge the school by them. "*You can't win. If you achieve the targets they say it's because they weren't challenging enough, and if you don't you're a failure!*". He was also concerned that the national tests which children took were unreliable and that data produced was "*often incorrect and sometimes based upon inaccurate marking*".

He argued that the LEA had made unreasonable demands. The school had only six Y6 pupils and five had special educational needs. The target for 1999 was, therefore, for 20% of Y6 to achieve level four in the SATs but the head felt that this was impossible because only one child was capable of that level of performance. SATs scores had been higher in the past, and in the previous year fifteen Y6 pupils had taken the tests and the school had been placed 12th in the LEA's league tables. The target for 2002 had originally been set at 98% by the LEA, but the head had pointed out that this was impossible since the 2% not achieving level 4 would represent a fraction of a child! The LEA had reduced the figure to 93%.

The head of St Kevin's (168 pupils) argued that the targets set by the LEA were *"totally unrealistic"* and did not seem to take into account the problems which inner city schools experienced.

> *"They're right to be ambitious. I mean, we all want these children to achieve, but all they're doing by setting unrealistic targets is building in failure. We won't achieve them, most schools won't, and then the schools and the LEA will come in for even more criticism."*

Summary

Heads' objections to target-setting were based upon the feeling that the targets set by the LEAs were unrealistic and often unfair. There was no evidence that heads objected to the setting of targets *per se*. However, the heads of the smaller and medium-sized schools tended to be rather more negative about target-setting than those of larger schools, because fluctuations in performance could be so great when a very few children were unable to reach the required level (see Tables 6.6-6.11). There was also a feeling among some heads of small schools that LEA expectations for them were unreasonably high because of what some regarded as a misconception that children in rural schools were brighter than those in towns.

Ofsted Inspections

When Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) was subsumed within the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) in October 1991, a new era of school inspections began. Inspections by HMI had been rare for schools and many heads never experienced one throughout their careers. Ofsted inspections were to be made every four years, in a bid to ensure that standards were raised in all schools.

All of the schools in the present sample had completed successful Ofsted inspections and some had received particularly good reports. St Kevin's (168 pupils), although successful, had been criticised for some aspects of management and for low achievement at Key Stage 2. However, many of the heads felt that the inspections had caused great anxiety for staff and questioned their value. The head of Kirkby (93 pupils) stated that there was a *"culture of fear"* which was created by the Government and its agencies in order to ensure that schools did as they were told. *"It's a case of 'Do it or Ofsted'll get you'"*.

The head was adamant that he was not running the school for the benefit of Ofsted inspectors and that the inspectors would have to accept the school as it was. However, the inspection team in 1997 had been *"a good one"* and had *"wanted to see what happened in the classrooms and were not so interested in bureaucracy"*. He had been pleased by this, but reflected that other teams might have been more preoccupied with management issues. Interestingly, in the light of the findings reported earlier in this chapter, Kirkby's inspection team had urged that governors be more involved in the day to day running of the school and in long-term planning.

The head of Barratt GM (96 pupils) had found his school's Ofsted inspection had proved burdensome and had created a great deal of work as the school had prepared for it in autumn 1997. He complained that it had distracted staff from their work and had induced anxiety in normally calm teachers.

Darrington's head (70 pupils) had been so over-worked during the build up to a recent Ofsted inspection that he had parked his caravan in the school playground and had camped in it for over a week.

Some heads disagreed with some of the findings of their inspection teams. The head of Charlton (135 pupils) maintained that Ofsted had been critical of the school's planning which, according to the head, the inspection team did not understand. Borchester's head (314 pupils) thought that his approach to delegation of curricular responsibilities *"had worked a treat"*, but the registered inspector at the last Ofsted inspection had *"slated it"*. The approach had been retained despite the Ofsted criticisms[•]. At St Kevin's (168 pupils), the head had been unhappy that her *"co-operative approach"* to managing change and her *"democratic"* approach to decision-making had been criticised:

> *"The way I operate is the way that was being advocated when I took up the job. Now it's not what they want to see. I'm a democrat not an autocrat. I want to involve staff as much as possible. They're professionals. You can't just order them to do things.*

Once again, it appears that, despite emphasising the value of teamwork (Webb and Vulliamy, 1996b), Ofsted may be responsible in part for increasing managerialism at the expense of collaboration. Most heads did not question the necessity for inspections, but there was a general feeling that, in their present form, the inspections created undue stress and tended to disrupt school life unnecessarily. The head of Borchester (314 pupils) felt that his school's Ofsted report's key issues for action had harmed the school because they cost a lot to implement. Since the school had received a good report and was not failing, it had received no money to help it to implement the action plan. Such funding was reserved for failing schools.

Turf Moor's head (665 pupils) argued that Ofsted inspections had brought some benefits, but asserted:

[•] The school was inspected again in 1999 and this element was praised in the inspection report.

"The pressure is horrendous. I'm not convinced about their worth. There should be some scrutiny from outside, but the government should place more faith in LEAs and in schools' abilities to self-evaluate."

He felt that it should be recognised that some schools had problems and needed support, but he did not approve of the format of Ofsted inspections. The school had received a very favourable report following its inspection two years previously, but he argued that the pressure to *"perform for one week"* was *"unreasonable"* and possibly had a negative effect on teachers and pupils for the rest of the year.

Summary

The only discernible difference between the attitudes of heads of small and large schools to Ofsted inspections revolved around what one described as the greater intensity of the inspections in small schools. Although inspections in small schools tended to be slightly shorter than in large schools, the presence of the inspection team in a school with two or three classes meant that teachers were observed more frequently than their colleagues in larger schools. Heads had views on this:

"It was relentless. I only taught one lesson that they didn't observe."
(Head of Darrington, 70 pupils)

"For three days we worked in a goldfish bowl. You didn't even know if you could get away from them in the gents!"
(Head of Newby, 61 pupils)

"The kids were great. By Wednesday they were making friends with the inspectors because they had got so used to seeing them."
(Head of Kirkby, 93 pupils)

The pressures of being accountable to parents and governors did not appear to be as great as those associated with being answerable to the LEA and, in particular, to Ofsted. Heads in schools of all sizes shared concerns about the stress which Ofsted inspections induced for themselves and their staffs. Both Borchester (314 pupils) and Milburn (323 pupils) had been given dates for their second inspections at the time of

the interviews. This had led to one experienced teacher at Borchester, who did not feel that he could cope with the stress of an inspection again, resigning without a pension.

Discussion on Accountability

Accountability does not appear to be any more of an issue for the heads of small schools than it is for those in large schools. Both groups seem generally to accept the need for schools to be accountable to parents, governors and the Government, but question the means by which this is achieved. There are, however, some problems for small schools in target-setting and the publication of SATs results, given the effects which a small number of children may have upon outcomes in such schools.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

It was shown in Chapter Seven that many heads, both in the 1990 survey and the fieldwork by Grace (1995) and Pollard et al (1994), had reservations about adopting an increased role in managing their schools' finances. The LMS scheme had been in operation for nine years in some schools at the time of the interviews, with Oakwell (284 pupils) and Milburn (323 pupils) having been pilot schools within their local authorities, and the head of Milburn having spent a year on secondment to the LEA helping other schools to come to terms with LMS. All of the smaller schools had received devolved budgets by 1994. The interviews sought to discover if some headteachers' initial apprehension about financial management (see Chapter Six) had been replaced by a more positive attitude by 1998.

Local Management of Schools (LMS)

Most heads were very positive about the benefits of LMS, but two did not feel that there had been long-term advantages to their small schools. Many complained about unfair budgets and the use of average salary costs to calculate the amount available for teachers' salaries. This seemed to work against the small schools, where heads tended to feel that it was important to employ experienced, and therefore more expensive,

teachers. Table 9.6 shows the nature of headteachers' attitudes to LMS based upon their comments in the interviews.

TABLE 9.6
HEADTEACHERS' ATTITUDES TO LOCAL MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS

SCHOOL	NO.ON ROLL	ATTITUDE TO LMS
NEWBY CE	61	✖✖
LOXLEY CE	64	✖
DARRINGTON	70	✓
KIRKBY CE	93	✓✖
BARRATT GM	96	✓✓
CHARLTON CE	135	✓✖
ST KEVIN'S	168	✓
GRIMSTON	234	✓✓
OAKWELL	284	✓
BORCHESTER	314	✓
MILBURN	323	✓✓
TURF MOOR	665	✓

Key to headteachers' responses
✓✓ Positive
✓ Mainly positive
✓✖ Neutral
✖ Mainly negative
✖✖ Negative

The head of Newby (61 pupils), who did not feel that LMS had benefited his school, maintained that the devolution of the budget had meant that he had to *"do the LEA's dirty work"*. He was particularly aggrieved that he had had to make a teacher redundant because funding could not be found to pay her salary. The school had suffered a well-publicised reduction in staffing at the end of the previous school year, when budget cuts had forced the governors to invite offers for redeployment or redundancy. In the end, one full-time teacher had agreed to work half time, but this meant that one class included the whole of KS2; some forty children.

> *"We had been living on our reserves for nine years and we had budgeted carefully. We used to have a really good NTA [Non-Teaching Assistant] and we had to make her redundant and then two years later we couldn't meet the staffing bill and we were £15000 short."*

As a result, the head now taught all of KS2 in the mornings and Years 3 and 4 in the afternoons. There had been considerable consternation about children being in a class of 40 and parents had raised petitions, written to councillors, the Prime Minister, and even sent letters written in Braille to the Secretary of State for Education. However, no extra money had been found by the LEA which, the head argued, was anxious not to set a precedent, and parents now seemed to have accepted the situation.

The head was angry about the staffing reduction and pointed out that when he had arrived at the school, over ten years earlier, there had been 2.6 teachers for 45 children and that this had been accepted as a satisfactory ratio by the LEA. He was now being asked to teach 61 with 2.7. He estimated that the amount by which the school's budget had been eroded in the previous nine years would have paid for the 'half teacher' the school had lost.

> *"For want of £15000 of tar they've spoilt the ship. I can't forgive them for that. They've spoilt something that was good."*

LMS could, argued the head, work in the school's favour, but it required *"careful manipulation of the system"*. He complained that schools were given no incentive to budget wisely and to maintain contingency funds, because if they under spent the LEA's reaction was to assume that they needed less money or no increase in funding. Operating LMS had increased his workload and had meant more work in evenings and at weekends. He felt that LMS was harder to manage for small schools and argued that heads and governors ended up with problems which had previously been the LEA's.

The head of Loxley (64 pupils), who claimed that he did not like his job any more, blamed financial cutbacks for some of his disaffection:

> *"I don't like having to respond to priorities which are not mine or the school's. There's no time to do the things I'd like to do with my class. I've had to take on other duties because of reductions in funding."*

The head had particularly resented having to make a member of staff redundant because of funding decisions by the LEA. This had been exacerbated by the fact that no member of staff had volunteered for redeployment. A teacher had had to be identified as the one to leave and this had led to wrangles with teacher unions. The head maintained:

> *"If others put us in these situations by withdrawing funding, they should deal with the consequences. The criteria were vague and that caused problems."*

The head had had little choice over which member of staff to ask to leave, because the only alternative was his only full-time colleague, and her departure would have left the head with only part-time staff.

LMS had produced some benefits for Kirkby (93 pupils), but the head asserted that, with hindsight, the school could have been better off had it opted out of local authority control. At the time when this was a possibility, he had had moral qualms about assuming grant maintained status and had felt a sense of loyalty to the local authority. Although he was still generally happy with the service provided by the LEA, he did not feel that his loyalty had always been reciprocated. However, his main source of grievance was that some politicians, who had professed to oppose grant maintained status when it was introduced, had subsequently sent their own children to such schools. The head felt, in view of this, that his previous reservations had been countered: *"There was no longer any moral reason not to opt out"*.

St Kevin's head (168 pupils) had found financial management difficult at first but had been well-supported by governors, one of whom worked for an accountant. She now had a secretary who did most of the clerical work associated with LMS, leaving her to make decisions once figures were provided. She generally found that the freedom which LMS allowed her and her staff to make decisions about spending benefited the school.

The head of Grimston (234 pupils) maintained that LMS was *"a brilliant idea"* and he looked forward to a time when all money was given to schools rather than LEAs. He was happy to be able to make decisions about supply cover himself rather than, as in the past, having to seek permission from the LEA before bringing a teacher in to provide cover for absence. He enthused: *"I'm 101% behind LMS, but we could do with more money. There are no problems with the budget. We've had no cutbacks."*

The head of Milburn (323 pupils) was also positive about the benefits of LMS:

> *"The big difference is premises management. Our place has been transformed since LMS. There's been more building work than in the previous century. The money's been there and we've decided what to do with it."*

However, most heads considered that budgets had been cut in real terms over the previous ten years and two had had to make members of staff redundant, while another had been unable to appoint a deputy headteacher because of a lack of funds. An exception to this was Barratt GM (96 pupils), which had increased staffing levels and undertaken a substantial building programme. The acquisition of grant maintained status had been the most significant factor affecting the school in the last ten years.

> *"It's given us more freedom and flexibility to manage finances and to free up the budget to focus on curriculum, teacher time and resources."*

One aspect of financial management which had particular implications for small schools was their reluctance to save money in the short-term by appointing newly qualified teachers (NQTs). All of the heads of small schools who were interviewed maintained that small schools were not good places for NQTs to work, since experience was needed to cope with a diversity of demands, and heads did not have sufficient non-teaching time to monitor progress and provide mentoring. They also felt that having a large proportion of the staff as inexperienced teachers would be detrimental to the effective delivery of the curriculum. Larger schools, in which heads and often deputies had non-teaching time and in which senior teachers were also available, were better able to absorb NQTs and were consequently able to save money

on salaries. All of the larger schools and Charlton (135 pupils) employed some teachers who had qualified within the previous three years, and Turf Moor (665 pupils) had four. None of the small schools had recently qualified teachers, except Loxley (64 pupils) which employed one for half a day each week.

Larger schools were also better placed to save money on supply teaching when staff were absent, since heads without teaching commitments could, if they so chose, cover the absences themselves. Milburn's head (323 pupils) had said:

> *"The real way to make money from LMS is for the head to cover absences. You can save £120 a day. Since LMS started I reckon I've saved £35-40000 by covering absent staff or taking over classes temporarily when staff leave. It all goes into the school budget. We've been carrying forward £40-50000 built up over three years. It means we can run at a loss of £16000 this year and £19000 next year to preserve staffing levels. The problem is, I teach so much now that I can't do cover any more."*

The introduction of LMS had increased the pressures on heads, but the head of Turf Moor (665 pupils) welcomed it and said:

> *"We're now 'lean machines'. What's never been documented is how much schools have saved the LEAs. We're far more economical than before LMS."*

The head maintained that savings had been made on heating and lighting, but argued that the repair and maintenance budget was *"far too low"*.

> *"The schools have been let go so much because of a lack of funds. Whenever I go into a business, the contrast strikes me. How many businesses with a £1m turnover like we have work in a 1935 property with a fifty year-old heating system and 35 people working in small rooms?"*

He maintained that formula funding based upon age-weighted pupil numbers and average teachers' salary costs, supplemented by compensatory budgets according to factors such as the numbers of pupils taking free meals, worked against large schools in more affluent areas. The head said that he did not administer the budget at all and left this to his secretarial staff, but he maintained an overview. He felt that it was not

part of the head's job to administer the budget and he also commented that heads who regularly covered for teacher absences in order to save money were *"expensive supply teachers"*.

The first years of LMS *"had been really good"* for Charlton (135 pupils), and the school had had money to spare. However, the head complained that LMS had not been worked out fairly and that basing allowances on average salary costs had disadvantaged the school because of its experienced staff. He also felt that operating LMS meant that the school had to invest in expensive computers and fax machines which it would otherwise not have needed. Buying in services was expensive and the cost of these had increased at a greater rate than the school budget so that the school had become relatively worse off over the years. The head maintained that:

> *"Everything done here has to be done again at LEA level and that just wastes money. If finances had been handled properly by the LEA, we would never have needed LMS. It still needs sorting out. It would benefit all the schools in our partnership if we could operate as a mini-LEA and do things like appointing our own SEN team."*

The head of Borchester (314 pupils) argued that there had been more opportunities to be entrepreneurial five or six years ago and complained that funding from the LEA had effectively been cut consistently over the last five years through standstill budgets and actual cuts. There was, therefore, greater pressure to raise funds, and fund-raising had *"gone from being a pleasant bonus to a necessity"*. Changes in funding arrangements and responsibilities over the last six years had meant that the school had used £60000 of budget money in areas which *"were previously the direct responsibility of the LEA"*. Play areas had been paid for by the school and five classrooms had been extended at a cost of £30000, with only one third of the cost coming from the LEA (*"given reluctantly"*) and the remainder coming from the school's budget and the PTA.

The head had initially *"relished the flexibility and opportunity to earmark priorities"* which LMS had given him, but now found this less enjoyable as funding was reduced

each year. He was annoyed that some heads boasted of having budget surpluses of £30-40000 and felt that these should be used for the benefit of the school. Many of these surpluses were achieved by the head covering for staff when they were ill, but the head did not do this and used insurance, which provided supply cover after three days, as well as his contingency funds. These were also used to release the deputy from teaching for one day per week and to give similar non-teaching time to the special needs co-ordinator. Other teachers were also released from teaching at other times.

Summary

The heads of the larger schools seemed, generally, to be better disposed to LMS than those in smaller schools, since their larger budgets afforded them greater flexibility to spend money on initiatives. Their limited class teaching responsibilities also provided them with opportunities to cover staff absences themselves and thus save money, although this was a strategy criticised by some headteachers. Heads in smaller schools had less administrative assistance and more teaching commitments as well as smaller budgets, all of which contrived to make some of them less enthusiastic about the benefits of a devolved budget. The exception to this was the head of Barratt GM who had been able to reduce his own teaching load, while increasing administrative assistance when his budget was increased after opting out of LEA control.

THE CURRICULUM

Of all the educational changes which have been made since 1988, the introduction of the National Curriculum is perhaps the most significant. Schools were forced to change their syllabuses and many had to teach subjects which had previously been given little or no attention. There were felt to be particular problems for small schools with limited numbers of teachers and consequently potentially limited ranges of expertise (Galton and Patrick, 1990, Audit Commission, 1990, Alexander et al, 1992). However, test results and league tables have shown that children in small schools often outperform their peers in larger schools in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science (Ofsted, 1998), and some researchers have argued that small schools

offered superior teaching and curriculum provision to larger and medium-sized schools (see Richards, 1998).

At the time of the interviews, the National Curriculum was well-established in its revised form following the Dearing Report in 1993, but schools had recently been informed by the Secretary of State for Education that a "slimmed down" curriculum could be offered in some subjects as the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy were being established, and that a revised National Curriculum would appear in 1999. Information Communication Technology was also gaining in prominence and government funding was to be provided to allow schools to enhance resources and to participate in the Superhighways Initiative.

In this section, heads' views on the National Curriculum, curriculum provision, and the management of the curriculum are presented. The discussion then moves on to examine schools' reactions to the latest initiatives in literacy and ICT before turning to delegation and shared responsibility for the curriculum. Table 9.7 indicates heads' views on each of three significant curriculum initiatives.

TABLE 9.7
HEADTEACHERS' VIEWS ON CURRICULUM INNOVATIONS

SCHOOL	NO.ON ROLL	NATIONAL CURRICULUM	NATIONAL LITERACY STRATEGY	INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY
NEWBY CE	61	✓	✖✖	✓✖
LOXLEY CE	64	✓	✖	✓
DARRINGTON	70	✓✓	✓✖	✓✖
KIRKBY CE	93	✖✖	✖✖	✓✖
BARRATT GM	96	✓	✖	✓
CHARLTON CE	135	✓✖	✖✖	✓
ST KEVIN'S	168	✓	✖	✓✖
GRIMSTON	234	✓	✖	✓
OAKWELL	284	✓	✖✖	✓
BORCHESTER	314	✓	✖✖	✓✓
MILBURN	323	✓✓	✖✖	✓✖
TURF MOOR	665	✓	✖✖	✓

Key to headteachers' responses

✔✔ Positive
✔ Mainly positive
✔✖ Neutral
✖ Mainly negative
✖✖ Negative

National Curriculum

School size did not appear to be a factor in determining heads' attitudes to the National Curriculum or their perception of their schools' ability to meet its requirements. Most heads were very much in favour of the National Curriculum, but felt it had been badly designed and introduced and had overloaded the curriculum. The head of Borchester (314 pupils) felt that the National Curriculum had benefited the school, although he had not liked the way in which it had been imposed with a lack of negotiation, but he "*would not get rid of it*". He had found that its introduction had helped him to establish many of the features which his staff had been reluctant to accept during the early years of his headship:

> "*The continuity and progression and the conceptual development were manna from heaven for me as I fought resistance from staff. The day the law came in I was able to say, 'This is your job description, contractual time and the curriculum. We have to do it, so let's find a way through it.' It gave me the clout to do it. There were enormous benefits to the children.*"

According to the head of Kirkby (93 pupils), the original National Curriculum had been "*impossible to deliver because no-one did a time management study*" and the subsequent Dearing Review had only improved matters slightly because it was "*mainly a cosmetic exercise*". He argued that recent developments were actually "*taking us forward to where we used to be*", although he conceded that now the curriculum was provided by the Government "*we can think about our teaching and children's learning*". He was, however, worried that schools had become "*over-concerned with content coverage*" and felt that this did a disservice to many children whose needs were not being satisfied and whose attention was not being "*grabbed*".

The head of Grimston (234 pupils) felt that there was now more structure to the curriculum, but that many aspects were less relevant to children now that they were taught as discrete subjects rather than as topics.

> *"Science is there to be taught because it's science not because it's relevant to the children. Art, geography and history are all much more organised now."*

At St Kevin's (168 pupils), the National Curriculum had posed problems for teachers with limited experience of science teaching, and had also presented difficulties in Design Technology (DT), which some teachers had been reluctant to teach at all. In particular, teachers' perceptions of DT and the ways in which it differed from the art and craft work, which had traditionally been part of the primary curriculum, had had to be addressed. There had been a lot of emphasis on teachers' subject knowledge in science in the early days of the National Curriculum, but this had now been overtaken by worries about other areas of the curriculum. However, the head argued that the curriculum was *"a real benefit"* to inner city schools like hers in that it gave children *"an entitlement to the same curriculum as children in the leafy suburbs"*.

The head of Milburn (323 pupils) felt that the National Curriculum had benefited the school and he wished that it had been introduced earlier. He had inherited a staff which was *"set in its ways"*, some of whom ran the school *"for their benefit rather than the children's"*. The impetus of a prescribed curriculum would, he felt, have helped him to provide greater direction for those staff in 1982 when he came to the school. He argued that the National Curriculum ensured that children were taught certain things and that it did not allow for *"rogue planning and classroom organisation"* and *"maverick teachers"*. However, the National Curriculum had over-burdened teachers and needed to be slimmed down further, especially at KS1 where he felt that *"children were learning facts in history, geography and RE before they even knew their own addresses and telephone numbers"*.

The head of Turf Moor (665 pupils) felt that children in the upper end of the school were now *"challenged far more"* than before ERA, but he maintained: *"We've lost some width. The curriculum has become very narrow and it's getting narrower".*

The head was critical of recent changes to the curriculum:

> *"Comparing what we do now with three years ago, what we do now is a shambles. There's no breadth. The Breadth and Balance document is vague. A lot of problems have stemmed from the literacy hour."*

Summary

None of the heads expressed the view that their schools were unable to deliver the National Curriculum adequately and Ofsted reports supported them in this view. However, Darrington, Newby and Kirkby did not have facilities for indoor physical education and used local village halls. There was, however, no difference between schools of different sizes in their levels of confidence in delivering any subject, including PE, according to their responses to the surveys and the interviews.

The National Literacy Strategy (NLS)

In many ways, headteachers' views on the National Literacy Strategy are reminiscent of those expressed by many in the 1990 survey and interviews when the National Curriculum was discussed. Just as concern had been expressed about small schools' abilities to deliver the curriculum in 1990, so there was anxiety about implementing the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) in 1998. However, whereas many heads could see that it was possible to deliver the National Curriculum in small schools, the structure of the NLS did not appear suited to schools with mixed-age classes. It may be that heads will come to accept the NLS and NNS in the same way that most appear to have accepted the National Curriculum. However, while there are echoes of the same hostility which the 1990 survey revealed towards the National Curriculum in some reactions to the NLS in 1998, there are important differences between the two major curricular changes. The NLS and NNS have prescribed a pedagogy, criticised by some headteachers, which has challenged *how* teachers teach as well as *what* they teach.

Many argued that the NLS was badly-designed and implemented, but some also felt that it had the potential to bring about higher levels of literacy. None of the small school heads questioned could see how to implement the NLS with mixed-age classes, and some schools were either not doing the Literacy Hour at all or were not attempting it in the form set out in the NLS. The head of Kirkby (93 pupils) questioned the basic tenets of the NLS:

"They've moved away from recognising that children are different and develop at different speeds. Children don't just fit into rigid lines of development. There's a real lack of flexibility in the literacy hour."

The head went on to express doubts about the approaches which were being advocated, and averred that teachers were now being asked to teach the whole class and pitch their teaching at the middle ability range, after years of being told to differentiate. He did not feel that *"people who are actually doing the job"* had been sufficiently involved in the design of the Strategy or in other initiatives.

The head of Newby (61 pupils) felt that staff were overburdened by the curriculum and that *"all they have time to talk about is the literacy hour, numeracy and IT"*. He did not think that the Government, the LEA or the designers of the NLS *"had any concept of how small schools work"*. He went on to state:

"Everything's related to large schools. It's like the literacy strategy was designed for schools with single-aged classes. They don't understand small schools. We're just idyllic village schools with no problems. They don't know the reality."

The literacy hour was a major cause of concern for the school at the time of the interview and, although he said that it was *"God's gift to my KS1 teacher who is very much into shared reading and literature"*, the head could see practical problems. There were three age groups in KS1 and a wide range of abilities, and the problem was even greater for KS2 where four age groups were in the same class each morning: *"If anyone can show me how to do a literacy hour with four ages in the same class, I'd like to meet them"*.

The head of St Kevin's (168 pupils) had had to revise class organisation plans in order to avoid having mixed-age classes because of the introduction of the literacy hour. In the past, despite there being seven teachers for seven year groups, many classes had been mixed-age to allow for disparities in numbers of children in each year group. The staff had decided that they would rather have single-age classes because of the way in which the NLS was structured, but this had led to the school having two classes of over thirty and one of eighteen. In the past, classes had been evenly-sized with slightly smaller numbers in the class for the youngest children.

The school was running daily literacy hours in all classes and the head felt that some success was being achieved. However, staff had complained that many children found the whole-class teaching sessions too long and that lower ability children were finding concentration difficult.

The head of Barratt GM (96 pupils), who was generally positive about most of the changes which he had had to implement since ERA, stated:

> *"I wouldn't say any changes had actually harmed the school, but I'm not too struck on the literacy hour. When they discover it doesn't work there'll be a backlash. We need a balance. What worries me is the narrowing of the curriculum. Schools should strive to go beyond the National Curriculum not carve chunks out to facilitate the literacy hour."*

The head of Oakwell (284 pupils) argued that the literacy hour had not been thought through carefully. The school's Ofsted inspection in the summer of 1998 had delayed the training process, but the deputy head had assumed the role of literacy co-ordinator and had now taken part in training sessions, and had run a series of in-service courses for the staff to "*cascade*" what she had learned. 89% of Y6 pupils had achieved level 4 or above in the 1998 SATs and, as a result, the LEA did not expect the school to follow the literacy hour guidelines "*to the letter*". The school had begun by concentrating on shared and guided reading and intended to move on to word skills in the spring term. The head was concerned that the structure of the literacy hour would

affect the school's ability to hear all KS1 children read individually at least four times a week. He was also worried that the literacy hour did not seem to afford sufficient time for extended writing which was assessed in the SATs. The head was also negative about the NLS's implementation:

> *"Once again we're fiddling about with the curriculum. The National Curriculum's going to be revised in 2000. It'll be based around literacy and numeracy strategies. We'll lose quality areas of study. Kids will just operate in little envelopes. There'll be less and less time to develop areas of study."*

Borchester's head (314 pupils) claimed that the literacy hour had added an extra hour a night to teachers' workloads and this had had a detrimental effect upon his colleagues.

> *"Staff are at a level of deterioration now* [mid-November] *that you'd normally associate with the end of the school year. They're so bogged down with meeting deadlines for the literacy hour, the numeracy hour and Ofsted that they're worn out. We've moved so far from what we used to do. This is the first time we've been told how to teach as well as what [to teach]."*

The head predicted that *"within a year there will be open revolt over the literacy and numeracy hours"*. He said that he had been told that politicians knew that the literacy and numeracy hours would not work, but had *"pushed them through knowing that teachers would then tell them what was wrong and help them to put it right"*. He concluded that there was *"no individuality about it. Everything's done by threat"*.

The head of Turf Moor (665 pupils) felt that the National Literacy Strategy had some strengths, but thought it had been *"rushed in for political reasons without adequate consideration"* and *"the implications for other subjects had not been thought through"*.

Some heads could not see the need for the Literacy Strategy in their schools, while the head of Oakwell (284 pupils) felt that the NLS had had a negative effect upon teachers' self-esteem:

"One thing primary teachers always thought they could do was teach literacy and numeracy. Now this is thrown into doubt, so if morale's low it's going to get lower."

Summary

Although there was general dissatisfaction about the implementation of the literacy hour, only the head of Oakwell, a large school, expressed concern over teachers having the necessary subject expertise to deliver it adequately. Heads of the smaller schools were worried about the practicalities of teaching the literacy hour with mixed-age classes, rather than with the abilities of members of staff to teach the content of the NLS.

There was a strong feeling among all heads that the NLS had been implemented before schools were ready to deliver it, and some heads questioned whether adequate preparations had been made by the Government for its successful incorporation into the broader curriculum of primary schools. There were complaints that staff had not been properly trained for its inception in September 1998, and that publishers had not been given sufficient time to produce materials which would support teachers. However, the greatest hostility was aroused among heads of small schools by the fact that guidance for small schools and mixed-age classes had not been issued until September 1998, seven months after the Framework (DfEE, 1998) was published. The fact that this extended to only three and a half pages was described as *"contemptible"* by one head of a small school.

Perhaps more than any other educational change since 1988, the National Literacy Strategy represents a particular challenge to small primary schools. Together with the National Numeracy Strategy, which was to follow it in September 1999, it requires a change in many teachers' ways of working and demands a high level of direct teaching which some, according to some of the heads, may have largely eschewed when working with perhaps three or four age groups in one class. It is, however, interesting to note the comment later in this chapter of the head of Milburn (323 pupils), one of

the large schools, that small schools in his area were at a more advanced stage in implementation than larger ones.

Information Communication Technology

Information Communication Technology, the subject about which schools of all sizes had least confidence in both the 1995 and 1998 surveys, was a source of concern for most heads who were interviewed. There were resource implications for all schools, but government grants and parental fund-raising had helped many to buy equipment, and three of the large schools had computer suites in which whole classes could work. Some heads were worried about what one termed the *"rapid ageing of resources"* which meant that equipment quickly became dated as new technological advances produced more sophisticated computers.

Some heads of larger schools reported that the younger members of staff were most at ease with ICT. This has implications for smaller schools where staffs tended to be slightly older and more experienced (see Patrick, 1991). Some heads of smaller schools cited lack of staff training as a major obstacle to the successful implementation of the ICT curriculum. The head of Newby (61 pupils) was concerned that he would not be able to afford to pay for training for staff in ICT, because his school's budget was small and did not leave a great deal of room for flexibility.

ICT had required the greatest changes to the school curriculum of any subject at Borchester (314 pupils), and this had been partly because of the school's advanced usage of computer technology. All classrooms were now networked and had access to centrally provided software as well as to the Internet and e-mail. The network had been *"imposed"* by the head in what he described as *"the most autocratic decision"* he had ever made and the largest investment. He had made the decision without consulting staff, but the National Grid for Learning had reinforced the decision and the Government had now made ICT a core subject so he felt fully vindicated. Schools from elsewhere in the LEA and from *"all around the country"* had taken an interest in

the school's ICT developments and there had been *"hundreds of visitors"*. The head maintained that all schools in the LEA would soon have similar facilities through government funding, but the school would still receive this funding and would be able to use it further to enhance the resources. A large proportion of the children at the school also had personal computers (PCs) at home, and this meant that even some of the youngest children were able to use computers at a quite advanced level.

ICT was proving difficult for Milburn (323 pupils) because of a lack of expertise among the staff and a lack of available, affordable technology. However, a Government grant of around £10000 was due to be received in 1999 and this, allied to the possible appointment of a teacher with ICT expertise in the new year, would, the head felt, help to develop this area of the curriculum. At present, the younger teachers were most comfortable with ICT and one, in particular, was very enthusiastic. The school had joined the Internet and had begun to network classrooms, but the head felt that a technician was needed if this area was to develop.

At St Kevin's (168 pupils), ICT had presented many problems, one of which was a lack of resources. Staff had been reluctant to make full use of the available computers, but their attitudes had begun to change since the appointment of the deputy head two years previously. He had shown *"tremendous enthusiasm"* for working with computers and had run in-house training sessions for colleagues. The head would have liked to have allowed him time to go into classrooms to work alongside colleagues but, for the reasons described earlier, this had rarely been possible.

At Darrington (70 pupils) ICT had demanded the greatest changes to the school's curriculum since the head had taken up his post and he stated: *"Things have changed so much in the last two years. Expectations have shifted"*. This was a recurrent theme in heads' comments. There was a feeling that ICT was important, but that it was just one of many subjects which had to be delivered. The resource and training implications were, however, far greater for ICT than for other areas of the curriculum

and heads feared that equipment would date quickly as new products appeared. Some pointed out that their schools had bought several BBC computers in the late 1980s and early 1990s and that these were now virtually redundant. As the head of Barratt put it, *"You just couldn't imagine spending several thousands of pounds on equipment for any other subject only to find it was out of date a few years later"*.

Summary

While heads of small schools were no less confident of their ability to develop ICT, there was concern that their smaller budgets allowed them less freedom to introduce new equipment than their counterparts in larger schools. Whereas large schools such as Turf Moor, Grimston and Borchester were able to create computer suites which allowed whole classes to have ICT lessons, limited funds prevented this from happening in the small schools. This meant that computers tended to be spread around the schools rather than concentrated in one room. While there may be sound educational arguments for such a system, the small schools did not have the luxury of being able to determine how they would manage ICT which was afforded to the large schools. Their inability to appoint ICT specialists, because of a low turnover of staff and the lack of funding for posts of responsibility, was clearly a factor here.

Shared responsibility for curriculum

There was considerable evidence of delegation of curricular responsibilities in most of the schools, but this tended to be more formalised in some of the larger schools, especially where the deputy head was effectively in charge of the curriculum as at Turf Moor (665 pupils) and Borchester (314 pupils). Some of the heads of small schools were reticent about asking staff to take on additional responsibilities because they were unable to reward them financially.

The 1998 survey revealed that there had been a reduction in the number of small school heads who delegated responsibility for curriculum planning since 1995, while medium-sized schools delegated to a greater extent and the vast majority of large

schools continued to delegate. There was also a decline in delegation of responsibility for curriculum organisation in 1998 compared with 1995 for both large and small schools, although large schools were consistently the most likely to delegate in this area (see Tables 7.12 and 7.13).

Most heads who were interviewed felt staff were now more actively involved in planning and designing the curriculum, and there had been a general increase in INSET attendance by staff at all but one of the schools.

Two of the small schools found it difficult to run in-house training, but some heads felt that teachers' attitudes towards colleagues' expertise had changed as the need to deliver an expanded curriculum had made teachers aware that they could not manage to do so without help.

The head of Oakwell (284 pupils) argued that staff were aware of gaps in their subject knowledge and were quite willing to accept that some colleagues had expertise from which they could learn. There was also a greater willingness to go on external courses to find out what others were doing. As the head argued, *"You have to work together now or you are floundering"*. There was, he maintained, no longer room for teachers who stayed in their classrooms and *"did their own thing"*.

All of the teaching staff at Oakwell (284 pupils) had subject responsibilities, with one having responsibility for both ICT and DT. The changes to the curriculum meant that staff had to be much more involved in curriculum development than before ERA.

The head of Newby (61 pupils) found it difficult to justify devolving a great deal of subject responsibility to his staff, since only one was full-time and the others worked for 0.5 and 0.2 of the week respectively. None had a salary increment above main scale, and he did not think he could reasonably ask them to take on three subjects. However, each was nominally responsible for subjects, with the exception of the 0.2

member of staff who, in any case, worked on a supply basis and was not paid during holidays or employed when students were teaching during teaching practices. The head stated:

> *"We tend to take a collegiate approach to the curriculum. People who are nominally responsible for subjects may get a chance to attend courses, but we all accept responsibility for all of the curriculum."*

All teachers at Darrington (70 pupils) had subject responsibilities, including the 0.1 teacher who was responsible for RE. There was supply cover available to enable a rolling programme of staff visiting other classes to look at subject teaching. The whole curriculum was divided among the four staff, as were several other non-curricular areas such as child protection, SEN, and assessment and recording. The head felt that staff had become much more involved in curriculum development since ERA, and in particular since he had taken over from the previous head who had served the school for more than twenty years. Staff at Darrington produced policy documents, advised colleagues, and monitored and assessed children's progress in each subject. The head did not delegate any administrative work to his colleagues, but he did delegate considerable responsibility for curriculum planning and organisation, resource management and pastoral care, and worked with them on school planning:

> *"Staff are involved in a way they'd never be involved in a large school. They are all part of the senior management team here just as only a handful of teachers would be in a big school."*

All of the teaching staff at Kirkby (93 pupils) had subject responsibilities but, although these were formally set out, in practice the staff worked together on all curriculum areas. The head did not think greater rigidity would improve the school's management and enjoyed the greater flexibility which this arrangement allowed. When a subject was to be discussed, one member of staff might take the lead initially, but there would be a shared responsibility for curriculum development. The head was very keen to discuss all aspects of the curriculum with his staff and felt that *"the sum was greater than the individual parts"*. He did not think that teachers had become more actively

involved in the curriculum since ERA and maintained that some schools had been more dynamic twenty years ago. He cited LEA initiatives in which he had been involved as examples of the extent of teachers' past involvement.

All of the teaching staff at Charlton (135 pupils) had subject responsibilities, but in practice the head provided leadership when subjects were being discussed and planning was being done. He felt that in-house curriculum discussions were never as effective if he did not take the lead, and conceded that he found it difficult to delegate curricular responsibilities to staff. Two of his colleagues were part-time and one was recently qualified, and he thought it would be unfair to expect them to devote a great deal of time to subject management. The head involved staff in a *"co-operative approach"* to curriculum organisation and planning, as well as to school planning, management of resources and pastoral care. However, he conceded that his expectations were high and that he ended up doing most of it himself because he was *"never really satisfied when other people assumed responsibilities"*. The school's special needs co-ordinator seemed to be delegated greater responsibility for this area than she or any colleagues experienced in any other aspect of school life, and the head regarded her as *"an excellent co-ordinator"*. In the absence of a deputy head, he delegated considerable responsibility for administration to his secretary and tended *"to rubber stamp"* what she did rather than involving himself heavily.

At St.Kevin's (168 pupils) all teachers had subject responsibilities, but these tended to be nominal, and the head maintained that all curriculum areas were planned collectively by the whole staff. She had been criticised by Ofsted for this approach because the inspectors had *"wanted to see subject specialists leading the staff"*. She thought that this might work in a larger school, but that it was inappropriate in a school with seven class teachers and a head.

Delegation of responsibilities for areas other than the curriculum was limited at Borchester (314 pupils), but the deputy head shared responsibilities with the head. The

head maintained that he operated *"a flatarchy"* with his deputy as an equal partner who was kept informed of, and shared in, all developments. This approach had been criticised by the registered inspector during the Ofsted inspection, but the head felt that it was very effective and meant that, when he had been absent through ill health for four months, the deputy had been able to take over with ease. The head constantly emphasised the value of his deputy headteacher and regarded her role as vital in the school's development.

The only administrative duties which the head of Turf Moor (665 pupils) delegated to staff were those which were *"directly related to the classroom"*. The deputy head was the school's curriculum co-ordinator and oversaw curriculum developments. There were also year co-ordinators who had budgets based upon pupil numbers, and subject co-ordinators who were given a financial allocation. All subject co-ordinators contributed to the three-year school development plan and all other staff had the opportunity to have an input before the head and deputy looked at it and refined it.

Summary

It is clear that the extent to which heads delegated responsibilities for the curriculum was partly affected by the availability of staff, and that, in this sense, large schools had a distinct advantage over small ones. It was noticeable, too, that some heads of smaller schools expressed a reluctance to add to their teachers' workloads and retained many of the responsibilities themselves. However, the nature of the small school, with its mixed age classes which have no parallel groupings, may be an important factor in determining the way in which curricular responsibilities are assigned. There was a feeling among some of the heads of small schools that teachers became 'experts' in each aspect of the curriculum for the age groups which they usually taught. Teachers were regarded very much as teachers of, say, infants or lower juniors or upper juniors and tended to retain the same age groups year after year. There was not, then, the same impetus to undertake curricular responsibilities for the whole school that existed in large schools with parallel classes in which teachers had peers working with similarly-aged children. This is not to say that the small schools did not share curricular

expertise or have teachers who were named as having responsibilities. Indeed, Darrington was particularly strong in this area. However, the other small schools did not appear to operate with subject co-ordinators in the way that larger schools such as Grimston, Oakwell, Milburn and Turf Moor were able to. All six of the larger schools had deputy headteachers while the six smaller schools did not. This may be a significant factor in determining the extent to which heads are able to delegate responsibility for curricular matters.

THE EFFECTS OF SCHOOL SIZE

The heads were asked to comment upon what effect they felt schools' sizes had upon the way in which they were able to manage educational change. All of the heads had experience of working in large schools and only the heads of St Kevin's, Borchester and Turf Moor had never worked in a small school. The head of Charlton (135 pupils) had experience of leading his school when it had fewer that 100 pupils on roll.

In order to draw distinctions between large and small schools, the heads' views are set out under two headings: *On Being Large* and *On Being Small.* An interesting feature of the small school heads' comments is the fact that, despite conceding that they had some problems associated with working in small schools, they tended to feel that small schools had attributes which could not be matched by larger schools. The heads of large schools generally felt that their schools' sizes conferred advantages in terms of organisation and delegation to manage educational changes. However, the head of Milburn's comments at the end of the section indicate that he perceived advantages for small schools in this area too.

On Being Large

The head of Grimston (234 pupils), who had previously been head of a small school for ten years, felt that his school's size had helped considerably in facilitating educational change.

"If there's an optimum size, we're it. We're small enough for me to know everyone and everything that's going on, but large enough for me to delegate responsibility for all subjects. If we were any bigger I think we'd lose something. I know all the parents and children by name. It's a strength of the school. If we were any smaller it would mean doubling up on duties. In the larger schools teachers tend to go to fewer curriculum meetings. About 250 on roll is about right."

The head of Turf Moor, the 665-pupil school, suggested that the turnover in staff, which was more likely in a large school than a smaller one because of the sheer number of teachers, had enabled him to bring people in who were flexible and who contributed to the school's success. He also argued that the departure of one or two staff in a small school could have much more dramatic effects than in a larger one. The head maintained that he ran his school in a similar way to that in which many secondary schools were run. The school's size meant that it had more in common with secondary schools than smaller primaries in the management structures which were deployed. He felt that the school's size was an advantage when implementing educational change because there was *"flexibility in knowledge and know-how"* and *"there was usually someone with good subject knowledge"*. This had been particularly true of science and two teachers had contributed greatly to raising standards in the subject to such an extent that 95% of Y6 pupils had achieved level 4 or above in the previous year's SATs. The school's size had made it possible to *"streamline its organisation"* since the head had taken up his post, and there was a senior management team of three (head, deputy and one senior teacher) and each key stage had a co-ordinator. Several teachers had incremental salary points and many had experienced a change in their responsibilities.

The head of Milburn (323 pupils), who had been headteacher of a small school in his previous post, considered that there were both advantages and disadvantages to each when it came to managing educational changes.

"Being bigger, it's better with eleven or twelve members of staff, one for each curriculum area and RE, and nobody carrying too many responsibilities."

However, he pointed out that a larger staff had a diversity of opinions and variations in levels of ability to adapt to change.

> *"It's easier to effect change with a smaller number of people, but with a very small staff you've got to initiate all the change yourself. With a bigger staff you can bring people in to initiate change for you...I've had nothing to do with the literacy hour at all. The deputy has done it all. At my previous school I'd have had to do it all. If there're only three of you, you do it all together. It's noticeable that with the literacy hour it's the small schools that have got it going first* [cluster meetings had revealed this]."

The head went on to say that it was easier to initiate and handle change in a smaller school, but the same people had to be responsible for all aspects of change. In a larger school more formal processes were needed to ensure that everyone was aware of what was happening. Communication was more difficult in a larger school. Meetings had to be convened in order to get all of the staff together, whereas arrangements were less formal in smaller schools.

Borchester's (314 pupils) central management team gave the school attributes in common with smaller schools, in that considerable responsibility fell to a small number of people. However, unlike in a small school, the central team did not also have to put the policies into practice in the classroom.

On Being Small

The head of Oakwell (284 pupils) felt that small schools experienced particular difficulties in managing educational changes:

> *"I don't know how a school with 2 or 3 teachers copes with some of the changes. I'm in awe of them for even attempting to."*

There were, however, some advantages to being a small school when managing educational change, according to the head of Loxley (64 pupils). It was *"easier to influence 2 or 3 staff positively, directly and quickly than a dozen"*. Despite the pressures of work. there were some advantages to being a teaching head since this gave credibility and made the staff see that the head, like them, had difficult things to do.

This created a sense of common purpose and unity when changes had to be made. He went on to state that *"you tend to blank the disadvantages from your mind because you don't have time to reflect"*.

A particular challenge for the small schools was differentiation, although the head of Loxley pointed out that, while *"the poles might be further apart in a mixed age and mixed ability class"*, there were advantages for younger bright pupils who could work with older pupils at a more advanced level. He concluded: *"It's the extremes that are the problem"*.

Among the advantages conferred by being a small school, the head of Darrington (70 pupils) cited the speed with which change could be implemented.

> *"In the large schools I worked in you set up sub-committees and they reported back. Here it's very quick, but difficult because of limited resources."*

He went on to extol what he considered to be the virtues of small primary schools.

> *"Small schools offer a quality of education you don't get in large schools. You know your pupils to an extent that others don't. Teaching quality doesn't suffer. My staff are experts at differentiation and they know the subjects well. We might be more expensive, but we provide better quality."*

Small schools tended to have flexible arrangements for management structures and some heads referred to their entire staff being equivalent to a senior management team in a larger school. There was, however, as stated earlier, a reticence about delegating in some cases because of the absence of salary increments in small schools.

The head of Newby (61 pupils) delegated some responsibility for curricular areas and resource management and pastoral care to his staff, but dealt with administration himself with the help of his secretary. There was no deputy head or teacher with a post of responsibility, so when he was absent from the school he handed over responsibility for the school to *"whoever I see first"*. He had used school funds to buy a mobile

phone (*"It'll go when we can't afford it any more"*) which he took with him to meetings in case a crisis occurred at school in his absence. The mobile phone was also used by teachers when taking children to the village hall for PE, as there was no public telephone nearby. He did not keep the phone in the classroom when teaching, but did receive some visitors when teaching. Such expedients were typical of the heads of small schools in the study.

The head of Newby also asserted the virtues of small schools:

> *"You can develop a nice atmosphere. You know all the children socially, although I don't know them educationally as well as I should. Every point of contact with colleagues is a staff meeting. You can establish where you want to go and you only have to implement things for one person, not for a phase, so you can move more quickly."*

The head of Kirkby (93 pupils), too, felt that the school's size made it easier to respond to educational change and to create staff unity and awareness: *"It's easier to get four people working together than sixteen"*. He said that he had come to the school, having only previously experienced working in large schools with elaborate management structures which he had expected to introduce at Kirkby, but that he had quickly dispensed with these.

Barratt's head (96 pupils) also felt that there were distinct advantages for the small school in managing educational changes.

> *"Change is quicker in a small school. There are fewer people to be affected. The people who make a decision are the ones who implement it. I've noticed that as we've increased in size my role as a manager has increased."*

Heads of small schools tended to emphasise the importance of having experienced staff in such schools. The head of Darrington (70 pupils) stressed the value of having mature people to accept responsibility for the school when he was absent.

"If I'm out you have to have an acting head who gets no money or glory. Money hasn't been a factor when appointing staff but the bottom line is, it would be if we were stuck financially."

This was a point made by all of the heads of small schools who each stated, without prompting, that experience was a major consideration when appointing teachers and that small schools were not suitable places for newly qualified teachers to work•.

The head of St Kevin's, who regarded her 168-pupil school as *"small"*, argued that the school's size meant that it did not have a sufficiently large budget to enable her *"to be creative"* in spending money. She did not have sufficient funds to be able to instigate initiatives which *"could effectively transform a whole area of the school or the curriculum"*, because large sums were never available as she felt they would be in larger schools.

Summary

The headteachers' comments suggest that there are both advantages and disadvantages for schools of being large or small. Although the head of Grimston (234 pupils) felt his school was an optimum size, the head of Turf Moor felt that his school had become too large. Oakwell was based upon two sites and this meant, according to the head, that in some ways it operated as two schools. This conferred upon each some of the advantages which he felt small schools enjoyed *("teachers knowing all the children in their care", "small groups of teachers working closely together")*. However, it caused problems for managing the whole school because interest groups were formed. This was a problem which large school heads alluded to on several occasions and many saw a major element of their role as being to unite the factions, units and phase groups within their schools.

The small schools where heads were interviewed were, according to the heads, harmonious places in which there was a unity of purpose among staff. However, two

• Darrington employed an NQT from September 2000.

heads cited examples of small schools where this was not the case and pointed out that disunity in a small school could be far more serious than in a large school. This was summed up by the head of Charlton (135 pupils):

> *"There's nowhere to hide in a small school, if you don't get on with a colleague. In a big school, you can avoid people you don't want to see."*

The heads of the smaller schools tended to maintain that they did not have sufficient time to manage their schools properly, given their heavy teaching loads. The head of Newby (61 pupils) said that he had thought about his role a great deal and had concluded: *"When I grow up I want to be a headteacher"*. He did not think that he was a headteacher at the moment, but rather *"a class teacher and an administrator"*. He had no time to work with his staff as he thought he would have in a larger school: *"I don't think you are a headteacher in a small school"*.

However, while the heads of small schools tended to be envious of some of the features of large schools such as resourcing, they were also keen to extol the virtues of small schools. None expressed a desire to move to a larger school for promotion, although the head of Darrington did not rule this out in the future.

HEADTEACHERS' MAIN CONCERNS IN 1998

It was clear from the interviews that experienced headteachers are positive about many elements of educational reform and have made great efforts to implement changes effectively. Heads tend to be less enthusiastic about the manner in which changes have been imposed and what they perceive to be successive governments' negative attitudes towards the teaching profession. Some of the heads said that they had suffered from stress and illness and many reported a lack of enjoyment of their jobs.

The head of Milburn's (323 pupils) main concerns at the time of the interview were, he felt, similar to those of other heads. He reported that at a recent meeting of about fifty headteachers they had been asked to itemise their major concerns. *"Without*

exception" heads had cited literacy, numeracy and ICT. There were problems concerning resources and managing the curriculum changes which would be necessary to implement the literacy and numeracy strategies.

Milburn's head was also concerned about *"little local difficulties"* such as managing a new building project without allowing it to disrupt the children's education. He was also worried about getting through the imminent Ofsted inspection *"without any teacher breaking down"*. Ofsted inspections were an area of concern for most of the heads and there were misgivings about the anxiety which these induced among staff.

Another area of concern was the *"bureaucratic over-burdening"* of teachers and the lack of what were felt to be adequate salaries for teachers:

> *"Teachers don't get anything like a decent reward for what they put in. Teachers need a good pay rise to make them feel more sanguine about all the hours they put in."*
>
> (Head of Milburn, 323 pupils)

The head of Borchester's (314 pupils) main concern at the time of the interview was also pay.

> *"It's got to be looked at fairly. I don't think super-heads and super-teachers are the answer. The Government should respect us as a profession. We've done everything they've asked us to do. Kenneth Baker said right at the beginning [of the reforms of the late 1980s] that the 'linchpin is the headteacher', but we've never been rewarded."*

He admitted that he would not choose to be a headteacher now and that he did not find it at all surprising that few teachers applied for posts. When he had applied for his present post, his had been one of 172 applications. A nearby school, with a similar catchment, had received just twelve recently, and some of these had been from *"candidates with no hope of being appointed"*, including one with only one year's teaching experience. The head felt that there were lots of deputy headteachers who no

longer wished to become heads, and he was *"glad that statistics were now showing that people didn't want headships"* and went on to say:

> *"I'm disappointed that, after waiting 18 years for a government which would raise the status of education and of teachers and headteachers, it's so disappointing to find that this lot* [the Labour Government] *are more right wing than the others."*

The view that headship was becoming increasingly unappealing was borne out by the head of Turf Moor (665 pupils) who felt that after appointing twelve new teachers in seven years, it was unlikely that many of the present cohort would move on within the next five years, particularly since the previous Government had made it much harder to retire early. He added: *"No-one realistically wants promotion because of the pressures on heads and deputies, so no-one moves"*.

The head maintained that the most difficult part of his job was *"managing staff and combating entrenched attitudes"*. He admitted that, given the opportunity, he would take early retirement, but would wish to pursue an alternative career. He was *"not discontented"*, but the job had become harder and he felt that he had been at the school for long enough, and that heads lost their effectiveness after around seven years.

The head of St Kevin's (168 pupils) had intended to retire at the end of the current school year, but the previous government had ended the opportunity for heads to take early retirement before the age of sixty. She resented this and felt that the government's motives had been questionable:

> *"I think they could see that there would soon be a crisis in recruiting headteachers. They did everything they could to make the job almost impossible and then they realised that hardly anybody wanted to be a head any more, so they stopped people from retiring early. Now what they've got is lots of heads who are resentful and are staying in the job because they have to and not because they want to."*

The heads of four of the five small schools suggested that it would become increasingly difficult to recruit headteachers, particularly for small schools, because salary levels for small schools' heads were not an incentive and workloads were high.

As the head of Darrington (70 pupils), who had taken a pay cut when moving from the deputy headship of a large school to his present post, put it:

> *"You've really got to want to be a head to do what I did and I think that fewer and fewer people do nowadays. I mean, why swap a deputy headship with a reasonable salary and some responsibility and status for a headship with no financial benefits and lots of stress. That's the way deputies and senior teachers see headship these days and, even though I love this job, I don't blame them."*

However, the head of Kirkby (93 pupils) remained positive about his role, and about the future:

> *"I like the job. I just want to make it so that I can have weekends. We all work longer hours, but for whose benefit? I'm still optimistic about the future. Happiness will come back into schools. New teachers come in with bags of spirit. They'll move things in the right direction."*

Discussion

Headteachers in primary schools of all sizes seem to exhibit a determination to implement educational changes, despite feeling aggrieved at the pace with which these become statutory and a perceived lack of regard for them as professionals. Whatever the strategies which schools employ to manage educational change, it was clear from the interviews and from visits to the schools, as well as from the Ofsted inspections which all had received, that all had implemented changes effectively. Externally imposed changes had been accepted and implemented, even when headteachers had had strong reservations about their value.

There appears to be general agreement that the National Curriculum, even though viewed as badly designed, had benefited schools in that it had increased the breadth of the curriculum and ensured a consistency of provision which had previously been lacking.

LMS was also generally discussed in positive terms, despite feelings that the formula for funding was unfair and ill-conceived. LMS seems to have presented many heads

with a welcome opportunity to manage finances effectively, but some complained about budget cuts and their effects upon staffing and pupil teacher ratios..

The data for the complete sample for the three surveys, presented in Table 7.8, reveals that pupil/teacher ratios worsened statistically significantly over the eight-year period for schools of all sizes, although there was a slight improvement for medium-sized schools between 1995 and 1998. The mean pupil teacher ratio in 1998 for the five small schools in which heads were interviewed was 22.5, and 26.5 for the five large schools. Charlton and St Kevin's, the medium-sized schools, had a mean of 21.8, and the overall mean for the twelve schools was 25.1. Blatchford and Martin (1998) reported that the average primary class in 1996 was 27.5 (26.8 at Key Stage 1) and that average class sizes had risen by 2.1 between 1982 and 1998. The slightly higher figures may be explained partly by the fact that the sample used in this chapter includes a disproportionately large number of small schools, and partly by the fact that the figures for the sample include headteachers, some of whom do not teach classes.

Barratt GM (96 pupils), which opted out of LEA control, appears to have done particularly well financially, although its pupil/teacher ratio had only fallen from 25:1 to 24:1 which, despite being against the trend of most other schools, was still higher than the mean for the other small schools. The head, however, had greater flexibility in his and his governors' management of funds than his colleagues elsewhere and had been able to undertake substantial building projects as the school increased in size.

Despite LEA encouragement, most schools were not involved in strong clusters with other schools. Only three of the twelve heads interviewed belonged to a cluster group which was engaged in joint curriculum planning and development with other schools. The apparent lack of will to become strongly involved in such projects was explained by some heads as being the result of increased competition between schools.

Most schools felt able to deliver most of the curriculum adequately, but ICT was proving problematical for many, particularly because of a lack of equipment and staff expertise. The Literacy Strategy was also an area for concern, with heads of small schools unsure about how to implement it with mixed-age classes, and most heads feeling that it had been introduced without sufficient consultation.

Some heads in small schools devolved considerable responsibility for curriculum planning to colleagues.. However, others were reluctant to impose additional work upon colleagues who could not be rewarded financially. Heads in larger schools tended to have a senior management team and a few other teachers with posts of responsibility, although virtually every teacher seemed to have subject responsibilities. Wallace and Huckman's (1996, p.312) survey revealed that "the notion of team approaches to management has taken a firm hold in the primary sector, in large institutions at least". The survey and subsequent interviews confirm that this approach is being adopted widely, although in small schools the entire staff often work as a 'senior management team', while in larger schools the team tends to be limited to two or three people.

The lack of funding for salary increments for posts of responsibility in small schools meant that many heads were reluctant to delegate responsibilities and this led to some of them feeling overburdened. Several had been ill as a result of stress and some said that, given their time again, they would not have become headteachers.

Despite statutory increases in governors' powers, most heads felt that *they* ran their schools and there were few examples of disputes with governors, who generally seemed to defer to headteachers' professional status in management and curriculum matters.

A major area of concern is the extent to which headteachers are over-burdened, particularly by administrative work, and the image of headship which this is projecting

within the teaching profession. The decline in the number of applicants for headships, described by many of the heads and frequently reported in the media, is likely to have serious implications for the future of primary education. Hillman (1992) discussed the extensive changes which had occurred in the head's role and argued that they had made significant demands upon heads and had meant that it was particularly important that they should be able to manage rapid change. He felt that the extent to which potential heads were identified early in their careers and prepared for a future role was "highly unsatisfactory" (p.481). However, the perception of the headteacher's role in schools of all sizes is increasingly negative and teachers who might, in the past, have expected to progress to headship are increasingly reluctant to do so.

The head of Newby (61 pupils) pointed out that the governors had had lots of applicants for the post of headteacher when he had been appointed, but that there were now few incentives for teachers to apply for small school headships and that he had heard that the average number of applicants for such jobs was now five. He did not feel that small school heads received *"either the money or the time"* to make the post attractive, and he pointed out that his salary was little more than he would receive as a classroom teacher with two salary increments in a large school.

There was considerable disillusionment with the Government at the time of the interviews, and some heads expressed this forcefully. The head of Kirkby (93 pupils), for example, felt strongly that an atmosphere of conflict existed between teachers and the DfEE, and he was particularly disappointed by the Labour Government which had succeeded the Conservatives in 1997.

> *"They've missed an opportunity. After what we'd had before, teachers would have done anything for this government, but the Secretary of State is ignorant of what's happening in schools. Every so often we get a pat on the back (well a pat on the head really, because they're so patronising) but it's always followed by about four boots. We should have been lifted by working together. There are too many buzz words and we've got the Paul Daniels school of thought with the illusion of expected standards."*

A significant factor in making headteachers' workload more manageable seems to be the extent of the secretarial support which they receive. This had increased in all cases and had enabled some heads to turn their attention to aspects of their jobs on which they wished to concentrate. This was particularly evident at Barratt GM where the head had prioritised additional secretarial help in his budget to enable him to devote his energies to the curriculum. Another small GM school which responded to the surveys had also increased secretarial hours significantly (from 10 in 1988 to 30 in 1998).

The research indicates that the demands placed upon headteachers have become such that many expressed discontent and resentment that it was no longer possible to retire before the age of sixty except on health grounds. It would appear that the Government recognised the extent of the problem of recruiting headteachers when it announced that it was accepting the recommendations of the *School Teachers' Salary Review Body* in February 1999. Pay rises for teachers were to be differentiated with increases of 3 to 4 per cent for class teachers, 4 to 6 per cent for secondary heads, and 6 to 9 per cent for primary heads. The increases were a response to a recruitment crisis which led to 28 per cent of primary headship vacancies being re-advertised in September 1998 because of insufficient or inadequate candidates. The biggest beneficiaries of the pay rises were to be the heads of the smallest primary schools because the greatest shortages were in that area. This was a particularly telling innovation by the Government, ten years after the imposition of educational changes which were to set in train many of the factors which would make headship an increasingly unattractive career move.

The interviews, then, provided considerable background information which enabled the researcher to look closely at issues raised by the published research and the quantitative data. The qualitative data revealed some trends which demonstrated differences between small and large schools, but it also showed that there are many similarities. In Chapter Ten, conclusions drawn from quantitative and qualitative data, as well as from published research, will be presented.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

> *"Given that there are so many alleged educational and economic disadvantages involved, it is surprising that so many parents, teachers and local communities actually want to keep their small schools open. But parents are not stupid; they do not fight to ensure their children have a poor education. The fact is that the closure of small schools is now being vehemently challenged because there are powerful arguments for their continuation and enhancement."*
>
> (Rogers, 1979, p.41)

Writing in 1979, Rogers may have had a strong case for endorsing the defence of small schools. The curriculum, apart from Religious Education, was non-statutory; schools were not expected to manage their own budgets except with considerable assistance from LEAs; SATs and Ofsted were years from conception; and the virtual ending of the 11+ examination had left schools with substantial autonomy over what they provided for their pupils.

There was little doubt in 1979, as there was little doubt in 1999, however, that small schools were, in simplistic terms, less economical to run than larger schools, and this, above all else, had led to hundreds of closures since the Second World War.

Ten years after Rogers' publication, the question of small schools' viability was being raised in a quite different educational climate. A prescribed statutory curriculum had been imposed, and small schools would soon be expected to manage their own budgets under the LMS scheme.

This thesis has sought to examine how schools of different sizes have responded to educational change. In 1990, when work began, primary schools of all sizes might be said to have reached a crossroads. Their cultures, which were diverse and reflected the autonomy which both heads and teachers had hitherto been afforded, were threatened by the changes to their curricula and management brought about by the 1988 Education Reform Act. However, if large schools felt that their *modus operandi* were under threat,

small schools also had to face up to change while having their continued existence threatened. It seemed that small schools might have serious deficiencies as they came to terms with what was arguably the most significant piece of educational legislation since 1944. Galton and Patrick (1990, p.178) had cautioned:

> "Unless small schools are seen to be pro-active in their response to the National Curriculum then pressure for further closures from central government is likely to grow."

As the demands which the ERA would place upon schools became evident, there was considerable concern (see, for example, Alexander et al, 1992) that small schools would not be able to meet them. Governmental attempts to cut public spending, allied to reports which demonstrated that there were surplus places in schools (Audit Commission, 1990), added to the fears of advocates of small primary schools that closures would soon follow. That this has not been the case to any great extent is due to a number of factors, not least of which, cynics might argue, is the fact that small schools tend to be situated in rural areas which were predominantly Conservative constituencies between 1979 and 1997. The landslide victory of New Labour in 1997 meant that some of these rural areas changed their political colour. It will be interesting to see if they retain their small schools, as politicians avoid upsetting those who put them into Westminster.

However, small schools' survival in the face of educational change and concern about their abilities to implement it, is not solely due to political pragmatism. Research described in previous chapters (for example, Webb, 1993; Somekh, 1995; Hargreaves, L et al, 1996; Ofsted, 1997; Ofsted, 1998; Richards, 1998; Galton et al 1998) has shown that small schools have often been more successful than larger schools in implementing educational changes.

In this chapter, the research questions identified in this thesis will be discussed in the light of the findings described in earlier chapters. Finally, recommendations will be made for

measures which might enable small schools to maximise their advantages while compensating for their disadvantages.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To what extent have the externally imposed reforms changed the role of the head? Does school size affect this? How have heads of different sized schools responded to educational change?

The 1988 Education Reform Act and other changes made by central government have had a profound effect upon schools in England and Wales and, as a result, the headteacher's role has been redefined. Grace (1995) described the 1988 Act, and the powers which it gave to government over curriculum and assessment, as having nullified a process which had seen heads and teachers gaining greater professional autonomy (see Chapter Eight).

Pollard et al (1994) discovered, from surveys in 1990 and 1992, that heads felt that their autonomy had decreased, particularly with the introduction of LMS. This represents an interesting conclusion, given the views expressed by some heads in Chapter Nine that they had, in fact, acquired greater powers through their abilities to manage budgets, and through the managerial authority which some claimed to have acquired as a result of curriculum changes. Indeed, Bush (1999) claimed that self-management, whatever its merits, has transformed the roles of principals, heads and senior staff who now have responsibility for many aspects of school life which were formerly the preserve of LEAs.

A significant effect of the head's changing role has been a change in relationships between some heads and their staffs. The need for heads to act as agents to ensure that externally imposed changes were implemented may have led to an increase in their powers in relation to class teachers. The latter, having lost considerable autonomy over the syllabus, were faced with having to implement statutory changes at the direction of the headteacher. Although there may have been some resentment about this on the part of class teachers (see headteachers' comments in Chapter Nine), some heads found that their position as a director of change gave them added authority and lent weight to their attempts to impose structures which had previously been resisted (see, for example, the comments in Chapter Nine by the head of Borchester).

The freedoms, which some teachers had experienced before 1988, to deliver a syllabus virtually of their own choosing, while perhaps paying only lip service to school policies and loosely defined government suggestions, were severely diminished by the introduction of the National Curriculum and by subsequent testing arrangements. Although it has been suggested that many teachers simply 'bolted-on' the new curriculum to the old (Sammons et al, 1994; Galton et al, 1999), a degree of accountability was imposed by the publication of test scores and reports on Ofsted inspections, and heads were given the impetus to exert a greater influence over what happened in the classroom. Some of the heads interviewed as part of the present study (see Chapter Nine) welcomed the opportunity which this provided to introduce hierarchies and to delegate. Some, who had been in post before 1988, also regretted that their initial attempts to manage curricular change had lacked the impetus which the demands of the 1988 Act had afforded them. Paradoxically, then, the increased influence of government over many aspects of school life, which constrained headteachers' independence in determining the syllabus, may have increased their influence over the ways in which schools were run. This view is supported by research by Webb and Vulliamy (1996a) which found that there was a breaking down of the culture of individualism within schools and some increase in co-operation, but that there were other, equally strong, forces which were undermining collegiality and promoting "directive management styles" (p.159) by headteachers.

Ultimately, the changes to the head's role were recognised by government and national qualifications were introduced. Ironically, the impetus to have a well-qualified force of headteachers, capable of managing schools effectively, came at the same time as a decline in the number of applications for headships, with the result that the qualifications could not be made a requirement for new headteachers. Bush (1998) examined the potential value of the Teacher Training Agency's National Professional Qualification for Headship, which was introduced in response to the growing demands placed upon headteachers as a result of legislation in the late 1980s and 1990s. While suggesting some amendments which might prove beneficial to the programme, he

maintained that this was an important initiative which would "provide the rigour necessary to ensure that the next generation of headteachers is well equipped to lead our schools in the twenty first century" (p.332). Evans (op cit.) maintains that such courses have tended to recommend the introduction of senior management teams "as an organizational strategy to help headteachers cope better with their jobs" and that:

> "As a result, senior management teams, which were, before 1988, almost exclusively confined to the secondary sector, are now a widely accepted feature of primary schools." (p.417)

It was shown in Chapter Nine that, in large schools, many heads have introduced senior management teams and have made elaborate arrangements for teachers to assume responsibilities for areas of the curriculum which they were then expected to develop with and for colleagues. In smaller schools, where headteachers have extensive class teaching responsibilities and smaller staffs, structures have generally been different. In some, class teachers appear to have retained some of the autonomy which colleagues in larger schools may have lost following the 1988 Act. For example, in a two-teacher school, where the head may be responsible for all of Key Stage 2 and his colleague for all of Key Stage 1, there may be little point in asking one teacher to develop an area of the curriculum for the whole school. Wilson and McPake (2000) found in their research in small Scottish schools that heads tended to see themselves as part of the teaching team rather than adopting the managerial strategies of many large school heads. The present research illustrates the extremes of managerial approaches in the contrast between the directive styles of the heads of, for example, Grimston (234 pupils) and Borchester (314 pupils), and the head of Kirkby (93 pupils) who was pleased that Ofsted could not readily identify who was headteacher during an inspection. Some teachers in small schools have, therefore, been allowed to continue

to have considerable autonomy over the design of the curriculum for their classes, within the constraints of the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum.

The status of the class teacher has been further changed vis a vis the headteacher, as pay rises have been differentiated to favour heads. In particular, the heads of the smallest schools have received increases of almost three times those of class teachers (Public sector Pay Settlement, 1999). These increases represent a greater divide in small than large schools, since teachers in the former are less likely to have incremental posts, making the salary differentials wider. This may have implications for heads' abilities to delegate responsibilities to them.

In Chapter Seven, it was shown that in 1990 the vast majority of headteachers reported that their administrative workload had increased greatly since ERA. There was some dissatisfaction with the effects that this had had upon heads' abilities to focus on those aspects of their work which they valued, and Hellawell's (1991) research concluded that heads generally did not wish to expand their administrative and managerial roles at the expense of their teaching. This view is borne out by some of the interviews and headteachers' comments in survey responses, in which many heads regretted that they could neither teach as much as they would have liked, nor devote as much energy to their teaching as they wished.

The role of the headteacher in English and Welsh primary schools, which had evolved over many years, changed significantly as statutory changes to the curriculum and financial management were introduced. This led to a conflict of interests for many heads of small schools, as they tried to redefine their role from being the "leading professional" to being the manager of the school with an increased administrative burden. Dunning (1993) suggested that the role was markedly different in the 1990s from what it had been less than a decade earlier. Some heads who were in post before 1988 described their

present roles as being almost unrecognisable compared with when they took up their posts. Hill (1994) maintained that, "Many perceived the increased power of central government, governing bodies and parents as involving a reduction in their autonomy" (p.233), and argued that primary headship might, in future, attract people who derived job satisfaction from areas of their work other than teaching. This may, of course, limit the number of potential candidates for leadership. Indeed, James and Whiting (1998) looked at factors influencing people's decisions to seek headship and argued that "the notion that there is a large pool of potential heads out there who have the capacity to assume headship and who will, of course, choose to do so in sufficient numbers is unsustainable" (p.12).

Serious problems of recruitment for heads of all schools, but especially small schools because of a lack of financial incentives, allied to a growing perception that the job is difficult, may have a profound effect upon the future of some primary schools. It would be ironic if, despite pressure from parents and from campaigning groups such as the *National Association for Small Schools*, some small schools were to be threatened with closure because of a lack of suitable applications for their headships. There is evidence that this is already happening in some areas, including three of the LEAs which formed part of the former Humberside.

The headteacher in the small school, although he or she has fewer pupils and parents to deal with than the head of a large school, is still faced with a considerable administrative burden. This burden grew for all heads as a direct result of the Education Reform Act, with its requirements to change the curriculum and to manage finances at school level to a much greater extent than before (see Chapter Seven). The additional workload was recognised by many LEAs and extra clerical support was provided. However, although the surveys for the present research (Table 7.3) revealed that the number of hours of secretarial assistance had increased for schools of all sizes between 1990 and 1998, smaller schools received a smaller increase than larger schools, despite having headteachers who taught for a significantly greater part of the school week than their large school colleagues. The example of a small grant maintained school, Barratt, in which the

number of secretarial hours had been significantly increased from ten in 1988 to 38 in 1998 and the secretary's status and role enhanced, suggests that workloads of heads of small schools could be lightened considerably if this were to become the norm. It is worth pointing out that secretarial time costs considerably less than headteacher time, and that it would seem a more profitable use of trained educators' time that they deploy their energies in developing the curriculum and supporting colleagues, rather than in administration.

The extent of the increase in headteachers' workloads is illustrated by the survey findings (Tables 7.4-7.6) which revealed that around 88% took administrative work home daily or on most days in each of 1995 and 1998, compared with just under 79% in 1990. Although no differences were revealed between heads of small and large schools, it may be that, whereas some heads of large schools may take work home because they choose to teach during the school day, this is not an option available to heads of small schools. The teaching commitment in small schools is part of the head's expected role when appointed.

In Chapter Seven the question was posed: *Can one view heads of small and large schools as performing the same roles?* The research indicates that in some ways one cannot, given the difference in teaching responsibilities and opportunities for managing and directing staff during the school day. In a large school the head is able to make decisions about priorities during the teaching day, while in a small school, where the head has a class to teach, there is less flexibility to be able to do this. The small school head's management style may, therefore, be described as *situational* (Wilson and McPake, op cit.) in that it is largely based upon context and responding to situations; whereas in a larger school, where the head may not have a heavy teaching load to occupy her during the school day, there may be more opportunities to develop a managerial philosophy and to set up and monitor organisational systems. Nevertheless, in both small and large schools, it is headteachers who have taken the lead in implementing educational changes, and in this respect there are similarities between the roles of teaching and non-teaching heads. The job which has to be done and the objectives which must, often statutorily, be

achieved are essentially similar, but it is the means of, and time available for, doing it which differ.

How have teachers been affected by educational change?

It was seen in Chapter Four that statutory changes to the curriculum and to teachers' conditions of service were imposed upon teachers with little consultation, and that this had implications for their professional autonomy. The 'discourse of derision' (Bell, 1990) which ministers and their allies in the media created helped to develop a public perception that teachers were failing their pupils. Teachers have been made more accountable for their work through the introduction of SATs, Ofsted inspections and appraisal, and will soon have to contend with the introduction of performance related pay structures. These measures reflect a lack of governmental trust in teachers and indicate their negative attitude towards the profession (Hargreaves, A, 1994).

At a time when teachers were being subjected to considerable criticism (see Galton et al, 1999), they also had to broaden the subject base of the curriculum and meet demands of the National Curriculum for study in areas such as science, technology and information technology, well in advance of what was attempted in most schools before 1988. This led to schools placing greater emphasis upon the development of subject specialist teachers. Such teachers may, especially in large schools, teach their subjects to several different classes, but more commonly they will act as curriculum leaders to help and advise colleagues.

The 1995 and 1998 surveys showed that virtually all schools had teachers with subject responsibilities, but in 1990 many small schools did not. It was clear from the interviews (Chapter Nine) that all small schools had people who were, nominally at least, responsible for subjects. However, while one might question the depth of subject knowledge which might be available where one teacher is responsible for perhaps five subjects, as is the case in some small schools, Ofsted (1999) praised small schools' use of subject expertise stating:

> "There is no evidence to suggest that pupils in small schools are disadvantaged because their teachers lack sufficient subject knowledge, understanding and skills to teach the required broad curriculum with appropriate academic challenge." (9.3)

The report went on to cite the 1997 HMI report which it summarised thus:

> "Indeed, in a recent survey by HMI some of the best examples of the successful use of subject specialists were found in small schools, reinforcing the view that small schools work hard to ensure that their pupils have access to adequate expertise to teach the full range of skills, knowledge and understanding required by each subject." (9.3)

Teachers' subject expertise was challenged by the introduction of the National Curriculum and has been further challenged by the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. It would seem logical to argue that small schools, with small staffs, would experience greater difficulty in finding expertise in a broad span of subjects. The presence of a wide range of expertise among the staff of a large school has often been cited as giving the school a better chance of implementing change effectively than its smaller counterparts. However, Ofsted inspections (Ofsted, 1997; 1998) and research by Hargreaves et al. (1996) and Richards (1998) suggest that small schools seem able to provide broad curricula, and that many have been creative in their approaches to finding subject specialists in clusters and even in the local community (see Chapter Eight).

The present author's surveys revealed that after an increase in the incidence of teachers being delegated some responsibility for organising the curriculum between 1990 and 1995, this actually decreased between 1995 and 1998 in both large and small schools. A similar trend was found for delegation of responsibility for curriculum planning in small schools over the same period. Indeed, the heads of small schools delegated less than their colleagues in large and medium-sized schools in other areas such as school management and management of resources in 1998, and less than colleagues in large schools for pastoral care. Some of the heads of small schools who were interviewed claimed to feel guilty about asking teachers, who had no additional salary increments, to take on extra work. It is possible that the increased salary differentials between small school heads and their staffs which resulted from the 1999 pay settlement will make heads even more

reticent about delegation, and it is quite possible that some teachers will be equally reticent about accepting additional responsibilities. The absence of the position of deputy headteacher in smaller schools is significant here, and it was clear from the interviews that heads of the larger schools devolved considerable responsibility to deputies; an option not available to any of the six smaller schools.

Most of the heads who were interviewed felt that attendance at in-service training by staff had increased since ERA. However, much of the INSET in some schools took place in-house and was often provided by members of staff. Some small schools found this difficult and some combined with other schools for in-service work or sought outside help. The expense of paying for outsiders to come into schools and lead courses was a problem for small schools with limited budgets, and some had mitigated the problem by holding joint INSET courses with other schools. However, there was evidence that, where such training also involved large schools, some small school heads felt that their needs and those of their staffs were not best served.

Some heads felt that it was difficult to run courses for one, two or three other people and that a different approach was needed, while others did not feel that teachers from different key stages could be of much use to each other where subject expertise was concerned. The need for in-service training which is specific to the needs of small schools was highlighted by Galton and Patrick in 1990.

> "...local authorities who intend to maintain their small schools need to address themselves to the problem of evaluation and careful monitoring of resources, and to institute special in-service arrangements to maximise the advantages which small schools enjoy, as well as seeking to overcome their apparent disadvantages." (p.179)

The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has added impetus to this need, yet small schools in the former Humberside area now have less support than before NLS and NNS, the LEA having abolished the post of seconded *Advisory Teacher for Small Schools* before reorganisation. The year-group-related nature of the programmes of study for the strategies shows scant regard for the problems of teachers of

mixed-age classes, and the guidelines for such teachers are at best minimalist. It may be that, having shown that they can manage curricular change as effectively as large schools, small schools will find delivering the strategies a more difficult challenge. This was clearly the view of some of the small school heads interviewed, even though the head of a large school argued that small schools were in the vanguard of implementation in his area (see Chapter Nine).

The surveys, conducted as part of the current research, showed that schools of different sizes had generally similar levels of confidence about teaching all National Curriculum subjects in all three years. Although there was no statistical significance, small schools actually seemed more confident than others about some of those subjects which many had feared would present them with problems. The interviews revealed concern about a lack of resources for Physical Education and Information Communication Technology, but heads of small schools did not generally feel that their schools could not deliver the curriculum in any subjects. This finding is similar to that of the INCSS research (see Hargreaves et al, 1996) which found that teachers in small schools were generally as confident as, or even more confident than, colleagues in larger school about their ability to deliver the National Curriculum. Given the concerns which were raised about small schools by some of those researchers cited in Chapters One, Two and Three, it is worth considering why such a finding has emerged. Five explanations seem plausible:

1. The surveys and the interviews focused on headteachers' opinions. Given that the respondents in smaller schools were teaching heads with considerable experience of delivering broad curricula, as well as responsibility for teaching large proportions of their schools, it would seem likely that they would feel more confident about meeting statutory curricular requirements than non-teaching heads.
2. Heads of larger schools, who would be considerably less likely to be class teachers (see Table 7.2), might be more divorced from what was happening in classrooms and, with less influence over pedagogy than their small school colleagues whose influence was direct, be no more confident that their staffs were able to deliver the curriculum.

Burgess et al (1994) found that heads in larger schools, with few teaching commitments, lacked credibility as curriculum leaders and tended to delegate curricular responsibility, while teaching heads were knowledgeable about the curriculum and had sufficient credibility to be able to influence colleagues' practice.

3. Teachers in small schools tend to be slightly older than those in larger schools and presumably have correspondingly greater classroom experience and understanding of the curriculum.
4. In small schools, where they tend to teach the older pupils, heads would be familiar with the progress made by younger pupils working with colleagues, as these children transferred into the heads' classes. Thus, although they may not have time to monitor colleagues' teaching directly because of their own teaching commitments, heads in small schools are able to see the results of colleagues' teaching when they inherit their pupils. This should enable them to provide feedback to colleagues and to ensure that the curriculum is covered adequately.
5. Heads will also have the opportunity to remedy any deficiencies in children's learning across the curriculum within their own classes. Hence, small school heads may not only feel confident about their ability to deliver the curriculum, but their confidence may also be based upon superior evidence to that available to non-teaching heads.

In Chapter Six, attention was drawn to the SCENE Report's (1991) suggestion that small schools might have been argued to have been relatively successful before ERA because larger schools failed to make use of their inherent advantages. SATs scores seem to suggest that this continues to be so, with small schools often outperforming larger ones. Small schools consistently appeared at or near the top of the performance league tables for SATs at Key Stage 2 in all three years in which these were published. However, there were many examples of large fluctuations in the performance of small schools caused by the effects of a small number of children who did not reach level 4. Such fluctuations are

much more common in small than in large schools, because of the effect which two or three children can have on the overall results (see Chapter Six).

It would seem that teachers in large and small schools have lost some autonomy over what they teach and, latterly, how they teach. However, in small schools the head's role as a class teacher may mean that all staff are part of a team in which each member, partly by virtue of the fact that everyone teaches a different age group, has some autonomy over his or her work. The managerial and directive styles of heads in many large schools may render teachers in such schools less autonomous and, perhaps, less involved in decision-making, despite being part of organisational structures which are often more formalised than in small schools.

To what extent are collaborative structures set up by schools of different sizes when they attempt to implement change? Which factors encourage or inhibit collaboration?

One of the implications of the ERA for small schools was that they were expected to be less able to deliver educational changes, because they lacked the same facilities and personnel that were found in larger schools (Galton and Patrick, 1990; Alexander et al, 1992). Clustering arrangements seemed a logical solution, and many LEAs encouraged small schools to collaborate to share planning and even staff. As Williams (in Craig, I 1987, p.249) argued:

> "To remain educationally viable small schools must use their own strengths, identify their own needs and be willing to share their expertise."

Clusters formed by heads who had well-established relationships seemed to flourish; a point stressed by those who were interviewed. Some of the collaborative arrangements which were discovered were only loosely geographically based, and relied more upon the coming together of a group of headteachers who felt that they could work together for the mutual benefit of their schools. Given the element of competition described in Chapter Nine, this may be a fruitful approach to future clustering arrangements. It may also be more productive than some of the *contrived* clusters (Hargreaves, A, 1994) which were

encouraged by the LEAs, but which have subsequently foundered. As Last (1993, p.11), headteacher of a small school in Oxfordshire, argued:

> "...it is not so much financial commitment that is the cement of clustering, rather it is mutuality expressed in terms of personal and professional commitment to the idea of widening the boundaries of the school."

Where such commitment existed, especially at Darrington, Charlton and Turf Moor, clusters were successful and active. However, some heads showed a growing introspection and were sceptical about the future of co-operation with other schools. Smaller clusters were often more effective, with larger groups of feeder schools to some secondaries being too unwieldy for close co-operation, but often successful for sharing INSET.

Only one of the schools in which a head was interviewed enjoyed a successful and close partnership which included a secondary school. There was a feeling among some others that common interests were not strong where schools were diverse. However, there were benefits to children transferring from small schools with few peers from meeting others from feeder schools at sports and social events. Long before the ERA, Davies (1975) suggested that links between primary and secondary schools would be beneficial to both parties. Facilities belonging to the larger institutions could be used by the smaller ones and secondary school staff, representing a wide range of school subjects, could act as specialist advisers to the local primary schools. Secondary teachers could benefit by visiting schools and becoming familiar with their methods, and getting to know and be known by the children. Many of the schools which were surveyed had made use of secondary schools for assistance with in-service training and curriculum development, but these links had declined in many cases between 1995 and 1998, after growing between 1990 and 1995. This was part of a general, though not statistically significant, trend towards many schools becoming less involved with other schools after 1995.

The clustering arrangements discussed in this thesis vary considerably in their nature and, while some schools participated in well-established and active clusters, none had

yet reached the most advanced levels of clustering identified by Huckman (1998) or by the INCSS project (see Hargreaves, L in Bridges and Husbands, 1996). Those schools which were strongly involved in clusters seemed to derive great benefits from them. In two clusters there were joint appointments: in one for a science co-ordinator, and in another for an administrator. Galton and Patrick proposed in 1990 that clusters might be funded by LEAs to provide an additional teacher, who could allow one of the heads in the cluster to be relieved of teaching duties completely to act as overall manager for all the schools. The danger of such an arrangement is that schools may feel that they lose autonomy and individuality. However, Galton and Patrick suggested that the role of cluster manager could rotate so that heads took it in turns to assume the role. While none of the schools where heads were interviewed were involved in such arrangements, there was an example of heads taking turns to chair cluster groups in Darrington's cluster, which also paid for a teacher to work throughout the cluster on a part-time basis. Back in 1990 the Audit Commission had stated that "Current practice indicates that clustering is at best an incomplete alternative", but maintained that curriculum provision could be enhanced if appointments were made directly to clusters rather than to individual schools:

> "If co-operation between schools is to make a favourable impact on the organisational disadvantages of small schools, it will have to be extended by schools voluntarily giving up some of their autonomy for the good of the cluster. Most importantly this will have to affect teacher staffing. Schools within clusters will need to co-operate with each other in appointments procedures, from identification of staffing needs through to selection and appointment. Until they do so, clustering will not make good the organisational and expertise deficiencies which smallness generates". (p.17)

The present research has shown a stagnation or decline in involvement in clustering arrangements by small schools since 1995 (see Chapter Six). Clusters were developed to enable schools to co-operate to cope with educational change and yet, with major changes still being imposed (NLS, NNS), some small schools, in particular, seem to be

leaving clusters. The secret to the success of living companies, according to Fullan (1999, pp.15-16), is that "they consist of intricate, embedded interaction inside and outside the organization which converts tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge on and ongoing basis". It would appear that some schools either do not recognise the benefits which might be offered by collaboration, or do not regard them as sufficient to warrant establishing collegiate structures with others whom they may consider to be competitors (see Downes, 1998). While it should be remembered that the majority of small schools in the 1998 survey continued to be involved in collaborative ventures, it would seem that the failure of some clusters to develop and the demise of others may be attributable to several factors:

1. The end of the ESGs in 1991 and consequent reduction in funding to support collaboration between schools in Humberside, which was one of fourteen LEAs to receive ESG funding, may have reduced the potential for clusters to develop through the appointment of subject co-ordinators and the purchase of resources. Keast (1993, p.4) maintained that clusters had to "survive on their own enthusiasm and scrape together whatever funding can be found from individual school budgets". Leadership no longer came from outside the clusters, but had to be found within them.
2. Many clusters in the LEA were contrived when the ESG bid was successful. Such contrived collaboration seems to have been unsustainable once financial benefits diminished and the LEA reduced its support for small schools as its own funding was cut as a small number of schools opted out of its control and took up Grant Maintained status. As Galton (1993, p.28) argued: "This shift in funding makes it difficult, if not impossible, for local authorities to subsidise curriculum developments in schools by, for example, providing the services of Advisory Teachers to support the work of cluster groups". In Humberside, the posts of

advisory subject teachers and seconded Advisory Teacher for Small Schools were all dispensed with as the LEA prepared for reorganisation in 1996. With the demise of the latter post and the LEA's influence, the impetus for clustering was reduced.

3. The reorganisation of Humberside into four separate LEAs in 1996 seems to have had a significant effect upon clustering, since one LEA contrived clusters for its schools (all large or medium-sized) while other LEAs did not continue to promote collaboration as strongly as the former LEA had done in the late 1980s.
4. Changes in personnel, especially of headteachers, may have reduced the impetus for clusters to progress towards *consolidation* and *reorientation* stages (Galton et al, 1991). Heads of small schools are at the foot of the promotion ladder for headship and many move on to larger schools. New heads may need time to be assimilated into established clusters or may be reluctant participants. There is a parallel here with Hargreaves, L's (1996) assertion that LEAs' attempts to instigate clusters at advanced levels without allowing schools time to progress through stages of clustering tended to be unsuccessful.
5. Those involved in the surveys, and all but one of those interviewed, had been headteachers for at least ten and a half years and some may have felt sufficiently confident about their work to feel that collaboration with other schools was unnecessary. It is interesting to note that it was the least experienced head who was involved in the most advanced cluster.
6. Increased competition between schools for pupil numbers and a preoccupation with external mechanisms for accountability such as Ofsted and SATs may have led some heads to retreat from co-operative ventures. As one head (Newby, 61 pupils) put it: Ofsted *don't inspect the cluster: they inspect my school, and SATs results are for my school not for the group".* It seems possible that, for some

headteachers, the competitive atmosphere engendered by the ERA may have proved inimical to co-operative ventures.

7. Some heads felt that involvement with clusters was time-consuming and amounted to an additional burden at a time when they were preoccupied with internal matters. Ironically, collaborative arrangements which might have saved heads' and teachers' time by sharing workloads for planning and preparing teaching materials were sometimes resisted because heads did not feel they had time to devote to them (see Chapter Six).
8. The tightly prescribed curriculum may, as Hargreaves has argued (in Fullan and Hargreaves, A, 1992a), leave teachers feeling that there is little for them to collaborate about.

As the Conservative Government's attempts to induce more schools to take up grant maintained status intensified in the early 1990s, the DfE proposed legislation to enable groups of small primary schools to apply together for GM status and, once approved, to be managed by a single governing body. The take up for this initiative was minimal and perhaps reflected a growing view in many small schools that their future lay in working independently. After all, powerful financial arguments for closure and amalgamation may be countered by forceful lobbies of parents and members of the community when schools can demonstrate, through SATs scores and inspection reports, that they offer something which appears superior to what is provided in larger institutions. The publication of SATs scores and Ofsted reports may have proved to be the salvation of many small schools. It would take a brave LEA to close a school which could produce evidence from Government agencies that it was successful. However, collegiate or federal approaches may be a compromise which will be considered in the future as an alternative. A hypothetical example is discussed in Appendix I.

How have schools of different sizes approached and been affected by educational change?

In this section some of the key elements of educational reform since 1988 will be considered and conclusions drawn about the ways in which primary schools of different sizes have approached educational change.

Local Management of Schools

Although not specifically asked about LMS in the surveys, many heads commented upon the way in which it had impinged upon their roles. Comments appended to the 1990 questionnaires tended to be mostly negative, but there were fewer such comments in 1995 and 1998. The heads interviewed in 1998 were mainly positive about the changes which increased budgetary control had brought to their schools. Heads of the larger schools, in particular, and the head of the grant maintained school, spoke of being able to prioritise spending and often referred to the advantages which increased flexibility afforded them. Heads in some smaller schools were less enthusiastic, although only one would have liked to have seen LMS abandoned. Heads' objections tended to be connected with the additional workload induced by LMS and the fact that they now had to make difficult and sometimes unpleasant decisions about staffing levels which had previously been the LEAs' responsibility.

Small schools with smaller budgets are less able to be as creative in their spending than larger schools, because the amounts left over after salaries, heating and lighting and other standard charges are met are necessarily limited. This means that there tend not to be large amounts available for capital expenditure which would have a significant effect upon children's education. While fewer children will require fewer resources, initial outlays for mathematics schemes, science and English programmes, or hardware such as televisions, computers and video recorders, do not decrease proportionately as pupil numbers decrease.

Small schools also have limited flexibility in spending on staffing. A large school with £20000 available might, for instance, choose to employ an additional teacher, or appoint perhaps two or three classroom assistants, or an additional administrator and a part-time teacher. A small school, with considerably less available, is not able to make such choices.

The head of Milburn (323 pupils) stated that one way to save money under LMS was to manage supply teacher cover. He had saved around £35-40000 for the school by covering for absent teachers himself over two years. This is not an option available to the head of a small school who has class teaching commitments which restrict the time available to teach other classes.

While many of the heads interviewed maintained that salary cost was not a factor when they appointed new members of staff, some did take this into account. Salaries for main scale teachers with no additional responsibility points varied by around £8000 in 1999 according to teachers' years of experience. The savings to be made by appointing an inexperienced teacher are, therefore, considerable, especially for a school with a small budget. However, heads of small schools were especially reluctant to appoint newly qualified or inexperienced teachers, while heads of larger schools tended to be happy to do so. Heads' perceptions of the needs of their schools and the staffing which would be necessary to meet these needs, clearly affect their scope for saving money. In this respect, small schools are disadvantaged.

Parents and Governors

Although one head who was interviewed did not feel that parents were especially interested in test scores, most heads thought that they were an important criterion when parents chose their children's schools. If the Conservative Government's aim was to make schools more accountable to parents, it seems to have succeeded in many schools. The interviews revealed that parents in schools of all sizes were actively involved in providing voluntary classroom assistance and in fund-raising, but few heads found

parental involvement intrusive. Indeed, with the possible exception of the head of Grimston, heads tended to welcome it.

However, the perception that they had a choice about the school to which they wished to send their children had led to parents creating problems for some headteachers. Two schools, Borchester (314 pupils) and Darrington (70 pupils), which were close to a city, had experienced increased pupil numbers which had brought in extra funding, but had caused overcrowding. At Darrington, shortly after the interview, a building extension was approved by the LEA to enable the school to meet the demand for additional places. The head feared that his school could lose some of the qualities which attracted parents if it grew too large and also pointed out that schools within two miles, across the county boundary, had spare classrooms as a result of a growing exodus from the city. Barratt GM, too, had increased its numbers at the expense of nearby LEA schools and two additional classrooms had been built. It would seem that parental choice can be costly where additional space has to be provided while other teaching space is left unused.

Governors did not seem to be assuming a significantly more active role in the running of schools than before ERA and there was no correlation between school size and the extent to which governors were involved. The extent to which governors allowed heads to make decisions seemed to be dependent upon the relationship which had been built up. However, most heads who were interviewed seemed to feel that they ran the schools with the governors' approval, and there was little evidence of governors exerting their ultimate authority. There had been some instances of governors being assertive or confrontational, but these tended to be exceptional.

Accountability

Heads who were interviewed talked not only of having to implement changes, but also of having to be seen to have done so. Accountability was a major issue for some, and there was resentment that SATs test results were published in the form of raw data, which provided what some regarded as inaccurate reflections upon the relative qualities of schools.

The research of other authors, as well as the three surveys and the interviews, suggests that headteachers' concerns have, on the whole, varied over time and have changed according to the temporal proximity of the changes they have faced. LMS and the implementation of the National Curriculum were very much to the fore in 1990, while testing and Ofsted inspections were preoccupations in 1995. By 1998, heads were concerned about Ofsted inspections, which were an ongoing cyclical feature of school life, and NLS and NNS. Target-setting and the publication of SATs scores were also areas about which heads expressed concern. Given heads' apparent acceptance of many of the educational changes which had been imposed in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the question arises: *Will they be less concerned about major initiatives such as the literacy and numeracy strategies as time passes and they become more familiar with them and adapt their working practices to accommodate them?* Recent research on the curriculum and pedagogy suggests that this may well be the case.

The Curriculum and Pedagogy

Much of the research on teachers' practice in classrooms (for example, DES, 1978, Bennett, 1976; Mortimore et al, 1988; Francis and Grindle, 1998; Galton et al, 1999) indicates a conservatism which is at odds with the popular perceptions, promulgated by sections of the media, that teachers adopt so-called "progressive" methods. McNamara (1994) argued that, in the face of so many constraints on their ability to change practice radically, "it is only through a substantial investment of time, money and staffing that more progressive and flexible changes could be brought about and established in a manner which could offer some guarantee of enduring success" (p.18).

While the Education Reform Act did little to help schools in terms of staffing, and surveys and Government statistics have shown that class sizes have risen consistently since 1979, it did provide imperatives to change in the form of a national curriculum, SATs tests and Ofsted inspections. The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has provided even greater impetus to change classroom practices

and, for the first time in any current teacher's experience, pedagogical methods have been prescribed by the Government. This even went as far as suggesting pupils' seating arrangements for the National Numeracy Strategy in 1999. The methods of teaching advocated for the literacy and numeracy hours may have serious implications for small schools with mixed-age classes. Indeed, it seems clear from the original documentation for the National Literacy Strategy that little thought had been given to such schools when the programmes were designed. Some heads expressed concern about their ability to deliver the NLS in the prescribed manner in small schools in 1998 with two or more year groups in each class. As Fisher et al (2000, p.1) suggested:

> "By advising one particular organisational structure of whole class and group teaching and in having a clearly defined programme of study, the NLS appears to be removing the flexibility to choose methods."

Nevertheless, Fisher et al's research in small rural schools led them to conclude that the "NLS can be successful in small schools with mixed age classes" (p.7) and that the teachers "did not find the literacy strategy as hard to implement as they had expected" (p.2). Informal visits to Darrington, Newby and Loxley by the present author in early 2000 revealed that many of the heads' initial concerns had been allayed by the introduction of a restructured syllabus designed specifically for small schools by their LEA's English advisor. This *spiral syllabus* included lesson plans which focused on aspects of the NLS for single year groups, but incorporated work for other year groups in the same lessons. Perhaps significantly, the advisor has subsequently taken up a post with the NLS. Ofsted's evaluation of the first year of the NLS asserts that the "overwhelming majority" of primary schools adopted the strategy "enthusiastically" and that "Concerns expressed initially about an adverse reaction to the specific nature of the teaching objectives have proved largely unfounded" (p.8). The Ofsted evaluation, Fisher et al's research, and the responses of the heads of Darrington, Newby and Loxley, suggest that, in answer to the question posed on page 373, small schools may well be able to adapt to meet new challenges, and initial fears about change may recede as heads and teachers become familiar with changes. The heads' role seems crucial in influencing schools' reactions to change. Where leadership was clear and support effective, schools tended to

be successful in implementing the National Literacy Project, according to HMI's evaluation which described the headteacher's influence as "one of the most significant factors in the progress made by schools" (in Ofsted, 1999, p.19).

An additional concern for smaller schools is the restriction upon their development of ICT, given their limited funds for establishing computer suites which might be used by whole classes. By virtue of their size some schools may be restricted in determining a preferred pedagogy for teaching ICT. However, government funding for all schools to develop ICT facilities may help to ameliorate even this problem.

How capable are schools of different sizes of implementing educational change?

It has been seen throughout this thesis that teachers in large and small schools share more common features than differences. The changes to the curriculum have been a feature of every state primary school in England and Wales. There may be differences in the levels of success achieved in different schools, but there is little evidence to suggest that teachers are any less successful in implementing change in small schools than in large ones. Indeed, such evidence as does exist (Webb, 1993; Somekh, 1995; Hargreaves, L et al, 1996; Ofsted, 1997; 1998; Richards, 1998) often suggests the contrary.

Small schools seem to be similar to large schools in more ways than they differ from them. They teach the same curriculum; apparently achieving better results in the core subjects, although this may partly be accounted for by their different catchments. They employ teachers who are, according to Patrick (1991), similar in background to those in larger schools, if slightly older. They do not differ significantly from larger schools in the confidence shown by heads or teachers about delivering the curriculum. The principal difference between small and large schools, apart from the obvious difference in staff and pupil numbers, lies in the headteacher. While it might be contended that this view is an inevitable consequence of the focus of the present research upon headteachers' views, the conclusion is supported by other researchers who have looked at wider aspects of work in schools (Webb and Vulliamy, 1995, 1996a; Hargreaves, L et al, 1996) as well as by

Ofsted (1998). Headteachers are the key agents for change in schools, given their influential positions as leaders in their individual establishments. LEAs, which were once able to influence practice and control schools' finances to a far greater extent, have declined in authority with the inception of LMS, while governors, who nominally have ultimate authority in individual schools, appear not to exercise their powers to any great extent in most. Changes in education have been mandated by government and imposed upon schools, but it has been headteachers who have been responsible for ensuring implementation and who have been held accountable and sometimes dismissed when this was not deemed successful by Ofsted.

Heads in small schools are teachers who are doing substantially the same job as their colleagues, but have additional administrative duties. When curricular change is demanded by government or LEAs, the heads not only have to manage the change and make it possible for their colleagues, they also have to implement it within their own classrooms. In this important respect, the role of small school heads is substantially different from that of their peers in larger schools.

It has been argued by some heads that change is easier to manage in small schools. The evidence of this research and that of Ofsted and INCSS suggests that in many ways this is true. However, the limited numbers of staff in small schools prevent heads from delegating in the same way as their colleagues in larger schools are able to. Nevertheless, where staff are willing to assume responsibilities without pecuniary reward, small school heads may enjoy a level of co-operation and support which might be difficult to achieve in a larger institution. The substantial teaching role enables headteachers to have a more direct influence on curriculum development and a closer working understanding of the processes of change. The centrality of purpose which has been achieved in some small schools may be hard to replicate in larger schools in which senior management teams may be regarded as separate from the rest of the staff. Where all members of staff are part of what is, effectively, a senior management team,

the commonality of purpose may lead to effective implementation of change and a sense of ownership. Goerner (1998 in Fullan, 1999, p.10) asserted that size "pulls us apart" and that "growth creates regular crisis points which will require we learn anew. The challenge of intricacy is to keep smallness under an ever-growing umbrella of connective tissue." Perhaps it is the intimacy of small schools which has enabled them to sustain relationships and internal collegiality in order to implement educational changes effectively.

It may be that "a contradiction of perceptions" exists concerning small schools' needs (see Chapter Six). Some of the limitations identified by 'outsiders' may conflict with the perception of some who work in small schools that such limitations do not in fact exist. For example, the view that delegation is difficult when staffs are small may appear incontrovertible to people whose conception of primary schools is one where a head is able to draw upon a number of colleagues, some with posts of responsibility, when change needs to be implemented, without having to take all responsibilities upon herself. However, the head of one large school with experience in small schools, as well as some heads of small schools, felt that there were actually advantages in having a limited number of staff since they would play an active role in managing change and there would be fewer people to convince of the need to change practices.

There can be no doubt that, at a superficial level, it costs more to educate children in small schools. The figures for the East Riding of Yorkshire, which appear in the Introduction, show that there is a difference of £1154 between the least and most expensive schools in the county in costs per pupil. However, this should be seen in the light of the total costs of running schools and the costs of closure and of making alternative arrangements for children in villages without schools. These costs are, as Bell and Sigsworth (1987), Benford (1986), Bottery (1991) suggest, not purely financial. There are social costs attached to school closures and the effects upon a village may be considerable, with house prices falling and a reduced demand for accommodation from families with children. The consequent effect upon a village's remaining services may be significant.

Throughout this study an attempt has been made to discover whether school size affects primary schools' abilities to manage educational change. The empirical research conducted for this work, and much of the research by others, indicates that size is an important factor which affects the way in which schools manage educational change. School size affects headteachers' working practices; the management structures they employ; and the extent to which they teach children in the classroom. Nevertheless, what emerges from the surveys and from the interviews with headteachers, as well as from some of the literature, is an impression that small and large schools have many problems in common.

The hypothesis that small primary schools are disadvantaged compared with larger schools, when faced with educational change, has not been proved by this study. Small primary schools appear generally to have implemented changes effectively and with good results. They may appear disadvantaged when faced with some changes because of their lack of senior management apart from the headteacher, and because some initiatives such as the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy have failed to take adequate account of the fact that many schools (including most medium-sized and some large) have mixed-age classes. However, small schools have proved resourceful in adapting their working practices and implementing educational changes. They seem to be popular with parents and most should continue to be so in areas where rural populations are growing. The example of Darrington and Barratt, village schools two miles of a city and a town respectively, which were heavily over-subscribed because parents from the took their children there rather than to large urban schools, suggests that parental choice may be a key factor in the survival of small schools.

Small and medium-sized schools have declined in number since 1988, partly because many have grown in size and have become medium- and large-sized schools respectively. This growth, it might be argued, would not come about if parents did not find the

educational provision of such schools satisfactory. As Rogers (1979), whose words began this chapter, wrote: "parents are not stupid".

Parental choice was almost a catch phrase for the last Conservative Government and choice was to be informed by data. Test scores and inspection results were published, and parents could read them and make decisions about their children's schooling as a result. Despite their many flaws, the external measures of school success indicate that small primary schools have implemented educational change as effectively, if not more effectively in many cases, as larger schools. Moreover, in an era when governments place great emphasis upon measurable achievement, small schools also appear to provide less tangible benefits to their pupils according to Ofsted (1998, 9.5):

> "One of the great strengths of small schools is their ethos. Very good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, considerable parental involvement in their children's learning, and strong links with the community all contribute significantly to the establishment of caring, welcoming schools often seen as playing an essential role at the heart of a local community."

It is significant that some of the benefits which proponents of small schools cited before 1988 should be reinforced ten years later by an organisation which exists to monitor school standards. It would seem that small schools may have succeeded in implementing educational change without compromising some of the attributes which marked them out as special for many of their supporters.

The final section of this chapter comprises recommendations which are based upon the needs which have been identified as a result of the research.

Recommendations

- Clustering arrangements need to be flexible if they are to be effective. Small groups of schools often work together well, especially where they are not in direct competition with each other for pupils. However, larger groups can enjoy economies of scale in putting on in-service training. A way forward may be for schools to belong

to large cluster groups which include smaller sub-groups. Whatever their composition, clusters are likely to be more effective if they are spontaneously formed rather than contrived.

- In collaborative arrangements between schools, consideration should be given to retaining an element of autonomy for each individual school. Parents, governors, teachers and children should be able to identify with their local school and its unique features, while enjoying the benefits of sharing resources and facilities with others.
- An important element in clustering is the opportunity it can provide for children to meet peers from other schools. This is particularly important for those who will move on to secondary school with few others of similar age from their own school. Secondary schools should take the initiative in providing opportunities for future pupils to come together, perhaps during examination periods when secondary teachers may have fewer teaching commitments than usual.
- Some of the better features of management structures of large schools may be incorporated into clusters where teachers' subject expertise is utilised for the benefit of a group of schools.
- Headteachers in small schools should not have to spend time on tasks which could just as easily be carried out by an administrative assistant. Any increase in secretarial assistance which could be provided for heads in small schools would be relatively inexpensive compared with the cost of having a relatively highly paid headteacher performing clerical tasks.
- Consideration should be given to the appointment of administrators who are able to work for a group of schools. The financial benefits of such an arrangement could be significant if heads are relieved of some of their administrative burden, and if administrators are able to use bulk buying to obtain discounts on purchases of materials. An embryonic scheme was in place in Charlton's cluster and was working effectively (Chapter Nine).

- Small schools could benefit more from having devolved budgets if greater assistance were to be provided to enable heads to manage the clerical and accounting elements of LMS. Again, administrators with responsibility for a group of schools could be effective here.
- Incremental salary points should be available to clusters of small schools to reward teachers for work which benefits the cluster. This would provide an opportunity for teachers to gain management experience which would foster their career development.
- Given the reluctance of the small school heads within this study to employ less expensive newly qualified teachers, consideration should be given to compensating small schools for having to employ more experienced and therefore more expensive teachers. In this respect, education in small schools should be seen within the wider perspective of each LEA's overall educational provision and should be costed accordingly.
- The publication of SATs scores for schools with eleven or more pupils can show small schools in a deceptively good or bad light. Consideration should be given to restricting publication to schools with thirty or more Y6 pupils in order to avoid presenting a confusing picture of the fluctuations of scores. A better scheme still would be one in which all children's scores contributed to a school's profile. Thus, one point could be awarded for the level achieved by each child so that Level Four was worth four points. Schools' total scores would then be divided by the number of pupils to produce a mean figure. This would not only provide a fairer picture, but would also give schools an impetus to give attention to children with no chance of achieving Level Four as well as to those who could achieve Levels Five and Six.
- The National Literacy Strategy, in its present form, has failed to take into account the problems of implementation in mixed-age classes. Inadequate guidance has been given to teachers in small schools and this has appeared as an afterthought rather than as an integral part of the guidelines. Given that a significant part of the school

population is taught in mixed-age classes, the Strategy should be examined carefully and detailed guidance should be provided for teachers of mixed-age classes. Similar guidance and in-service training should be provided for the National Numeracy Strategy.

- In-service training which is directed at meeting the needs of teachers of mixed-age classes should be developed, especially in LEAs which include several small schools.
- Where major curriculum initiatives are being introduced by Government, care should be taken to consult teachers in schools of all sizes, and pilot programmes should take place in schools of varying sizes.
- There is a pressing need to address the problem of recruitment of headteachers for small schools. Consideration should be given to collegiate systems in which small groups of schools are jointly administered, but in which each retains an identity and a place at the heart of the village community, as well as a teacher in charge of the school under the direction of a group headteacher. This would not only enable some schools to benefit from a sharing of expertise and resources, but it would also provide a career structure which would enable class teachers to attain posts of responsibility without having to move to larger schools.

The measures suggested could go some way towards alleviating some of the problems which arise as a direct consequence of many primary schools being small in at the end of the 20th century. However, the introduction of year-group-based programmes of study as part of the National Literacy and National Numeracy strategies has presented a new challenge for small schools. Although there are already indications that small schools are rising to this challenge, further research will be required in order to establish whether they are able to meet it as effectively as they appear to have met others in the past.

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APPENDIX I

SMALL PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN 2008: NO LONGER AT THE CROSSROADS?

"I have seen the future, and it works."
(Lincoln Steffens in Kaplan, J, 1975, Ch.13, ii)

This thesis began with a stroll through an English or Welsh village as an attempt was made to conjure up an image of a rural settlement which had evolved over many years. This final chapter provides a vision of what the future might hold for such a village.

This work has charted the progress of educational reforms and their effects upon schools of different sizes and in particular their effects upon small primary schools. The most radical reforms discussed were those introduced by and in the wake of the 1988 Education Reform Act. Ten years later, interviews and surveys revealed that small schools were generally alive and well and, despite many problems, coping with change effectively. Given that this picture emerged a decade after the ERA, it is fitting that the thesis should conclude by speculating about the village and the small school a further decade into the future. In 2008, then, what might a stroll through an English or Welsh village reveal?

The Village School in 2008

The village has grown, with more detached houses having been built upon more of the meadows whose names their streets and closes now bear. From these houses come the children, some of primary school age, whose presence in the village has led to the local school's expansion. A brand new school, built at the edge of the village, has appeared. Amenities such as shops have not survived, but the school is the most vibrant institution in the village. The board at the gate, however, indicates that the school has changed its status since 1998. Underneath the school's name is a subtitle: 'Member of the Eastdale Co-operative of Schools'. For the school has been linked with two other schools, each with its own school manager, under the leadership of a peripatetic headteacher who is responsible for all three.

Although the schools grew as the rural population grew, rationalisation has taken place. A lack of applications for small school headships in the late 1990s and early 2000s led the LEA to take the pragmatic step of replacing headteachers with school managers when vacancies arose, and elevating a few existing heads to the status of heads of rural colleges. The new institution, while it retains establishments on three separate sites, each with its own identity, has an office in one for the head, who oversees the schools on each site.

When the proposals for such a college were first made there was something a public outcry, and this led to packed meetings of parents, governors and council officials. Education officers pointed to the success of similar arrangements in Wales, North Yorkshire and other rural areas in the 1990s. Only when all parties had been reassured that the new arrangement would secure the long-term futures of the schools in their villages were many people placated. Officials had pointed out that it was becoming increasingly difficult to find people who would take on small school headships, and that their radical plan would attract deputy heads and potential headteachers to the posts of college head and school manager respectively. People of such calibre would, they argued, enhance the children's education.

The ever-present hint that an alternative could be the closure of one or more schools heightened anxiety levels for villagers concerned not only about their children's educations, but also about the effects which school closure could have upon local property prices. Many of the residents with school-age children were commuters likely to move to other areas of the country as job promotions arose. Their long-term loyalty to the autonomous village school was tempered by the fear that any future move could be more costly if the school were to close altogether.

Ultimately, the rural college had been established with the grudging acquiescence of villagers, some of whom alluded to past inter-village rivalries when expressing scepticism about the project's likely success.

Once inaugurated, the College Headteacher had acted quickly to develop links between the three schools, and managers had joined her in developing a collective ethos which could be adjusted to suit the needs of each school. Joint training days had been a feature of the College since its inception, and teacher exchanges took place regularly on a timetabled basis, with some teachers spending up to two days a week out of their base school and in the other two. Pupils enjoyed joint residential trips and sports teams, each of which had only become viable because of the numbers now involved.

The village had, by 2008, continued to grow and an increasing number of people both lived and worked in the village, as a growing trend to work at a computer in one's own home spread throughout the country. In the schools, too, children worked at computers, accessing the Internet to work on many areas of the curriculum, including literacy and numeracy. Although greatly modified after the 2002 election, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies were still a feature of the primary curriculum, but each had been scaled down considerably. The head and subject specialists were able to prepare work to be placed upon the College's network, so that children in each school could use it.

Parents had been particularly reassured by the College's SATs scores, which had been published collectively and without identifying scores for each individual school within the College. The Government's concession on the calculation of schools' scores, in response to growing pressure from teacher unions in the early 2000s, had helped to boost the scores of rural schools generally. Each child's performance now contributed to the overall points total, with one point accruing for a child who reached Level One, two for Level Two, and so on. Fluctuations in scores had reduced, and the presence in

many rural schools of children who achieved Levels Five and Six had enabled them to score highly.

The hypothetical school in the hypothetical village had, then, survived. Successive governments, which nailed their colours to the masts of improving test scores, could hardly sanction the closure of those schools which, despite occasional fluctuations, more than achieved targets. The presence of an articulate rural middle class, ready to defend its children's schools, had also tempered any proposals for closures. However, more radical schemes, such as the one described here, were increasingly seen not only as educationally viable but also as cost-effective. Small school headships and managerships were now attracting interest from a wide range of teachers and it was not unusual for college heads to be recruited from deputy heads of large schools or school managers of satellite schools within colleges. Indeed, in 2008 large schools, too, were beginning to consider whether some elements of collegiate status might benefit them. An Ofsted report on Village Colleges had aroused their interest when it concluded:

> "The village college represents an amalgamation of the benefits of small and large schools. It allows villages to retain educational establishments at the heart of their communities, but overcomes many of the problems associated with teacher isolation and limited curricular expertise which have formed the basis of criticisms of small schools in the past.
>
> Where experienced practitioners with management experience have been appointed as principals, satellite schools within the colleges have been able to make significant progress in implementing Government initiatives such as the National Science Strategy and the National ICT Strategy. The sharing of expertise and the use of curriculum specialists, allied to high quality leadership by the principal, have been key factors in the most successful institutions."
>
> (Ofsted, 2007)

In 1988, small primary schools were very much at an educational crossroads. By 1998, there was evidence that they were establishing themselves as an integral part of the educational scene and that their achievements, allied to their growing support, had assured the future of most. Ten years later, the picture may again have changed. Economic constraints and a declining number of candidates for small school headships may have presented new challenges for small schools. However, the changing

demography and political make up of rural areas may mean that closure becomes less of an option and restructuring takes its place.

The small school may have moved from the crossroads both metaphorically and literally by 2008, but it will almost certainly still be on the road.

Reference

Ofsted (2007) *Curriculum Organisation and Classroom Practice in Village Colleges* (Hypothetical Report), Ofsted, Milton Keynes.

APPENDIX 2
PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 1990 SURVEY

IMPLEMENTING EDUCATIONAL CHANGE IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

NAME OF
SCHOOL____

NUMBER OF PUPILS ON ROLL______________________________

NUMBER OF TEACHING STAFF(e.g.3.1,4.2)______________________

1 What part of the school week do you spend teaching?
(e.g.0.4)____________________

2 a)How many hours of secretarial help do you receive weekly?________hours.
b)Does this represent an increase since the 1988 Act? YES/NO
c)If you answered 'yes' to b) please state the number of extra hours of secretarial help you receive.___________hours.

3 Which age groups do you teach as a class?(e.g.Y3,Y5-6)_________

4 Do you take administrative work home a)daily?
b)on most days?
c)occasionally?
d)never? (please tick)

5 Since the introduction of the 1988 Education Reform Act has the level of administrative work a)increased greatly?
b)increased slightly?
c)remained the same?
d)decreased slightly?
e)decreased greatly? (please tick)

6 a)Does the school have teachers with subject responsibilities?
YES/NO
b)If 'yes' to a) please state subjects and,if appropriate,allowance given to member of staff(e.g.A,B)____________________

7 a)Is the school involved in any collaboration with other schools for curriculum support? YES/NO
b)If 'yes' please give brief details.

8 Are you able to delegate any of the following areas of responsibility to teaching colleagues a)administration?
b)organization of curriculum?
c)curriculum planning?
d)school management?
e)management of resources?
f)pastoral care? (please tick)

9 a) Have you had to make any significant changes to the school's curriculum in order to meet National Curriculum requirements? YES/NO

b) If 'yes' please give brief details.

10 Does the local secondary school, into which your pupils transfer, offer assistance with a) curriculum development? YES/NO

b) INSET? YES/NO

Please give brief details if 'yes' to a) or b)

11 In order to implement the 1988 ERA, has the school had to:

a) provide additional INSET?

b) seek additional advisory help?

c) seek help from other schools? (please tick)

APPENDIX 3
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 1990 SURVEY

IMPLEMENTING EDUCATIONAL CHANGE IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

NAME OF SCHOOL________________________________

NUMBER OF PUPILS ON ROLL________________________________

NUMBER OF TEACHING STAFF INCLUDING

HEADTEACHER(e.g.3.1,4.2)________________________________

1. What part of the school week do you spend teaching?(e.g.0.4)_____

2. Which age groups, if any, do you teach as a class? (e.g.Y3,Y5-6)________________________________

3. a)How many hours of secretarial help do you receive weekly?______ hours.

b)Does this represent an increase since the 1988 Education Reform Act? YES/NO (please circle appropriate answer)

c)If you answered YES to b) please state the number of extra hours of secretarial help you receive.__________________hours.

4. Has the introduction of the 1988 Act caused the level of administrative work you undertake to:

a) increase greatly?	
b) increase slightly?	
c) remain constant?	
d) decrease slightly?	
e) decrease greatly?	

(please tick)

5. Do you take administrative work home

a)daily?	
b)on most days?	
c)occasionally?	
d)never?	

(please tick)

6. a)Does the school have teachers with subject responsibilities?

YES/NO (please circle)

b)If YES to a) please state subjects and, if appropriate, allowance given to member of staff(e.g.A,B):

7. Are you able to delegate responsibility for any of the following areas to teaching colleagues?

a)administration	
b)organization of curriculum	
c)curriculum planning	
d)school management	
e)management of resources	
f)pastoral care	

(please tick all that apply)

8. a)Is the school involved in any collaboration with other primary schools for curriculum support? YES/NO (please circle)

b)If YES to a) please give brief details of number of schools involved, subjects covered, frequency of meetings etc.

9. Do any of the local secondary schools to which your pupils transfer provide assistance with:

a)curriculum development? YES/NO

b)INSET? YES/NO (please circle)

Please give brief details if you answered yes to a) or b).

10. In order to implement the requirements of the 1988 ERA, has the school had to:

	very often	quite often	once or twice	never
a)provide additonal INSET?				
b)seek additional advisory help?				
c)seek help from other schools?				

(please tick the appropriate boxes)

11. Below is a list of the foundation subjects which primary schools are required to teach under National Curriculum legislation. Please tick the appropriate boxes to indicate how confident you are of the school's ability to fulfil the curriculum requirements for each:

	totally confident	confident	quite confident	not very confident	no confidence
ENGLISH					
MATHEMATICS					
SCIENCE					
TECHNOLOGY					
HISTORY					
GEOGRAPHY					
MUSIC					
ART					
P.E.					

12. a)Have you had to make any significant changes to the school's curriculum or timetable in order to meet National Curriculum requirements? YES/NO (please circle)

b)If YES please give brief details.

Thank you for taking the time and trouble to complete this questionnaire. If you wish to give any additional information or comments please feel free to do so in the space below or on separate sheets.

All replies will be treated in the strictest confidence and no school or headteacher will be named in any resulting publications.

APPENDIX 4
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 1995 SURVEY

IMPLEMENTING EDUCATIONAL CHANGE IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

NAME OF SCHOOL ______________________

NUMBER OF PUPILS ON ROLL ______________________

NUMBER OF TEACHING STAFF INCLUDING HEADTEACHER (e.g. 3.1, 7.5)

____

1. What part of the school week do you spend teaching? (e.g. 0.4, 0.8) __________

2. How many hours of secretarial help do you receive weekly? __________ hours

3. How often do you take administrative work home? *(please tick one)*

a) daily

b) on most days

c) occasionally

d) never

4. Does the school have teachers with subject responsibilities? YES/NO

(please circle)

5. Are you able to delegate responsibility for any of the following areas to teaching colleagues? *(please tick all that apply)*

a) administration

b) organisation of curriculum

c) curriculum planning

d) school management

e) management of resources

f) pastoral care

6. Is the school involved in collaboration with other primary schools for curriculum support? YES/NO
(please circle)

If YES please give brief details of the number of schools involved, subjects covered, frequency of meetings etc.

7. Do any of the secondary schools to which your pupils transfer provide assistance with:

a) curriculum development? YES/NO

b) In-service training? YES/NO
(please circle)

Please give brief details if you answered YES to a) or b).

8 Below is a list of the subjects which primary schools are required to teach under revised National Curriculum, legislation. Please tick the appropriate boxes to indicate how confident you are of the school's ability to fulfil the curriculum requirements for each.

	totally confident	*confident*	*quite confident*	*not very confident*	*no confidence*
ENGLISH					
MATHS					
SCIENCE					
TECHNOLOGY					
HISTORY					
GEOGRAPHY					
MUSIC					
ART					
P.E.					
I.T.					

Thank you for taking the time and trouble to complete this questionnaire. If you wish to add any further information or comments, please feel free to do so in the space below or on separate sheets. All replies will be treated in the strictest confidence and no school or headteacher will be named in the thesis or in any resulting publications.

David Waugh
School of Education, University of Hull

APPENDIX 5
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 1998 SURVEY

IMPLEMENTING EDUCATIONAL CHANGE IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

NAME OF SCHOOL ______________________

NUMBER OF PUPILS ON ROLL ______________________

NUMBER OF TEACHING STAFF INCLUDING HEADTEACHER (e.g. 3.1, 7.5) ______

1. What part of the school week do you spend teaching? (e.g. 0.4, 0.8) ______

2. How many hours of secretarial help do you receive weekly? ______ hours

3. How often do you take administrative work home? *(please tick one)*

   a) daily

   b) on most days

   c) occasionally

   d) never

4. Does the school have teachers with subject responsibilities? YES/NO *(please circle)*

5. Are you able to delegate responsibility for any of the following areas to teaching colleagues? *(please tick all that apply)*

   a) administration

   b) organisation of curriculum

   c) curriculum planning

   d) school management

   e) management of resources

   f) pastoral care

6. Is the school involved in collaboration with other primary schools for curriculum support? YES/NO *(please circle)*

If YES please give brief details of the number of schools involved, subjects covered, frequency of meetings etc.

7. Do any of the secondary schools to which your pupils transfer provide assistance with:

a) curriculum development? YES/NO

b) In-service training? YES/NO

(please circle)

Please give brief details if you answered YES to a) or b).

8 Below is a list of the subjects which primary schools are required to teach to meet requirements of the *National Curriculum, National Literacy Strategy* and *National Numeracy Strategy*. Please tick the appropriate boxes to indicate how confident you are of the school's ability to fulfil the curriculum requirements for each.

	totally confident	*confident*	*quite confident*	*not very confident*	*no confidence*
ENGLISH					
MATHS					
SCIENCE					
TECHNOLOGY					
HISTORY					
GEOGRAPHY					
MUSIC					
ART					
P.E.					
I.T.					

Thank you for taking the time and trouble to complete this questionnaire. If you wish to add any further information or comments, please feel free to do so on separate sheets. All replies will be treated in the **strictest confidence** and no school or headteacher will be named in the thesis or in any resulting publications.

David Waugh
Institute for Learning, University of Hull

APPENDIX 6
LETTER TO ACCOMPANY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 1990 SURVEY

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES AND INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

Tel: 0482 465406
Fax: 0482 466205
Telex: 592592 KHMAIL G HUL!8375

Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX.

Dean: Professor V. A. McClelland M.A., Ph.D. (Tel. 465988)
Secretary to Education: I. D. Marriott, C.Biol. M.I.Biol. (Tel. 465989)
Administrative Assistant: Mrs. K.C. Bury, B.A., L.G.S.M. (Tel. 465031)

2nd June, 1990

Dear

I am writing to ask for your help with research which I am conducting on the effects of educational change upon primary schools. I have sought and gained permission from Humberside Education Authority to do circulate a questionnaire to schools.

Until recently, I was Deputy Headteacher of Mount Pleasant CE School in Market Weighton, so I do appreciate that questionnaires can be a frequent irritation and that headteachers lead very busy lives. However, I have attempted to make my questionnaire as brief and easy to complete as possible and I hope that you will find the time to fill it in and return it to me in the SAE provided.

I hope to make use of the data as part of my PhD research, as well as in published articles for educational journals. Although I have asked for the school's name, this is purely for record-keeping purposes and I can guarantee that all information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence. If you have any questions about the research, please telephone me on 0482 466530.

Thank you in anticipation of your help.

Yours sincerely

David Waugh
Lecturer in Primary Education

APPENDIX 7
LETTER TO ACCOMPANY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 1995 SURVEY

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

HULL HU6 7RX · UNITED KINGDOM
TELEPHONE 01482 46540[illegible] · SWITCHBOARD 01482 346311 · FACSIMILE 01482 466133

PROFESSOR V A McCLELLAND MA PhD
DEAN OF SCHOOL
DIRECT LINE 01482 465988

4 April 1995

Dear Headteacher

I am writing to ask you for your help with research which I am conducting on the effects of educational change upon primary schools.

In 1990 I conducted a questionnaire and I am now following this up to see if schools' experiences have changed. The present questionnaire is brief and easy to complete and a pre-paid envelope is enclosed so that you can return it without cost. All replies will be treated in the strictest confidence and no school will be named in any publication. I have asked for the school's name so that I can ensure that I have a sample of the same schools over the five-year period.

I do realise that your time is at a premium and that many other people also send questionnaires for completion. Please accept my thanks in advance of your reply.

I wish you a relaxing Easter holiday.

Yours faithfully

David Waugh
Lecturer in Primary Education

PROFESSOR G HARRIES-JENKINS LLB MA MPhil PhD 01482 46[illegible]
PROFESSOR D R McNAMARA BSc PhD 01482 465[illegible]

APPENDIX 8
LETTER TO ACCOMPANY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 1998 SURVEY

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL
CENTRE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AND TRAINING IN EDUCATION
HULL HU6 7RX · UNITED KINGDOM
TELEPHONE 01482 465406 · SWITCHBOARD 01482 346311 · FACSIMILE 01482 [illegible]

PROFESSOR R J ANDREWS MA PhD
HEAD OF THE CENTRE
DIRECT LINE 01482 465401
E-MAIL R.J.Andrews@[illegible].hull.ac.uk

19 October 1998

Dear

In 1990 and again in 1995 your school responded to a short questionnaire to help me with a long-term research project. I am now writing to ask you to help me for a final time by completing the enclosed questionnaire and returning it in the stamped addressed envelope provided. Most questions only require limited data or a tick, but if you wish to add anything, please feel free to do so.

The three surveys should enable me to draw conclusions about school size and approaches to educational change and will form part of my doctoral thesis and, I hope, ensuing publications. All replies are treated in the strictest confidence, but I do need to know the school's name so that I can match up records and discern trends.

I do realise that you have quite enough to do without filling in questionnaires, but I hope that you will be able to set aside a few minutes to help me to conclude a piece of research which I have been working on for eight years. It is very important that I maintain a large sample if the research is to be valid.

Please accept my thanks in anticipation of your co-operation. I wish you a relaxing half-term break.

Best wishes

David Waugh
Lecturer in Primary Education

THE CENTRE IS PART OF THE INSTITUTE FOR LEARNING

APPENDIX 9
QUESTIONS FOR 1998 INTERVIEWS WITH HEADTEACHERS

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW: 1998 ______________________ school

Number on roll ___________

Number of staff including headteacher ___________

How long have you been headteacher of the school? ___________

What was your previous post? ___________________________

What part of the school week do you spend teaching? ________

Which age groups do you teach? ___________

How many hours of secretarial help do you receive? ___________

How often do you take administrative work home?

- daily
- on most days
- occasionally
- never

Does the school have teachers with subject responsibilities?

____

Please give details

Is each NC foundation subject the responsibility of a member of staff?

Do staff play a more or less active role in curriculum development since ERA?

Which foundation subjects, if any, have required the greatest changes in the school curriculum?

How confident do you feel about the school's ability to fulfil the curriculum requirements for each of the following subjects?

	totally confident	confident	quite confident	not very confident	no confidence
ENGLISH					
MATHS					
SCIENCE					
TECHNOLOGY					
HISTORY					
GEOGRAPHY					
MUSIC					
ART					
P.E.					
I.C.T.					

Are you able to delegate responsibility for any of the following areas to teaching colleagues?

- administration
- organisation of curriculum
- curriculum planning
- school management
- management of resources
- pastoral care

Is the school involved in collaboration with other primary school for curriculum support?

Please give details if YES

Do any of the secondary schools to which your pupils transfer provide assistance with:

- curriculum development?

- in-service training?

How do you feel that the nature of your job has changed since ERA?

What have been the most significant factors affecting the school in the last ten years?

Which educational changes, if any, do you feel have benefited the school?

Which educational changes, if any, do you feel have harmed the school?

Which changes have been the most difficult to implement and why?

How has the school changed its organisation since ERA?

Which factors have influenced any changes to the school's organisation?

Has attendance at INSET by staff increased, decreased or remained about the same since ERA?

How has the introduction of LMS affected the school?

When appointing new members of staff which factors influence you and the governors?

Do parents take a more or less active role in the running of the school since ERA?

Do governors take a more or less active role in the running of the school since ERA?

What are your main concerns at the moment?

How do you feel that the school's size affects its ability to manage educational changes?

APPENDIX 10
FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT SCHOOLS IN WHICH HEADTEACHERS WERE INTERVIEWED IN 1998

Newby

61 on roll

The school, which was built in the 1870s with an additional classroom having been erected in 1996, was situated in a rural area about ten miles from each of two small towns, and fifteen miles from a large city. Most parents commuted to the towns or the city. Some worked in farming.

The headteacher had been at the school for ten and a half years and had previously been deputy head of another small school in the same LEA. His previous teaching experience had been in two large schools, including one which had over 700 pupils. He spent 0.8 of the week in timetabled teaching with a Y3/4/5/6 class for three mornings, and with Y5/6 for five afternoons.

Loxley

64 on roll

The school, which had been built in the 1960s, was situated in a village six miles from a large city. Many parents commuted to the city for work.

The headteacher had been at the school for fifteen and a half years and had previously been deputy head of a small rural school in the same local authority, and had been a senior teacher in a large rural school before that. His timetabled teaching was mostly within a Y5/6 class but also included science and other work with the other two classes.

The head took administrative work sometimes, but tended to stay at school until he had finished his work rather than taking it home. He had stayed until after midnight on one recent occasion and had been very late on others.

Darrington

70 on roll

The school, which was a late Victorian building with an additional mobile classroom, was situated a mile from the edge of a large city and four miles from a town. Most parents who lived in the village commuted to the town or the city. Around 80% of the pupils, however, came to the school from the city, and many parents walked from the large estates in the suburbs with their children daily, while others travelled by car. Many of these parents worked in the city, but many were unemployed. Darrington's pupils were not typical of those found in other rural schools.

The headteacher had been at the school for five and a half years and had previously been deputy head of a large junior school in the same LEA. His previous teaching experience had been in two large schools, including one which had over 700 pupils. His timetabled teaching was with a Y4/5/6 class. He took administrative work home daily and arrived at the school by 7 a.m. each day.

Darrington was included in the interview sample despite having a head who was appointed after the ERA because, despite being in a village, it represented the nearest thing to an urban small school in the area. It was in the unusual position of having a predominantly urban pupil population, while being part of a strong cluster of small,

rural schools. However, the interview did not reveal much to suggest that Darrington's unusual situation led it to operate internally in ways which differed greatly from the other small schools in the sample.

Kirkby CE
93 on roll
The school, a Victorian building with an additional mobile classroom, was situated in a rural area about five miles from a small town and ten miles from a larger town which was also a seaside resort. Parents commuted to the towns or to one of two cities which were each around twenty miles away. Some worked in farming locally.

The headteacher had been at the school for ten and a half years and had previously been deputy head of an infant school with around 150 pupils in the same LEA. His previous teaching experience had been in large estate schools in a city. His timetabled teaching was with a Y5/6 class for 0.7 of the week and a Y3/4 class for one afternoon each week.

The head took administrative work home quite often.

Barratt GM
96 on roll
The school, which was built in the 1970s, was situated in a village ten miles from a city. Many parents commuted to the city for work or to a nearby small town. The school had opted out of LEA control and acquired grant maintained status in January 1995. Prior to that it had been a split-site school with Key Stage Two children being taught in a Victorian building some 200 metres from the newer building. The latter had recently had two additional classrooms added, as well as a suite of offices.

The head had been at the school for twelve and a half years, having previously been deputy head of a medium-sized school. He had also taught in two large schools. The head's timetabled teaching was with a Y2 class for three afternoons, and Y4, and Y6 for two mornings each. He no longer had a class responsibility and rarely took administrative work home.

Charlton CE
135 on roll
The school, which was built in the 1960s, was situated in a village almost twenty miles from a city where many parents worked. Some worked at nearby factories and a few worked on or owned farms.

The headteacher had been at the school for eighteen and a half years and had previously been deputy head of a first school with around 150 pupils in another LEA. His timetabled teaching was with a Y3/4 class for two days per week.

The head took administrative work home on most days.

St Kevin's RC
168 on roll plus 26 place nursery
The school, which was built in the 1960s, was situated in an inner city area and was surrounded by a council housing and low cost private housing. There was a high incidence of unemployment among parents and many children came from single parent families. More than 50% of children were provided with free school meals and there were 27 on the special needs register.

The head had been at the school for eleven and a half years and had previously been deputy head of a 250-pupil school in the same LEA. Before that she had taught in two large schools in a different LEA.

The head had no timetabled class teaching, but worked with groups of more able pupils in Y6 and Y2 in an attempt to improve SATs performance. She took administrative work home on most days.

Grimston

234 on roll

The school, which was built in the 1960s, was set in a rapidly expanding village in a rural area. At the time of the interview an estate of around 200 houses was being built near to the school. Most parents commuted to one of three nearby towns or cities or worked at local factories or refineries. The school was the second largest in its LEA.

The headteacher had been at the school for fourteen and a half years and had previously been head of a small rural school in another local authority for nine. He had become a head after only four years of teaching at a large school. He spent 0.3 of the week in timetabled teaching and this was mostly within a Y5 class, but also included work with the other two classes.

The head took administrative work occasionally.

Oakwell

284 on roll

The school, was situated in a village six miles from a city on a split site with the two 1970s buildings being around 200 metres apart. Many parents commuted to the city for work.

The headteacher had been at the school for eighteen and a half years and had previously been head of a school with around 150 pupils in another LEA. He had also taught in two large schools in the other LEA. He spent 0.3 of the week in timetabled teaching and more when teachers were absent. His timetabled teaching was in both KS1 and KS2, and with different classes or teaching groups.

The head took administrative work home on most days.

Borchester

314 on roll

The school, a 1960s building, was situated at the edge of a city, only a short distance from the city boundary, but outside the city's LEA. Parents tended to work in the city. The school was heavily over-subscribed a drew almost half of its pupils from outside its catchment area.

The headteacher had been at the school for thirteen and a half years and had previously, for nine years, been deputy head of a large primary school with around 300 pupils in the same LEA. His previous teaching had been in two large schools. He had no timetabled teaching, but did teach occasionally and still regarded this as *"the best part of the job"*.

The head took administrative work home on most days and said that he could easily take it home every night, but sometimes decided not to. If he did not take work home regularly he would *"not be able to keep on top of it"*.

Milburn

323 on roll, including 39 full time equivalent nursery places

The school was situated in a village fifteen miles from one city and twenty from another. Some parents commuted to the cities for work, while others worked at local factories or in agriculture.

The headteacher had been at the school for fifteen and a half years and had previously been head of a small rural school in the same local authority. Before becoming a head, he had taught in two large schools in another LEA and had been deputy head and long-term acting head of one. He spent 0.5 of the week in timetabled teaching and more when teachers were absent. His timetabled teaching was all within KS2 and with different classes or teaching groups.

The head took administrative work home on most days.

Turf Moor

665 on roll

The school was situated in the suburbs of a city in a two-storey 1930s building. Many parents commuted to the city for work or were employed in local factories.

The headteacher had been at the school for seven years and had previously been head of another large school for seven years in the same city. He spent 0.1 of the week in timetabled teaching and more when teachers were absent. His timetabled teaching was in Y3.

Numbers on roll were rising and were expected to reach 700 in the following year. The school's admission limit was set at 100.

The deputy head did not have class teaching responsibilities but was timetabled to support low ability children at KS2. Another member of staff also had no class responsibility and worked with the less able, but he was used as cover when teachers were absent.

The head took administrative work home daily.

APPENDIX 11
DATA FROM 1990 SURVEY OF SCHOOLS

Tables 1,2 and 3 have not been reproduced in any form in the thesis and appear here for information. Other tables appear in the thesis, but with the addition of 1995 and 1998 figures for the reduced final sample of 94 schools.

TABLE 1: PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL INSET TO IMPLEMENT ERA IN 1990 SAMPLE OF 153 SCHOOLS

RESULTS	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE	TOTAL
very often	13 (26%)	11 (32.3%)	36 (52.2%)	60 (39.2%)
quite often	24 (48%)	19 (55.9%)	30 (43.5%)	73 (47.7%)
once or twice	10 (20%)	2 (5.9%)	3 (4.3%)	15 (9.8%)
never	2 (4%)	2 (5.9%)	0	4 (2.6%)
no reply	1 (2%)		1 (0.7%)	

TABLE 2: SEEKING ADDITIONAL ADVISORY HELP TO IMPLEMENT ERA IN 1990 SAMPLE OF 153 SCHOOLS

RESULTS	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE	TOTAL
very often	4 (8%)	4 (11.8%)	8 (11.6%)	16 (10.5%)
quite often	13 (26%)	11 (32.3%)	20 (29%)	44 (28.6%)
once or twice	23 (46%)	15 (44.1%)	36 (52.2%)	74 (48.4%)
never	8 (16%)	4 (11.8%)	4 (5.8%)	16 (10.5%)
no reply	2 (4%)		1 (1.4%)	3 (2%)

TABLE 3: SEEKING HELP FROM OTHER SCHOOLS TO IMPLEMENT ERA IN 1990 SAMPLE OF 153 SCHOOLS

RESULTS	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE	TOTAL
very often	2 (4%)	2 (5.9%)	3 (4.35%)	7 (4.6%)
quite often	18 (36%)	8 (23.5%)	9 (13.04%)	35 (22.9%)
once or twice	17 (34%)	15 (44.1%)	33 (47.83%)	65 (42.5%)
never	9 (18%)	9 (26.5%)	23 (33.33%)	41 (26.8%)

Four small schools and one large school did not reply to this question.

See TABLE 6.2:
MEAN LEVELS OF CONFIDENCE FOR SUBJECTS FOR SCHOOLS OF DIFFERENT SIZES IN 1990 IN SAMPLE OF 153 SCHOOLS

SUBJECT	SMALL SCHOOLS MEAN CONFIDENCE	MEDIUM SCHOOLS MEAN CONFIDENCE	LARGE SCHOOLS MEAN CONFIDENCE	MEAN FOR ALL SCHOOLS
ART	3.72	3.68	3.32	3.53
ENGLISH	4.20	3.95	4.13	4.11
GEOGRAPHY	3.40	3.15	2.88	3.11
HISTORY	3.25	3.22	3.08	3.12
MATHEMATICS	4.12	3.83	3.96	3.98
MUSIC	3.16	3.11	2.86	3.01
PE	3.27	3.14	3.22	3.22
SCIENCE	3.68	3.42	3.77	3.66
TECHNOLOGY	3.02	3.16	2.96	3.02

See TABLE 6.12:
FREQUENCY OF SCHOOLS COLLABORATING WITH OTHER PRIMARY SCHOOLS FOR CURRICULUM SUPPORT IN 1990 IN SAMPLE OF 153 SCHOOLS

YEAR	SMALL SCHOOLS n=50	MEDIUM SCHOOLS n=34	LARGE SCHOOLS n=69	MEAN FOR ALL SCHOOLS n=153
1990	34 (68%)	15 (44.1%)	31 (44.9%)	80 (52.3%)

One small school did not reply to this question.

See TABLE 6.13:
FREQUENCY OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS PROVIDING ASSISTANCE WITH CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN SCHOOLS OF ALL SIZES IN 1990 IN SAMPLE OF 153 SCHOOLS

YEAR	SMALL SCHOOLS n=50	MEDIUM SCHOOLS n=34	LARGE SCHOOLS n=69	MEAN FOR ALL SCHOOLS n=153
1990	16 (32%)	13 (38.2%)	29 (42%)	58 (37.9%)

One small-, two medium- and three large-sized schools did not reply to this question

See TABLE 6.14:
FREQUENCY OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS PROVIDING IN-SERVICE TRAINING IN 1990 IN SAMPLE OF 153 SCHOOLS

YEAR	SMALL SCHOOLS n=50	MEDIUM SCHOOLS n=34	LARGE SCHOOLS n=69	MEAN FOR ALL SCHOOLS n=153
1990	14 (28%)	15 (44.1%)	38 (55.1%)	67 (43.8%)

Two medium-sized schools did not reply to this question

See TABLE 7.1
CHANGES IN LEVELS OF ADMINISTRATIVE WORK UNDERTAKEN BY HEADTEACHERS SINCE ERA IN 1990 IN SAMPLE OF 153 SCHOOLS

CHANGE IN ADMINISTRATIVE WORK	SMALL SCHOOLS	MEDIUM SCHOOLS	LARGE SCHOOLS	TOTALS
Increased greatly	47 (94%)	32 (94%)	68 (99%)	147 (96.1%)
Increased slightly	1 (2%)	2 (6%)	1 (1%)	4 (2.6%)
Remained constant	2 (4%)	0	0	2 (1.3%)
Decreased slightly	0	0	0	0
Decreased greatly	0	0	0	0

See TABLE 7.2
MEAN PROPORTIONS OF THE WEEK DURING WHICH HEADTEACHERS TAUGHT IN 1990 IN SAMPLE OF 153 SCHOOLS

SIZE OF SCHOOL	1990 mean part of the week in which head taught
small	83%
medium	47%
large	18%

See TABLE 7.3
MEAN HOURS OF SECRETARIAL ASSISTANCE PER WEEK IN SCHOOLS SURVEYED IN 1990 IN SAMPLE OF 153 SCHOOLS

SIZE OF SCHOOL	1990 mean hours of secretarial help
small	13.15
medium	19.84
large	28.33

See TABLE 7.4
FREQUENCY OF HEADS TAKING ADMINISTRATIVE WORK HOME IN 1990 IN SAMPLE OF 153 SCHOOLS

FREQUENCY	Small schools n = 50	Medium schools n = 34	Large schools n = 69	Total n = 153
Daily	14 (28%)	12 (35%)	26 (38%)	52 (34%)
On most days	23 (46%)	16 (47%)	32 (46%)	71 (46.4%)
Occasionally or never	13 (26%)	6 (18%)	11 (16%)	30 (19.6%)

See TABLE 7.8
PUPIL/STAFF RATIOS IN SURVEYED SCHOOLS IN 1990 IN SAMPLE OF 153 SCHOOLS

SIZE OF SCHOOL	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	1990 mean pupil/ staff ratio
small	50	19.5
medium	34	23.1
large	69	23.4
TOTALS	153	22.1

See TABLE 7.9
FREQUENCY OF HEADS DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADMINISTRATION IN 1990 IN SAMPLE OF 153 SCHOOLS

Year	Small schools n = 50	Medium schools n = 34	Large schools n = 69	Total n = 153
1990	9 (18%)	8 (23.5%)	32 (46.4%)	49 (32%)

See TABLE 7.11
SCHOOLS WITH TEACHERS WITH SUBJECT RESPONSIBILITIES IN 1990 ACCORDING TO SCHOOL SIZE IN SAMPLE OF 153 SCHOOLS

Teachers with subject responsibilities	Small schools n = 50	Medium schools n = 34	Large schools n = 69	Total n = 153
Yes	22 (44%)	32 (94%)	67 (97%)	121 (79.1%)
No	28 (56%)	2 (6%)	2 (3%)	32 (20.9%)

See TABLE 7.12
FREQUENCY OF HEADS DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR ORGANISATION OF THE CURRICULUM IN 1990 IN SAMPLE OF 153 SCHOOLS

YEAR	Small schools n = 50	Medium schools n = 34	Large schools n = 69	Total n = 153
1990	24 (48%)	17 (50%)	51 (73.9%)	92 (60.1%)

See TABLE 7.13
FREQUENCY OF HEADS DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR CURRICULUM PLANNING IN 1990 IN SAMPLE OF 153 SCHOOLS

YEAR	Small schools n = 50	Medium schools n = 34	Large schools n = 69	Total n = 153
1990	28 (56%)	21 (61.8%)	61 (88.4%)	110 (71.9%)

See TABLE 7.14
FREQUENCY OF HEADS DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR SCHOOL MANAGEMENT IN 1990 IN SAMPLE OF 153 SCHOOLS

YEAR	Small schools n = 50	Medium schools n = 34	Large schools n = 69	Total n = 153
1990	9 (18%)	8 (23.5%)	32 (46.4%)	49 (32%)

See TABLE 7.15
FREQUENCY OF HEADS DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGING RESOURCES IN 1990 IN SAMPLE OF 153 SCHOOLS

YEAR	Small schools n = 50	Medium schools n = 34	Large schools n = 69	Total n = 153
1990	21 (42%)	19 (55.9%)	48 (69.6%)	88 (57.5%)

One small and one large school did not reply to this question.

See TABLE 7.16
FREQUENCY OF HEADS DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR PASTORAL CARE IN 1990 IN SAMPLE OF 153 SCHOOLS

YEAR	Small schools n = 50	Medium schools n = 34	Large schools n = 69	Total n = 153
1990	24 (48%)	17 (50%)	52 (75.4%)	93 (60.8%)

See TABLE 8.1
FREQUENCY OF SCHOOLS UNDERTAKING ADDITIONAL IN-SERVICE TRAINING TO HELP THEM TO IMPLEMENT THE ERA, IN 1990 SAMPLE OF 153 SCHOOLS

FREQUENCY	Small schools n = 50	Medium schools n = 34	Large schools n = 69	Total n = 153
very often	13 (26%)	11 (32.3%)	36 (52.2%)	60 (39.2%)
quite often	24 (48%)	19 (55.9%)	30 (43.5%)	73 (47.7%)
once or twice/never	12 (24%)	4 (11.8%)	3 (4.3%)	19 (12.4%)
no reply	1 (2%)		1 (0.7%)	2 (0.7%)

APPENDIX 12
DATA FROM 1995 SURVEY OF SCHOOLS

These tables appear in the thesis, but with the addition of 1990 and 1998 figures for the reduced final sample of 94 schools. The data here is for the full response of 109 schools in 1995.

See TABLE 6.3:
MEAN LEVELS OF CONFIDENCE FOR SUBJECTS FOR SCHOOLS OF DIFFERENT SIZES IN 1995 IN SAMPLE OF 109 SCHOOLS

SUBJECT	SMALL SCHOOLS MEAN CONFIDENCE	MEDIUM SCHOOLS MEAN CONFIDENCE	LARGE SCHOOLS MEAN CONFIDENCE	MEAN FOR ALL SCHOOLS
ART	3.62	3.31	3.72	3.61
ENGLISH	4.14	3.65	4.28	4.11
GEOGRAPHY	3.60	3.55	3.57	3.58
HISTORY	3.72	3.56	3.76	3.71
I.T.	3.08	2.68	3.22	3.07
MATHEMATICS	4.12	3.86	4.20	4.11
MUSIC	3.26	3.14	3.32	3.27
PE	3.18	3.27	3.54	3.37
SCIENCE	3.62	3.44	3.68	3.60
TECHNOLOGY	3.22	2.93	3.24	3.17

See TABLE 6.12:
FREQUENCY OF SCHOOLS COLLABORATING WITH OTHER PRIMARY SCHOOLS FOR CURRICULUM SUPPORT IN 1995 IN SAMPLE OF 109 SCHOOLS

YEAR	SMALL SCHOOLS n=36	MEDIUM SCHOOLS n=21	LARGE SCHOOLS n=52	MEAN FOR ALL SCHOOLS n=109
1995	28 (77.8%)	13 (61.9%)	33 (63.5%)	74 (67.9%)

See TABLE 6.13:
FREQUENCY OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS PROVIDING ASSISTANCE WITH CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN SCHOOLS OF ALL SIZES 1995 IN SAMPLE OF 109 SCHOOLS

YEAR	SMALL SCHOOLS n=36	MEDIUM SCHOOLS n=21	LARGE SCHOOLS n=52	MEAN FOR ALL SCHOOLS n=109
1995	16 (44.4%)	10 (47.6%)	31 (59.6%)	57 (52.3%)

See TABLE 6.14:
FREQUENCY OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS PROVIDING IN-SERVICE TRAINING IN 1995 IN SAMPLE OF 109 SCHOOLS

YEAR	SMALL SCHOOLS n=36	MEDIUM SCHOOLS n=21	LARGE SCHOOLS n=52	MEAN FOR ALL SCHOOLS n=109
1995	14 (38.9%)	11 (52.4%)	26 (50%)	67 (43.8%)

See TABLE 7.2
MEAN PROPORTIONS OF THE WEEK DURING WHICH HEADTEACHERS TAUGHT 1995 IN SAMPLE OF 109 SCHOOLS

SIZE OF SCHOOL	1995 mean part of the week in which head taught
small	81%
medium	42%
large	15%

See TABLE 7.3
MEAN HOURS OF SECRETARIAL ASSISTANCE PER WEEK IN SCHOOLS SURVEYED 1995 IN SAMPLE OF 109 SCHOOLS

SIZE OF SCHOOL	1995 mean hours of secretarial help
small	17.4
medium	24.8
large	39.2

See TABLE 7.4
FREQUENCY OF HEADS TAKING ADMINISTRATIVE WORK HOME 1995 IN SAMPLE OF 109 SCHOOLS

FREQUENCY	SMALL SCHOOLS n=36	MEDIUM SCHOOLS n=21	LARGE SCHOOLS n=52	MEAN FOR ALL SCHOOLS n=109
Daily	11 (30.55%)	10 (47.6%)	23 (44.2%)	44 (40.4%)
On most days	20 (55.55%)	10 (47.6%)	22 (42.3%)	52 (47.7%)
Occasionally or never	5 (13.9%)	1 (4.8%)	7 (13.5%)	13 (11.9%)

See TABLE 7.8
PUPIL/STAFF RATIOS IN SURVEYED SCHOOLS 1995 IN SAMPLE OF 109 SCHOOLS

SIZE OF SCHOOL	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	1995 mean pupil/ staff ratio
small	36	21.0
medium	21	24.5
large	52	25.2
TOTALS	109	23.7

See TABLE 7.9
FREQUENCY OF HEADS DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADMINISTRATION 1995 IN SAMPLE OF 109 SCHOOLS

Year	SMALL SCHOOLS n=36	MEDIUM SCHOOLS n=21	LARGE SCHOOLS n=52	MEAN FOR ALL SCHOOLS n=109
1995	7 (19.4%)	5 (23.8%)	27 (51.9%)	39 (35.8%)

See TABLE 7.12
FREQUENCY OF HEADS DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR ORGANISATION OF THE CURRICULUM 1995 IN SAMPLE OF 109 SCHOOLS

YEAR	SMALL SCHOOLS n=36	MEDIUM SCHOOLS n=21	LARGE SCHOOLS n=52	MEAN FOR ALL SCHOOLS n=109
1995	23 (63.9%)	13 (61.9%)	45 (86.5%)	81 (74.3%)

See TABLE 7.13
FREQUENCY OF HEADS DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR CURRICULUM PLANNING 1995 IN SAMPLE OF 109 SCHOOLS

YEAR	SMALL SCHOOLS n=36	MEDIUM SCHOOLS n=21	LARGE SCHOOLS n=52	MEAN FOR ALL SCHOOLS n=109
1995	31 (86.1%)	14 (66.7%)	48 (92.3%)	93 (85.3%)

See TABLE 7.14
FREQUENCY OF HEADS DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR SCHOOL MANAGEMENT 1995 IN SAMPLE OF 109 SCHOOLS

YEAR	SMALL SCHOOLS n=36	MEDIUM SCHOOLS n=21	LARGE SCHOOLS n=52	MEAN FOR ALL SCHOOLS n=109
1995	11 (30.5%)	8 (38.1%)	32 (61.5%)	51 (46.8%)

See TABLE 7.15
FREQUENCY OF HEADS DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGING RESOURCES 1995 IN SAMPLE OF 109 SCHOOLS

YEAR	SMALL SCHOOLS n=36	MEDIUM SCHOOLS n=21	LARGE SCHOOLS n=52	MEAN FOR ALL SCHOOLS n=109
1995	27 (75%)	12 (57.1%)	45 (86.5%)	84 (77.1%)

See TABLE 7.16
FREQUENCY OF HEADS DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR PASTORAL CARE 1995 IN SAMPLE OF 109 SCHOOLS

YEAR	SMALL SCHOOLS n=36	MEDIUM SCHOOLS n=21	LARGE SCHOOLS n=52	MEAN FOR ALL SCHOOLS n=109
1995	29 (80.6%)	9 (42.9%)	41 (78.8%)	79 (72.5%)