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The Impact of Performance Management Policy on Standards in Schools

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PhD Sociology

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

July 2013

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SUMMARY

The impact of Performance Management policy on standards in schools

Following the introduction of Performance Management in schools in 2000, the rate of increase in attainment from 2001-2005, as measured by the GCSE 5A*-C percentage pass rate, is noticeably higher than in the five years prior to its introduction. The aim of this research is to consider the impact of the national policy for Performance Management (PM) of teachers on standards of attainment in secondary schools. The thesis attempts to locate and explain a potential causal link between PM and the rate of increase in attainment at GCSE. It does this from within a Transcendental Realist philosophical framework incorporating a Critical Realist sociological perspective.

An extensive literature survey on both Performance Management and its precursor, Appraisal, revealed a potential for research on the link between PM and standards of attainment in schools. In considering prospective strategies for such a study, a comprehensive range of methodologies and research methods are explored and the Critical Realist perspective using a case study design was considered to be a reasonable approach in that it appeared not to have some of the weaknesses exhibited by some of the other methodologies reviewed.

The Case Study was completed through a series of forty four structured interviews in schools with 'Challenging Circumstances' (an Ofsted indicator of the demographics of a school) and with two policymakers from the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). The structured interviews based upon an analysis of PM national policy revealed a positive response to the effect of PM on standards of attainment. This was also coherent with a wider literature survey of the effects of the various PM policy dimensions at one level and a conceptual abstraction of the policy at another. However, PM policy was introduced as part of the Standards Framework (DfEE 1998), which provided for the introduction of a plethora of policies aimed at raising standards. These, together with a number of other contextual factors, were considered to add to the complexity of the final causal analysis. It is argued that Critical Realism has the potential to provide a useful and penetrative starting point in the analysis of such complicated contexts.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr Woodfield and Dr. Jacklin for supervising my research and for their constant interest, support and challenge throughout the study. Their guidance, criticism, encouragement, and assistance have been a great help and source of inspiration. In addition, I am indebted to them both for providing the opportunity for me to develop the research presented in this thesis.

There are numerous others that I would like to thank. The library staff at the University and those at the British Library, have been a constant support. They have been available for suggestion and advice at several key stages of the research. The field work would not have been possible without the cooperation of the participating schools and the support and funding of the National College for School Leadership.

Finally, my wife and family have been supportive throughout my study and I thank them too.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BEMAS	British Education Management and Administration Society
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CMO	Context Mechanism Outcome (in the Real Domain)
cmo	context mechanism outcome (in the Empirical Domain)
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DCSF	Department of Children Schools and Families
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfE	Department for Education
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DfES	Department for Education and Science
E	Event (in the Empirical Domain)
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspector
IiP	Investors in People
INSET	In-Service Education and Training
M	Mechanism (linking an Event in the Empirical Domain to a Structure in the Real Domain)
MGP	Making Good Progress
MLT	Middle Leadership Team
NACCCE	National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education
NBPTS	National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
NCSL	National College for School Leadership
NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research
NPM	New Public Management

ABBREVIATIONS (continued)

NPQH	National Professional Qualification for Headteachers
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
NSG	National Steering Group
NUT	National Union of Teachers
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OFSTED	Offices for Standards in Education
PANDA	Performance and Data Analysis
PIPS	Performance Indicators in Primary Schools
PM	Performance Management
PMR	Performance Management Review
PRP	Performance Related Pay
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
RDRS	Retro-ductive Research Strategy
RRD	Retro-ductive and Realist Dimension
S	Structure (within the Real Domain)
SCS	Senior Civil Servant
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
STAPS	School Teacher Appraisal Pilot Study
TEC	Technical Education Council
TIMSS	Third International Mathematics and Science Study
VA	Value Added
VITAL	Variation for the Improvement of Teaching and Learning

Part 1:

Chapter 1

Introduction

From 1996 to 2005 inclusive, the 5A*-C percentage pass rate for all state secondary schools nationally improved, as illustrated by Fig 1.1 (DfE 2012).

From Fig1.1, it can be seen that the rate of increase from 2000 to 2005, which followed the introduction of Performance Management in schools in 2000, is noticeably higher than in the five years prior to its introduction, i.e. from 1996 to 2000. The aim of this research is to consider the impact of the national policy for Performance Management (PM) of teachers on standards of attainment in secondary schools and to explain any possible link between them.

Fig 1.1 Graph of Attainment (%5A*-C) against Time (Year)
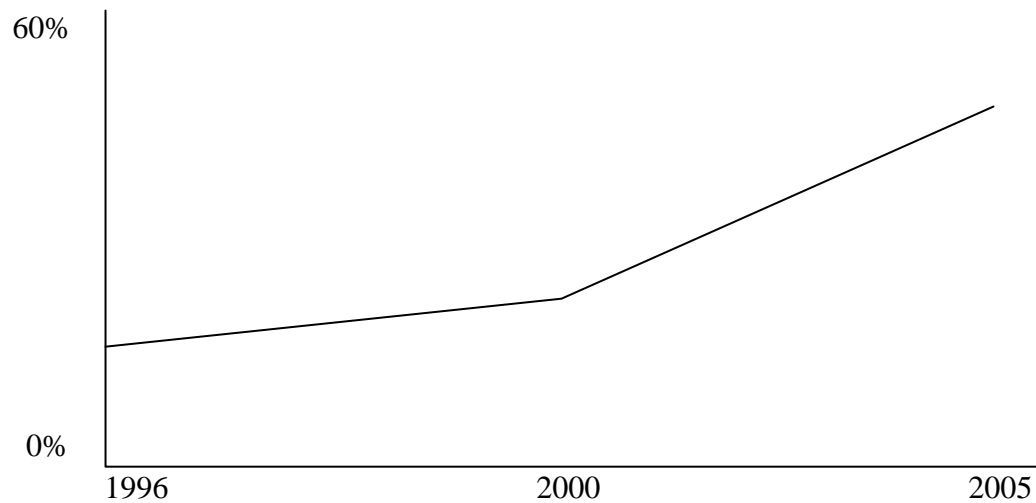
The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the thesis by outlining first the research questions and then the research topic, together with a brief account of the methods deployed. The outline of the topic and methods includes descriptive summaries of each chapter that explain what the aims of the chapter are and how they fit together into a

coherent whole in answering the research questions. This leads to an outline of the key contributions of the thesis.

The main research questions are:

1. What effect does PM policy have on standards of attainment in a school?

    a. What are the main dimensions (structures and processes) of the PM policy?

    b. What effect do these policy dimensions have on standards of attainment?

2. Why does PM policy affect standards in this way?

3. These two main research questions are answered by addressing the following supplementary issues:

a. What does established research say about the impact of PM and Appraisal on standards of attainment in schools?

b. How can a scientific study of a policy such as PM be used to assess the impact of the performance appraisal/management of teachers on standards of attainment in schools?

c. What theories about the scientific study of social action could be applied to an analysis of policy?

d. To what extent does the Critical Realism of Pawson and Tilley add to our understanding of PM?

e. Which of these scientific theories is considered the most appropriate approach to studying the impact of PM policy and why?

The first and second questions are the most important, because as far as I am aware they have never been answered. The whole thesis is aimed at answering these. The questions are problematic. For example, could PM be isolated from other factors affecting attainment? This may be why the matter has never been addressed. It needs to be addressed because the Labour Government backed its commitment to raising standards of attainment in schools with a very substantial financial investment in Education through the Standards Framework (DfEE, 1998c), included in which was the "Performance Management" of teachers (DfEE, 2000c). Finally, the general layout of the thesis is in

sequence with the questions set out in point 3 (Note 1).

In answering the research questions, the **main sources of information and documentation** were the British Library, Sussex University Library and the People's History Museum at Manchester. I frequently used the libraries for reference material at the following Colleges of the University of London: Birkbeck, Kings, LSE, the Institute of Education, Senate House and University College. The main research procedures were another source. **The Case Study** involved interviewing civil servants from the DfES and senior and middle leaders as well as teachers from the four schools that were the focus of the research.

By way of summarising the general findings of the thesis in response to the main research questions 1 and 2 above, it was found that teachers' perceptions of the effects of the five statutory dimensions of policy on teaching, learning and leading were overwhelmingly positive. The Critical Realist explanation of these reported perceptions reinforced the argument for a positive link between PM policy and rising standards of attainment.

In order to explain the methodology and point of reference of the thesis, it is necessary to briefly consider the Transcendental Realism of Roy Bhaskar (1994). As a Critical Realist, Bhaskar (2008) makes the distinction between the empirical, the actual and the real. This distinction is key to understanding the thesis. He asserts that the Empirical Domain consists of events that can be observed; the Actual Domain consists of events whether or not they are observed and the Real Domain consists of intransitive structures and mechanisms, real essences that generate these events. The thesis will attempt to develop concepts to describe what I understand to be the essence of PM that generates an increase in attainment. For this reason, it is divided into five parts. Following on from this 'Introduction', Part 2 'Considering the Empirical Domain' includes observations reported in the literature and how the thesis would make observations or collect data. Part 3 is called 'Reporting from the Empirical Domain' because it focuses on presenting these observations. Part 4 is entitled 'From the Empirical to the Real Domain and Back Again' because the data is checked against the conceptually abstracted policy. The abstracted

Note 1: The research questions raised do not ignore the Policy Practice distinction or the potential difference between a policy as planned and a policy as implemented. The study focused on the statutory dimensions of the PM policy only and in particular the use of the Model Policy (DfEE 2000). It was assumed that these were implemented according to statutory requirements. This was not an unreasonable assumption because, for example in an evaluation of the implementation of the national policy a substantial majority of schools nationally were reported by HMI, to have fully implemented PM policy even as early as 2002 (DfEE 2002). In the event, the Schools in the Case Study were found to have fully embedded the policy in line with statutory requirements.

concepts of PM are also compared to other observations about events at the time, particularly those associated with the Standards Framework (DfEE 1998c). Finally, Part 5 contains the Conclusion and overall Evaluation of the findings of the thesis.

Part 2 Considering the Empirical Domain

This section considers those aspects of appraisal, including performance appraisal, that have been 'observed', 'shared', written about and published. Performance appraisal is understood to entail, in essence, 'the regular review of a teacher's work'. Over the years, from the 1980s to the present day, its implementation has taken various forms. The object of the present study, Performance Management (PM), is the latest version of it. Related to this is the research on the dimensions of PM and how they impact on improvement before they became incorporated within a national policy for PM. Further, PM was introduced as one of a plethora of policies introduced through the Standards Framework by New Labour to raise attainment. The complexity of this situation was accounted for when the methodology to be used in the Case Study was considered.

Chapter 2 surveys the literature on appraisal as a general object of study. The purpose of the survey is to assess whether studies have evaluated its impact on standards, particularly of attainment. The literature is reviewed historically with this in mind, as research generally responds to the politics of the time. In the period of the New Public Management (NPM) and the Tory Government's focus on efficiency, there was much debate about whether appraisal best served the interests of teachers as professionals, particularly with regard to their development, or the interests of managers in relation to their control of the workforce and making teachers accountable. The focus of a research question has implications for the method of study: for example, the effect of PM on attainment has never been questioned to my knowledge. So historically, because there has not been a need for a scientifically controlled causal analysis of the impact of appraisal on standards, one has not been forthcoming. The matter has become more pressing with the introduction of the national policy for PM (2000b). This is because for the first time a national policy for appraisal had built into it a pupil progress measure and therefore a measure of the impact of a teacher's performance on standards of attainment in a school. The chapter shows that PM

is the first performance appraisal policy, national or otherwise, to be aimed at raising standards of attainment.

Chapter 3 develops the survey of PM in Chapter 2 into a broader study of the literature. This includes a consideration of the literature on processes incorporated into the PM policy, such as objective setting, continuous professional development (CPD), the use of baseline data, lesson observation and target setting. As processes that existed prior to the introduction of PM, the reported effects of these are considered to be independent of it. The aim is to help evaluate the findings of the Case Study considered later in the thesis. For instance, one question asked was "Do the five dimensions of the policy each independently impact on standards according to the literature regardless of whether they were a part of an appraisal policy?" In answering this question, I attempted to draw on empirical studies within the literature to help assess the findings of the effects of each of these different dimensions of the PM policy and the ways in which they, individually and 'independently' of PM, impacted on standards and contributed to improvement. This assumes that any improvement would increase the capacity in a school to affect standards of attainment. Such evidence, while inconclusive, adds to the complexity of the situation.

Chapter 4 briefly considers the social and historical context of PM policy and attempts to demonstrate how the findings from the Literature Survey regarding a developing focus on standards are consistent with sociological studies that relate to this context. For example, the Critical Realism of Willmott (2002) points to an historically increasing emphasis on standards. Others view it as part of something less complex: for example, Ball (2004) emphasises performativity and alienation as though they were the single most important social relation. The aim is to locate a culture of professional autonomy like that identified in tracing the roots of appraisal and PM policy in the early 1980s, corresponding to the emergence of the New Public Management (NPM), as outlined in Chapter 2. However, the main purpose of the chapter is to draw attention to potential connections between other policies within the Standards Framework and rising attainment.

Chapter 5 takes as a given the complexity of the social and historical context of Appraisal and PM. The assumption it makes is that the methodology used to study PM requires a scientifically controlled causal analysis with the potential to generatively link it to standards of attainment. This is partly because it assumes that the connection between PM and outcomes needs to be isolated from a complex context of influences in order to link it with standards. It is also because Appraisal has a history of "confrontation" arising from Government and Union disagreements. There was always the chance that teachers who were the subject of the study, including the more experienced, would be prejudiced against any positive impact PM might have. The need for scientific control and/or objectivity does not necessarily predispose the research to any one particular methodology. Clarity about a robust point of reference from which the causal analysis could be carried out is most important in this respect. Related to this, it is essential to be explicit about first the ontology that underpinned the research strategy and secondly the epistemology that it used to explain its findings, and to give a causal explanation of them. A full range of approaches is considered. They include the inductive/deductive (Experimentalist), the retro-ductive (Critical Realist) and the abductive (Constructivist). A value judgement is made and the most appropriate strategy for the present study chosen. A point of reference is taken that involves a retro-ductive methodology within a Critical Realist framework. The main reason for making such a judgement is a concern about reactivating vestiges of the 1980s and 1990s that could produce distortions in the data collected. The use of a robust point of reference like an 'independent reality' seemed apposite. The research draws heavily on the approach of Pawson and Tilley (2003) initially but finds difficulty with this in relation to the idea of classification, taxonomy and middle range theory (Danermark 2002). A strong case is made to place the work of Pawson and Tilley (2003) firmly within the Empirical Domain (Chapters 7 and 10 draw heavily on this argument). So, the methodology is set within the Critical Realist framework and the position is underpinned by the Transcendental Realism of Bhaskar (1994). The thesis is permeated by the metaphysic of the Empirical, the Actual and the Real, which is fundamental to it. The research design is developed within this framework to answer question 1 above. The design requires an analysis of the PM policy to identify its main structures and processes to answer research question 1a. This enables the completion of the Case Study based upon the structured interviews of

policy subjects, policy managers and policy makers. The structured questions of the interview are derived, in this chapter, from the main dimensions or structures of the PM policy and they are the implements that enable research question 1b to be answered.

Part 3 Reporting from the Empirical Domain

This section of the thesis is devoted entirely to the Empirical Domain: what was reported by policy makers, leaders and teachers about what they perceived some of the effects of PM to be in relation to increasing standards. Other effects are also considered, but elsewhere in the thesis, mainly in Part 2. They are also considered to be in the Empirical Domain because they are reports about actual events, and as such, they must have been, at some time, observed.

Chapter 6 gives a historical account of the time frame in which the research was carried out. In particular, it talks about what the data was comprised of and how it was collected, the context in which this was carried out, the schools and their locations and the teachers and how they were interviewed and why. It is relevant to the analysis to understand why the collection of the data was managed in the way it was.

Chapter 7 picks up from the way the data was collected and draws on the methodological framework set out in Chapter 5. It is based on the development of the Pawson and Tilley (2003) approach explained in the same chapter. In a way comparable to the Pawson and Tilley (2003) approach, the chapter refers to a thematic analysis of all of the interviews completed in the Case Study. These are summarised in Appendix B. In Chapter 7, a thematic analysis of the responses made by teachers at School W is used to demonstrate how the analysis was carried out. The data from School W was similar to that of the other schools in the Case Study. The analysis identifies coherence in the data and continuity in the perceptions of all who were interviewed from the four schools. School X, Y or Z could have been used. They share the vast majority, if not all, of the themes identified, but with varying frequencies. Each has a different 'fingerprint'. W was chosen because it has the most even spread of responses. The purpose of the thematic analysis is to organise the

perceptions reported by the respondents as 'observations'.

Chapter 8 aims to explain the preparation of the data collected in Chapter 6 and to show how it was made ready for the conceptual abstraction from the PM policy that followed. The chapter takes up the continuity identified in Chapter 6: it first summarizes the responses from all of the schools in tabular form. It then further develops the coherence in the data by varying the research strategy in focusing on the most frequent themes. More succinctly, this is a way of completing a (cross) check of the data without the inclusion of the thematic analyses of all of the schools. However, the analyses are included for reference in Appendix B. Next the data is, in essence, progressively classified in preparation for the conceptual abstraction. The chapter continues by first drawing attention to the Primary Code underpinning the thematic analysis; and prepares the ground for the conceptual abstraction and general discussion in Part 3 by reducing the data through a parallel code for this purpose. The chapter emphasizes the coherence in the data. The clusters of themes in the Parallel Code are named and numbered as a point of reference to show how, in the course of the conceptual abstraction, each of these clusters was linked/parallel to the mechanisms generated by the object of study. In short, the data is organized and made ready to show how the PM concept is coherent with the potential mechanisms identified and the empirical findings of the study. To be clear, the themes are coded and further reorganised, "parallel" to the first code, in a way similar to Pawson and Tilley but solely with a view to make the data more manageable for the discussions in Part 4. There was never any intention to generate a taxonomy out of which a middle range theory could be developed, as Pawson and Tilley (2003) appear to have had in mind (see Chapter 5).

The uniformity in the data was made apparent from the start of the analysis that the chapter describes. This raised questions like: 'To what extent did "coaching" by the interviewer prompt respondents' answers to the questions?' Retro-ductive research strategies are conspicuously vulnerable in this respect, as researchers could inadvertently teach the subject the theory that they are trying to construct. It is particularly true of a study like this one, as it attempts to explain the effects of a fairly well embedded policy. I should confirm

that the national PM policy had been statutorily implemented five years prior to the study (see Chapter 6).

Chapter 9 argues, through a form of internal verification, that the data collected is reliable. It returns to the fact that the thesis uses a retro-ductive research strategy and that it began, in a loose sense, with a theory (about PM raising standards) to test. Given the structured question approach to the interviews, the Case Study needed to confirm that interviewee responses, which were so uniform, had not been coached.

In order to check the reliability of the data, a suitable point of reference within the Empirical Domain was chosen and follow-up interviews were carried out in relation to this. The point of reference was the thinking and doing interface. Essentially, it indicated what respondents/subjects thought they were doing when they implemented PM policy. They were asked one open-ended question. This was: 'Why do PM?' The main purpose was to find out if their answers were consistent with those they had given to the closed structured questions some seven or eight months earlier. All of this was necessary in order to show that the data was reliable before considering it at length in Part 4 of the thesis. More to the point, it was necessary to secure an answer to Research Question 1 before attempting to answer Question 2.

Part 4 From the Empirical to the Real Domain

There are two assumptions that underpin this final part of the Thesis. First "Reality is the intransitive object of Science" (Danermark 2002, p. 23) and "Members of society act in accordance with their concepts [of reality]" (p. 36). These two statements are fundamental to explaining and substantiating the results of the Case Study of this research about the perceived impact of PM on standards. In line with this, a conceptual abstraction is carried out on the object of study, PM. Its constituent structures and powers (manifest as mechanisms) are shown to be coherent with the perceptions reported, and developed as themes, in the Case Study. The abstraction is not without issue. It therefore makes sense for this discussion, mindful of the arguments of Chapters 2, 3 and 4, to be presented in the form of two distinct but closely related chapters. Chapters 10 and 11, respectively, are relevant to the abstraction and the issues to be addressed.

Chapter 10 explains the results of the Case Study through Conceptual Abstraction (Danermark 2002). It attempts to answer Research Question 2. Related to this, the limits of the more orthodox Constructivist and Experimentalist approaches are discussed using the results of the Case Study. However, this is not to forget the limits to the application of conceptual abstraction, which is why this is critically considered.

Chapter 11 questions the very idea of the conceptual abstraction internally relating PM policy to standards within a Critical Realist framework, proposed in Chapter 10. Recent research on the impact of PM, the diversity of teachers' views of teaching and learning and complications arising from other policies within the Standards Framework are the main source of this questioning. The reports and initial conclusions of the Case Study in Chapters 7 and 8 therefore become vulnerable to further scrutiny. At the very least, the answer offered for research question 2 is placed in context.

Part 5 and Chapter 12 outline the main conclusions to the Thesis. The main contributions to research, main findings, future research and the main reflections on the Thesis are summarily discussed. Generally the chapter is about the impact of PM policy on standards of attainment and the extent to which the aims of the research have been met and the research questions answered.

In order to begin to answer the question: 'What is the effect of PM policy on standards in schools?' a fairly long-standing research literature needs to be considered. It is therefore appropriate, at this point, to turn to Chapter 2, 'The Literature Survey' and Part 2 of the thesis.

Part 2

Considering the Empirical Domain

Introduction

This section considers outcomes, events and data that have been "observed" and reported as well as how the data has been gathered. It relates primarily to the world of perception and events in contrast to that of conception and structure (Part 4). The discourse covered in this section relates to matters within the Empirical Domain (Bhaskar 2008) and how to relate to them. As such, it considers first the literature on PM (Chapter 2) and published work on processes that have been incorporated by PM (Chapter 3). The two chapters both consider how these "observations" were made: that is, the research methods that were used in the existing literature are also considered. The information gathered was considered relevant to how the national policy for PM should be studied. The social and historical context of PM is considered in Chapter 4, as this, too, is relevant to the selection of an appropriate research strategy. This leads to a discussion of the relevant research methodology and ultimately a consolidation of the research design (Chapter 5). It is appropriate at this point to consider what has been "observed" in other studies about performance appraisal as well as PM, and so it is to a survey of the literature on PM that the discussion now turns.

Chapter 2

Literature Survey on the impact of PM policy for teachers on standards in schools

Introduction

One of the aims of the research is to assess the impact of the national policy for teacher performance appraisal on standards in schools as the main element of the national policy for PM.

The thesis considers the literature on the performance appraisal of teachers in the wider context of public policy development, particularly what is commonly perceived to be the New Public Management (NPM). This is relevant to understanding a deficiency in the substantive research literature. The deficiency refers to the absence of a study which assesses the impact of performance management, or the appraisal of teachers, on standards in schools. The thesis accepts that this is a complex and challenging problem. However, it appears that the research literature has been historically engulfed by, and therefore preoccupied with, the political conflict between a teaching force concerned with preserving its professional autonomy and a Government with concerns that are more closely related to efficiency and control. By contextualising studies in terms of the developing political struggles, the thesis addresses two important issues. First, it helps to explain a lack of research in this area. Second, it helps to preserve the analytical status of the research by maintaining an objective distance between the development of policy, on the one hand, and furthering knowledge in the field - the literature on appraisal - on the other. The literature on appraisal arguably progresses through distinct phases because of the changing historical, social and political circumstances that generate the reality that the research studies had to deal with. It is via these historical phases that the literature is presented and unpacked.

The research literature on appraisal of teachers is, as a result of social and political circumstances, bifurcated by two clearly demarcated ways of thinking. The first is the improvement or development perspective: there is substantial research on the more positive

effects of appraisal, closely related to the continuous professional development of teachers. In this respect appraisal could be understood as a professional entitlement to improvement. The second is the accountability perspective: to a lesser extent there is research outlining some of the more negative effects of appraisal. The latter relates to policies aimed at calling teachers to account for their performance. In this respect, appraisal is loosely defined as a management expectation. While there are many positive effects of appraisal based upon accountability, it can be a source of tension. Such tensions in the implementation of appraisal are symptomatic of the development of the NPM (Jennings and Lomas 2003).

A common perception of NPM is that it derives from a requirement for accountability in the public sector. This is the view of Jennings and Lomas (2003). They cite Docking (2000) and Smyth and Shacklock (2003) in characterizing the main features of the "new managerialism" (Docking 2000; Smyth and Shacklock 2003; Jennings and Lomas 2003, p. 369). Essentially, they argue that to improve a nation's economic performance, it would be necessary to improve performance skills. This relates especially to the public sector and explains partly why there was a restructuring of public services during the late 1980s and 1990s. The aim of this restructuring, Jennings and Lomas suggest, was to make public management more efficient, and this required an emphasis on performativity, a significant issue for the thesis, and associated measures including "leadership, explicit standards and measures of performance" (Jennings and Lomas 2003, p. 369).

In relation to NPM, Jennings and Lomas have identified "a major conflict that has bedevilled appraisal almost from its inception" (Jennings and Lomas 2003, p370). This relates to, on the one hand, whether appraisal should be based on an accountability model or, on the other, whether it should be based on professional development. The literature on the performance appraisal of teachers has, not surprisingly, been dominated by this conflict and the review of the literature that follows takes this into consideration. This is because not only is the bifurcation unavoidable but also it is prevalent among the findings in the Case Study of this thesis and relates to one of the mechanisms linked to raising standards.

The chapter highlights the persistence of CPD and notes the emergence of standards (the new 'accountability') within Appraisal as PM Policy.

Following on from the above, the chapter identifies three distinct, but overlapping, phases in the appraisal literature. In phase one, from the early 1980s to the early 1990s, culminating in the 1991 Act, the thesis argues that discussions about appraisal were, and to a lesser extent continue to be, concerned with issues of control and accountability versus professional autonomy and professional development. Studies are more to do with the content, purpose and implementation of appraisal policy than with its impact on standards. So research activity during this period has been more about finding out how appraisal policy could be made to work, where 'work' means implementing it or getting it accepted. In the earlier part of the 1980s, research also related to the moral issue of whether there should be an appraisal policy and if so what form this would take.

In phase two, following on from the 1991 Education Act, which directed the aim of appraisal in the UK towards supporting the management of the school, it is demonstrated how appraisal studies became more closely related to developments in school improvement. In this respect, a number of studies are linked to Investors in People (IiP). IiP studies are discussed in the context of a convergence between the Departments of Employment and Education and the subsequent formation of the DfEE. Literature studies, at this time, became focused on improvement, and the earlier interest in issues related to a loss of professional autonomy was thus replaced. The new focus of research became both professional development and accountability for school improvement, which heralded the arrival of the 1999 Education Act, and "appraisal" was replaced by "performance management" (PM).

The final phase of this literature review concentrates on the new appraisal policy, which takes the form of PM for teachers, introduced to schools in 2000. This takes, as its foundation, management for school improvement. At the core of the policy, for the first time, is pupil progress, supported by and integrated with continuous professional development. The argument is that during this historical phase, research activity moved on

from establishing what form of appraisal is acceptable and what will bring about school improvement, the issues that had preoccupied the previous two phases. There are, in this phase of the literature, clear signs that questions about the impact that PM can have on teaching and consequently standards are beginning to be more substantially considered.

In contrast, while the impact PM is having on standards is being questioned to some extent, at this stage studies that combine conceptualisation and some form of experimentation in attempting to link appraisal with standards are not in evidence. In Social Science, experimentation is sometimes related to positivist approaches that incorporate correlation analysis and the isolation of variables. Such approaches were considered to be too complex for this study, as explained in the discussion of methodology in Chapter 5. It could also be a reason for the lack of research in this respect, generally. In this context, the section argues it is understandable that the literature continues to be deficient of a scientific approach to linking PM with increases in standards of attainment or improvements in pupil progress, including one that entails a conceptual abstraction based on an independent reality.

These final few points should be considered in the context of the fact that the mass implementation of a performance appraisal of teachers' policy, incorporating a statutorily required pupil progress objective, is a more recent phenomenon (DfEE 2000b). So, until now, an objective evaluation of the impact of performance appraisal on standards of attainment in schools nationally would not have been relevant. It could be argued that up to and including more recent times (the full implementation of a national policy for PM), studies on appraisal have not considered its effects on standards. Performance has not had quite the same focus until now: in this respect, the literature survey locates an opportunity for development.

In summary, the discussion of the literature attempts to demonstrate and explain the lack of a scientific study of the impact of performance appraisal on school improvement. So, in exhaustively surveying the literature on appraisal, this study, which attempts to answer the question 'what is the effect of PM policy on standards in schools?', also gives some

understanding of the lack of research relevant to this effect. The review demonstrates this by both characterising the nature of the research completed and also its methodological base in answering the questions it was designed to answer. This last issue is taken up in more depth in Chapter 5, where the methodological framework for the thesis is constructed. In locating a deficiency in the research literature on PM, relating to its impact on standards, issues are also raised, in the course of the discussions, about the usefulness of the methodology adopted by many researchers in the field prior to the present study. More succinctly, the thesis develops a methodological approach to answer the question: 'What is the effect of PM on standards in schools?' in contrast to the questions previous studies have attempted to answer.

Appraisal Literature Historical Phase 1 1979-1991: The Accountability and Professional Development Phase

This section discusses trends in the appraisal policy literature from 1983 to 1991. In this respect, it considers the main studies on appraisal up to and including the generation of the 1991 Education Act. Key influences on the development of appraisal policy in schools include Government policy statements like those in "Teaching Quality" (DES 1983), "Better Schools" (DES 1985), and "School Teachers Pay and Conditions of Employment" (DES 1987), as it became part of a national debate for the first time. The literature on appraisal, at this time, can be seen to reflect the reaction of the teaching profession against the Government's drive for accountability and control of the workforce. Appraisal became framed in terms of accountability and/or professional development and, as a result, the main debate in the literature, during these times, addressed the question 'What is the most effective approach to appraisal?' The conclusion reached, generally, was that approaches that focused on professional development, which were favoured by schools, were more successfully implemented than those emphasising accountability.

The main reason for the debate was the social and political context in which the development of appraisal policy took place. The appraisal literature reflected Government demands for teachers to account for their performance. This demand eventually precipitated tensions, confrontation and open political warfare between Government and

unions, which made the implementation of an appraisal policy extremely difficult if not impossible. The Ruskin College speech by James Callaghan (1976) rates among the earliest of political overtures confronting the accountability of teachers in schools. He expressed concern at too little attention to basic skills and the "rapid growth of child centred approaches" (Gillard 2011, p. 19) in the absence of appropriate teaching skills. The growing demands for accountability, as well as Tory demands for increased efficiency and value for money, set the educational climate for public discussion of teacher appraisal throughout the remainder of the 1980s. It was the 1979 Conservative Government that promoted appraisal policy to meet the requirement of accountability and increased efficiency. This drive by the Government evoked the response from the educational literature referred to below, which argues the case for a focus on professional development. The context of the "debate", relevant to an analysis of PM policy, is considered in Chapter 4.

Fidler suggests that at this time, the 1980s, schools were making little use of appraisal (Fidler 1995). He cites surveys by James and Newman (1985) and James and Mackenzie (1986) in this respect. As such, the mid to late 1980s were very much a "formative period" for appraisal research (Fidler 1995, p. 96). By way of illustrating this, Fidler cites Day et al (1987), who focus on a developmental approach specifically aimed at teaching, whereas others, e.g. Fidler and Cooper (1989), look to draw on successful appraisal systems used in comparable non-industrial settings. Frameworks such as these enable Fidler (1989) to distinguish between evaluative, developmental and managerial approaches. Such studies reinforce the point that in this phase of the development of appraisal policy, researchers were, understandably, more concerned with how best to do appraisal, to find out how it worked, rather than with effects like its impact on standards of attainment. In his presentation at the BEMAS Conference, Fidler (1989) argued that a managerial approach would acknowledge tensions between, on the one hand, evaluation and development and on the other, the needs of the individual and the school. This is, understandably, indicative of research into appraisal at that time, in that it recognises the importance of staff needs and development to the successful implementation of policy, arguably born of a reaction to protect teachers' sensitivities in making appraisal happen, rather than a concern to

objectively assess the importance of appraisal to school improvement. In this context, DES publications of the time, such as the "School Teacher Appraisal Pilot Study" (STAPS) of 1987, are part of a development that gave rise to two broad views of appraisal, one loosely defined by a rationale based on accountability - a management expectation - and the other loosely defined by a rationale based on professional entitlement.

The theme of successful implementation permeates the literature from the mid 1980s to the early 1990s. However, studies were not always directly related to the policy focus of development or accountability. Turner and Clift (1988) pointed out that school ethos was also relevant to how an appraisal policy should operate. Neither is this to say that such studies are unique to Phase 1 (see, for example, Timperly et al 1997). It is to suggest that they are more characteristic of the period. Wise et al (1984) argued that appraisal is a policy that needs to be done *by* teachers as well as *to* them. This could apply to any policy a teacher may be responsible for delivering, and is especially true of appraisal, since a core aim of it is to develop those responsible for its implementation, namely teachers. However, in the case of Wise's study (1984), effectiveness refers to the effectiveness as a policy that is real and is happening rather than the effectiveness of appraisal policy in raising standards.

The appraisal literature became increasingly focused on practical issues, concerned with implementation, toward the end of the 1980s and in the early 1990s. Matters related to the successful implementation of policy are taken up by McMahon (1992). She considers appraisal as defined by the framework developed in the 1991 Education Act, which defined it in terms of both improving teaching and supporting management (The Education [School Teacher Appraisal] Regulations 1991, p. 3). In this context, she notes sources of tension and a threat to the growth and development of teachers. Following an outline of the regulations, she identifies those areas that can undermine or promote growth. For example, the line management structure of an appraisal system could be seen to be a threat, but not in the context of the appraiser having direct responsibility for the appraisee's professional development. McMahon (1992) highlights classroom observation as a positive learning experience but argues that if the scheme is set up to evaluate the teacher's competence, it

becomes a threat and less successful than when the focus was on development. She argues "if appraisal is to promote real professional development then teachers will need to speak openly and honestly about their strengths and their weaknesses and they are unlikely to do this if they feel that the process is not confidential." (McMahon 1992, p. 27). I should add that success here is more about successful implementation than about the impact of appraisal on raising standards.

The appraisal literature is almost monotonous in its preoccupation with what type of appraisal policy would/would not work or be engaged with by teachers during this historical phase (e.g. Samuel 1987). This is not surprising given the political climate of the time, nor given the relative newness of the initiative. There is a focus in the literature on the successful implementation of policy linked to an emphasis on teacher development, without publicly challenging the teacher's competence, i.e. with an emphasis on confidentiality. Conversely, there is another focus, which links an emphasis on accountability to policy failure. This thinking is discernible in a whole range of publications throughout the 1980s. Darling-Hammond et al argue that appraisal based on accountability results in "teacher resistance and apathy" (1983, p. 285). Evans (1993), drawing on earlier studies, argues that such an approach would not influence teaching and learning. McMahon's paper (1992) is similarly reminiscent of this tradition.

Studies like McMahon's (1992) are symptomatic of many at this time in being permeated by sound practical advice, reflecting perspectives from within the teaching profession and from experience of initiatives in America, on how the teacher appraisal scheme could meet both professional and organisational needs. It would appear to rely, significantly, on approaches typical of studies like the STAPS (DES 1989a), Darling-Hammond et al (1983) and Stiggins and Duke (1988) for much of its information. These generally draw on non-structured conversations with teachers in schools and the most frequently recurring view is considered the most significant as a methodological base. This work, particularly the STAPS (DES 1989a), required accessing data through the subjective and open perceptions of individuals, which is an approach that is different from the structured approach, cross linked to standards and several data sources, taken in this thesis (explained in Chapter 5).

The conclusions drawn in papers like McMahon's (1992) unpack as a discourse on action research and are preoccupied with successful implementation. This is understandable given the context. A new national appraisal policy had been sanctioned. Many, including the research establishment, had a view on how it might work. Perspectives did not draw on systematically gathered empirical findings nor offer the experimental control of a conceptual abstraction (explained in Chapter 10) to make a scientific assessment of the impact of appraisal policy on standards of attainment. This, after all, was not the purpose of their research; nor would it have been particularly relevant at the time.

Powney (1991) reviews the national pilot on appraisal policy (1987) in an article that is also partly a response to the appraisal regulations of 1991 and the fear of under-funding threatened by the new Secretary of State. He, like McMahon, considers the lessons to be learned from other countries both in education and industry. He also examines "the linking of appraisal with pay, with promotion or with dismissal" (Powney 1991, p. 83). He points out that in piloting appraisal policies, the six LEAs taking part in the national pilot came to similar conclusions. Appraisal based on accountability would not work, whereas a formative system promoting development would. The six pilot LEAs recommended that appraisal should synchronise with development rather than with pay, promotion and/or dismissal. Powney (1991) cites Handy's view, which is consistent with this: "He [Handy] recognised the psychological incompatibility" of assessing performance (for financial reward), and giving "feedback on performance, to highlight strengths and weaknesses" for purposes of development (Handy 1985, cited by Powney 1991, p. 84).

Powney (1991) bases his case for a development approach on, for example, "Lessons from abroad", which are invariably derived from "failed" policies, teachers' and other professional viewpoints, including HMI and other (action) researchers' views of what an effective policy would/should look like (p. 84). He raises the issue of "who should appraise?", recognising that self-appraisal was "an important contributor to the appraisal process" for the national pilot (p. 87). He asks "what should be appraised?" (p. 89). In this section he relies substantially on the national pilot in drawing attention to the role of classroom observation in the appraisal of teachers. He opposes the use of attainment data

and examination results in appraisal, saying that such an attitude "is frighteningly significant as a national testing system is being developed" (p. 90). Generally, Powney (1991) found a negative reaction from the research fraternity and teachers to appraisal based on assessment. His paper touches on three important issues: appraisal as assessment views organisations as machines; ignores the complexity of the teaching process (e.g. criteria for effective teaching were not considered); and would be more negatively regarded if it were linked to pay (Powney 1991). He reinforces this last point by referring to the negative impact of bonuses on teamwork (Powney 1991). This digression into PRP is not to deny the very extensive associated literature, nor is it to deny that appraisal through PRP raises the stakes of failure. It is one more illustration of the kind of research interest that pervades the literature on appraisal in the 1980s and reflects the prevailing wisdom of the time. To recap, this emphasises a preoccupation with making appraisal operational in schools and is not only demonstrated by the activities of the research fraternity but also by a nationally appointed steering group on appraisal, a Government appointed body of the time - that is, the National Steering Group - that investigated appraisal as a piece of action research. The main aim of research in this phase is about the successful implementation of the policy. It is not - and understandably so, according to researchers like Powney (1991) - about making a scientific assessment of the impact of appraisal on standards in schools. Such a study would not have been relevant at the time.

In Phase 1 of the Appraisal Literature, the focus was on the successful implementation of policy. Research findings supported a policy that focused on development rather than accountability, i.e. teacher autonomy rather than professional control. The 1991 Appraisal Regulations, which underlined the upper boundary of this phase, emphasized both managerial control and teacher development. The research focus was soon to become using appraisal to improve schools. At this point, it is important to make some reference to policy context. It is essential to appreciating the changing emphasis in appraisal studies, as appraisal policy developed over the past twenty years. This is underlined by a decisive shift in emphasis arising from the intervention of the then Secretary of State in December 1990 and January 1991. He, Mr Kenneth Clarke, suggested that the purpose of appraisal is "to improve the quality of education of the pupils", an emphasis on managerial control, on

the one hand, and to "improve the management of schools", control in the political sense, on the other (The Education [School Teacher Appraisal] Regulations 1991, p3). It is hardly surprising that media coverage was characterised by comments on the Draft Circular on appraisal, such as the suggestion that it would make it "a much more negative, punitive and menacing innovation in schools. It will become much more a tool of control in the political sense and an aid to possible coercion" (Leech 1991, TES, January, p. 16). It demonstrates a media awareness of the same issues that surrounded the Keith Joseph era of the early 1980s. This was characterised by confrontation between Government and teacher unions and the political control of the teaching professions by the Government. It helps to explain the focus of appraisal research, such as the national pilot, which was on how it should be carried out, incorporating the views of the profession. It was not, at that time, about how it should be carried out to affect school improvement or raise standards of attainment.

Appraisal Literature Historical Phase 2 1991-1999: The School Improvement Phase

Given the number of publications on the appraisal of teachers up to 1991, debate appeared to go into remission until 1994. In 1995, at the end of the first phase of the implementation of the Appraisal Regulations and with the emergence of the School Improvement 'paradigm', interest in the purpose of appraisal appeared to undergo a revival. This section also shows that interest in CPD is sustained and a focus on school improvement emerges in the literature generally. However, the appraisal literature at that time never considered its effect on standards, whereas they became a focus in all areas of School Effectiveness research.

The bifurcation of thinking and research into paradigms of accountability on the one hand and improvement and development on the other is not unique to the field of teacher appraisal. A similar bifurcation discernibly permeates other major areas of research. There were essentially two broad approaches to the study of school development. These were the School Effectiveness and the School Improvement paradigms. The former variously focused on output data and school performance which relates to accountability and the data that indicate a school to be effective, the latter on the processes that lead to improvement and the general increase in capacity, especially in more recent times. For example, the

School Effectiveness approach delineated by Hopkins et al (1993) at the time asserted that management defines, directs and controls what is to be done and the pathways to do it, and then seeks agreement to these. Appraisal that focuses on accountability and control of the work force to, for example, ensure that they complete their job description, shares similar values, including a focus on output, and is similar in approach to that of the School Effectiveness tradition. While "school effectiveness is a difficult concept to define" (Scheerens 2000, p. 7), its focus has been consistently about output and performance. A school is considered effective when its output data reaches certain levels, e.g. when attainment is in line with national standards. It is the lack of agreement about what constitutes the output criterion and therefore performance that make it a complex concept.

In the case of the School Improvement movement, the focus was on the processes facilitated by the introduction of a certain type of appraisal, including professional development and developing a culture and climate of transparency and trust. In more recent times, perspectives have merged, with the incorporation of some School Effectiveness measures into the School Improvement approach (Hopkins and Reynolds 2001) but linked to whole school performance and not accountability. This shift in focus within School Improvement research has its parallel in the evolution of PM policy, which is supportive of the argument of this chapter.

Similarly, it is not surprising to find that such evolutionary parallels penetrate not only studies of appraisal in schools but also its introduction in other institutions organised to facilitate learning, such as the university sector (Hutchinson 1995). This not only helps to further clarify the study of teacher appraisal, as demarcated by this literature survey, but also relates to and reinforces the articulation of PM policy as a derivative of the NPM. To recap, this underpins the case studies in Chapters 7 and 8, which eventually enable the theoretical explanation of the impact of PM policy on standards in schools in Part 4.

If the evolution of the School Improvement and Effectiveness paradigms parallels the impact of NPM in the post-1991 Regulations, then studies that condemn appraisal on the basis of too much control of teachers would also condemn School Effectiveness research's

focus on output. Gunter (1996) considers a control/development tension that is arguably prevalent in the literature on performance appraisal during this phase. Her paper is more relevant to the negative consequences of implementing the policy, which is defined by the 1991 Education (School Teacher Appraisal) Regulations (DES 1991, p. 3). She considers the circumstances in which teachers do not become competent learners, a deficit model of teachers as learners (Gunter 1996). The paper was published long before the 1998 DfEE Green Paper but is nevertheless relevant to the argument of the thesis in that it draws attention to the consequences of a loss of teacher control, and correspondingly teacher autonomy, in the change process as a result of the 1991 Regulations. She claims there would be enhanced commitment to appraisal if teachers had the freedom to control, plan and implement the structure they feel appropriate to developing a new policy. She says "teachers will only become competent learners, if they not only do, but also design the tasks within a flexible negotiated framework" (Gunter 1996, p. 89). This issue is considered again later in relation to the findings from the schools in the Case Study.

A similar issue is taken up by Metcalfe (1994), although he argues that appraisal would be successfully implemented if the policy were developed to suit the organisation. For Metcalfe (1994), within the framework of the School Teacher Appraisal Regulations and the NSG, the focus is on school culture and policy context. In this respect, he points out that a collegiate school culture would be suited to and support peer appraisal, whereas a line management system would be better suited to a more authoritarian school culture. Thus, he argues, appraisal could be successfully implemented given these contextual considerations. He also adds that provided it is not used as a "mechanism for determining PRP [Performance Related Pay], there remains considerable scope for … pragmatic eclectic approaches to a school's approach to staff development and the place of appraisal within it" (Metcalfe 1994, p. 106).

There are at least two implications of research such as Gunter's and Metcalfe's for this thesis. In the first place, the message permeating the studies in a number of guises, at the very simplest of levels to the mid 1990s, continues to be that appraisal which focuses on individual professional development can be made to work, whereas appraisal which is

explicitly tied to accountability and the threat of dismissal does not (e.g. Darling-Hammond 1983; Evans and Tomlinson 1989; Handy 1985, 1989; Morris 1991; Powney 1991; Samuel 1987; Wise 1984, 1985). The use of the word 'work', in this context, refers to facilitating the implementation of appraisal, i.e. getting employees to engage with the policy. It does not refer to any positive impact appraisal might have on raising attainment. Secondly, the study of the successful implementation of appraisal policy, in terms of teacher assent, engagement and professional development, has been far more important than a scientific assessment of its impact on standards of attainment. However, this is not to forget issues like making appraisal 'work' that research studies were faced with at the time and the types of questions they generated, which tended to focus on policy implementation.

There are other studies that are critical of the adverse effects of the potential domination and controlling character of appraisal. For example, Bartlett (1996) sees appraisal, in the light of historical development, as having two major, though conflicting, purposes, namely increasing the accountability of teachers and promoting professional development. He argues that "teachers are able to influence the implementation of policy according to how they see the purposes of that policy" (Bartlett 1996, p. 7). He implies that if teachers see it as threatening or controlling, the policy would be subverted at implementation. The research findings demonstrate that in the three case study schools he investigated, "appraisal regulations are compromised, the process is seen as being of little use, something which has to be done" (Bartlett 1996, p. 7). He appears to take a holistic perspective on teaching and conceptualises appraisal as the complex product of contradictions, in the Hegelian and Marxist sense (e.g. Avineri 1970; Ollman 1971; 1990). He says: "the history of teacher appraisal can thus be seen as part of the struggle and tension between the developing of teaching as a profession and the growth of managerial control and its concomitant de-skilling of the work [force] of teachers" (Bartlett 1998, p. 227; Bartlett 1996, p. 12). Such comments are characteristic of the Braverman argument (1974). He sees the appraisal regulations as open to a wide range of interpretation, which is reflected in the literature and by the work of teachers themselves. How teachers "define and apply appraisal will depend on their own values and attitudes" (Wragg 1987, p. 1). So it could be

interpreted with respect to accountability and competency, personal development and/or as a value-for-money exercise (Wragg 1987).

In a later article, Bartlett (1998), within the framework defined by the 1991 School Teacher Appraisal Regulations, continues with a focus on the hidden hand of appraisal and how it is nevertheless being accepted or successfully implemented. Again, the research is based upon a case study approach. He becomes more optimistic for its successful implementation in writing that "the legal appraisal regulations were compromised by attempting to create a system, which developed staff and at the same time monitored their performance" (Bartlett 1998, p. 227). This more optimistic view of developments relates to his finding that the appraisal processes in the schools of his study were changing in response to the wider social circumstances (Bartlett 1998). A developing collegiate culture in management practice in the late 1990s is seen to be the reason for his optimism. This is because it helped escape from the more threatening elements of appraisal by encouraging teachers to reflect upon their practice. There is clearly a shift in this writer's level of acceptance between 1996 and 2000, which is indicative of the writing on appraisal at the time. Bartlett (2000) later argued that the collegiate culture and, perhaps, the shift in Government's approach to controlling teachers, began with the election of New Labour. The Government White Paper Excellence in Schools (DfEE 1997a) can be seen for them as "the key to creating a society, which is dynamic and productive, offering opportunity and fairness to all" (DfEE 1997a, p. 9). Bartlett makes the point that the White Paper expresses a desire to work in partnership with all who shared their passion. "All stakeholders would be involved in the future development of education. Partnership for change was to require commitment if it was to succeed" (Bartlett 2000, p. 32). The White Paper urges: "we must replace the culture of complacency with a commitment to success" (DfEE 1997a, p. 3). Bartlett (2000) seems to imply that the culture of Excellence in Schools is no more than apparently collegiate. He argues that this helped gain acceptance of the new PM. He suggests that "Labour, by using the rhetoric of partnership and consensus, are able to move increasingly towards the original Conservative goal" (Bartlett 2000, p. 36). Others have put this in a wider political context as "a shift [for New Labour] from social liberalism and social democracy to post-Thatcherite liberal conservativism" (Driver and Martell 1996, p. 8)

related to the "stronger communitarian links of New Labour" (p. 5). Bartlett (2000) has in a sense seen this happen in his case study (referred to above) and is expecting it to happen in schools up and down the country. His focus on historical holism, professionalism, de-skilling, autonomy and control is symptomatic of the epistemological idealism of a Hegelian Marxism. While the numerous perceptions made are relevant and illuminative, the overall approach is unworkable for a thesis such as this, which is concerned with a scientific and contextual analysis of the impact of PM on school improvement, with a particular regard to raising attainment. Bartlett seems to suggest that teachers were being 'tricked' into accepting appraisal in the guise of a 'treat'. However, those who are committed to a developmental view of appraisal, including those who support IiP, would see it as a pointer for the successful implementation of performance appraisal policy (McMahon 1992; Brown and Taylor 1996).

To recap, the purpose of summarising the work of a particular researcher on appraisal is to illustrate the preoccupation of the appraisal literature at that time, with the purpose and criteria for the implementation of appraisal. In addition, the intention is to draw attention to a number of methodological issues with respect to a significant piece of work - Bartlett's - that are fairly typical of the way appraisal had been studied in this phase. In the first place, his case study is based upon interviews with a number of teachers who are not necessarily derived from a cross section of the organisational structure and therefore not necessarily representative of the range of appraiser and appraised perceptions. Secondly, these "identified" perceptions seem to holistically derive from Marxist concepts like ideology and alienation that can be difficult to apply to the (empirical) everyday, professional and practical life of raising standards. The concepts from which his case study derives are, ontologically, so distant from everyday practical life that they become more vulnerable to interpretation. Both of these deficiencies can be related to the methodological approaches generally adopted in the study of performance appraisal. However, the main reason for considering a study such as this is that it is dominated by issues of professional autonomy and control, the purpose of appraisal and how it is being, or may be, successfully implemented. It therefore highlights a need and an opportunity to develop an appropriately

experimental and scientific study of what impact appraisal or performance appraisal has had on raising standards in schools, or for that matter, any one school.

IiP Literature in relation to Appraisal and School Improvement

Following the interjection of the then Secretary of State, who emphasized both accountability and professional entitlement (DES 1990), discussions in the appraisal literature increasingly turned to ones which considered how appraisal could be used to generate school improvement (Secretary of State, Kenneth Clarke, see Education [School Teacher Appraisal] Regulations DES 1991). Such a shift in the discussions took attention away from the heated debate about accountability (control) or professionalism (autonomy) and reformulated it by asking questions like 'how could appraisal be used to generate school improvement?'

Appraisal studies related to school improvement are traceable to the work of Bollington and Hopkins and also of Henley as early as 1989. The former considered "School based review as a strategy for the implementation of teachers' appraisal and school improvement, Educational Change and Development" (Bollington and Hopkins 1989, p. 8; see also Henley 1989). In addition, Hopkins reinforces this view in a later article (Hopkins 1991). In this particular study, he concludes that the impact of appraisal depends on how far it is integrated with other strategies, such as review and development. Bollington and Hopkins' research is illuminated by the experience of appraisal in a particular school and is consistent with the line management/development model of the NSG (DES 1989).

The introduction of appraisal so that teachers acquire the skills and development to support school improvement is also discussed by Henley (1989). He bases his argument on an approach to objective setting that recognises both management requirements and the personal growth needs of the teacher. His approach is consistent with the 1988 Act that he refers to, which "affords a school the managerial influence to shape the professional growth and development of the staff" (Henley 1989, p. 145). He refers to his experience of North American schools in which the appraisal process is growth oriented both personally and professionally toward the improvement of teaching and learning. In identifying the conditions that will bring improvement, he asserts that the function of appraisal is to

differentiate staff needs in stimulating staff growth. In this context, he argues that it is essential that the supervisory and/or management function of the headteacher is kept separate from the use of appraisal, which is planned to raise the level of performance of a teacher from competent to excellent. He asserts that appraisal offers all staff the opportunity to improve but not necessarily overall, rather in specific areas of their professionalism. In this context he refers to Van Velson et al (1985) in saying that appraisal "facilitates change in the learning conditions with the ultimate aim of accomplishing educational goals more effectively" (Henley 1989, p. 156.). It would be reasonable to assume that improvement in an individual's teaching could be brought about in this way. It would also be reasonable to suggest that by synchronising improvements in teaching within a school, by linking the changes with, for example, a school development plan, it could well enhance the general improvement in the performance of a school and even an increase in standards. Nevertheless, it would be unreasonable to expect that an appraisal system, even of the nature described, would inevitably generate higher standards, although it could. However, Henley (1989) bases his arguments on assertions informed by non systematic approaches to action research and direct experience. His paper is a form of action research aimed at skilling schools in preparation for the introduction of appraisal. In this respect, it is illustrative of some parts of the appraisal literature at the time.

This emphasis on school improvement in appraisal research became much more noticeable in Phase 2 and was paralleled and affected by the introduction of IiP to schools (DE 1992). At that time IiP, a form of human resources management or development, was initiated by the Department of Employment by local Technical Education Councils (TECs), based on the assumption that the economy would be more effective if organisations were to focus more on the involvement of staff and their development (DE 1992). The CBI and the National Training Task Force were responsible for its design. The IiP initiative offered "a strategy for raising the quality of the work force, for empowering staff, improving morale and enhancing teamwork. It was designed to help organisations and institutions improve their performance through the linking of individual training and development with the overall strategic goals of the organisation or institution" (DE 1992). However, this linking of appraisal with school improvement is not to suggest that the studies immediately turned

to assessing the impact of appraisal on improvement of a school's performance. In fact, the work of Henley (1989) and Hopkins (1991), described above, supports the idea that linking appraisal to improvement would promote professional development and facilitate the implementation of the policy. I should also add the aim of studies like those of Henley (1989) and Hopkins (1991) was not to link appraisal to rising standards of attainment. Related to this last point their studies were based upon non systematic approaches to interviews and case study. They based their recommendations on consultations and discussions with teachers. This is not a criticism of the use of action research or case studies because, given their aims, an assessment of the impact of appraisal on standards in schools would have been irrelevant to their research.

There is a range of publications on school improvement, linked to appraisal, implemented in the context of IiP. Such views of appraisal are characterised by a focus on professional development with a view to improving a school. For example, in their case study based upon interview and the analysis of school documents, Brown and Taylor (1996) note numerous benefits deriving from IiP. These include: improvements in:

> staff commitment, their perception of being valued, the clarity of goals for the institution and for individuals, the quality of relationships between teaching and non-teaching staff, [improvements] in planning processes, staff development, communications and the school as an environment for better teaching and learning. (Brown and Taylor 1996, p. 376)

They identify a climate of trust and support in the schools in their study and assert that, as a consequence, "energy is released for continuous school improvement" (p. 377). They found that "staff feel free, able and motivated to innovate and contribute, thus constantly developing themselves and becoming learning individuals in a learning institution" (p. 377). They suggest that the standards associated with IiP presuppose "many of the characteristics regarded as necessary for continuous improvement and effectiveness" (p. 377). The point is, if the prerequisites for IiP accreditation are commensurate with those essential for the successful implementation of appraisal, it is not surprising that many of the

successful appraisal policies in schools (where 'successful' is defined as those policies that are fully operational) are found in IiP accredited schools (see below as part of the literature survey p. 42 and p. 43). Finally, Brown and Taylor (1996) appear to confirm the existence of certain processes, in the schools of their study, traditionally linked to increased effectiveness. However, they did not systematically link what teachers thought with what they did in the study; nor was a consideration of standards, attainment and other output data included. Theirs was, therefore, both by intention and design, a study, an evaluation, of school improvement based on the "Investors in People" (IiP) programme. Further, since the introduction of PM in 2000, measures of pupil progress have been included in appraisal policy. Consequently, there is a need and an opportunity to develop a scientifically controlled study of the impact of such a policy on standards.

Many schools succeeded in meeting IiP standards by the mid 1990s; some of them attracted the attention of researchers who wanted to investigate the impact of appraisal. This was mainly because such schools were successful in implementing appraisal policy consistent with the 1991 regulations. Studies on schools accredited with IiP demonstrated a focus on staff, which made for a more equitable and inclusive approach to appraisal. The effect of this was to diffuse much of the threat of power relations associated with appraisal, particularly where and when its purpose was accountability. James Sale (1998b, p. 38) argues that IiP is "a human resource tool, which will indirectly improve all aspects of school management and make ready the school for target setting, appraisal and Ofsted". There are two relevant points here. The first is the focus on school improvement and the second is that IiP is a human resource tool, which is used to co-ordinate "the management activities the school is already engaged in" (Sale 1998b, p. 39). It is marketed on the basis that it is well funded; a useful form of bench marking and quality assurance; it is good for staff; it is good for management and good preparation for monitoring and review (i.e. for a visit by Ofsted). The second point is of particular relevance in the context of performance appraisal based on accountability. It is relevant to this research in that the shift in the literature through the influence of studies of schools accredited with IiP is from a focus on either development (and processes) or accountability (which relates to output and school effectiveness) to school improvement. The aim of such an approach to appraisal, like that

of Sale's, incorporates both. IiP achieves this by taking the focus away from staff who are managed, to all of the staff, through its emphasis on management processes, appraisal and target setting. For schools, the focus is on managers, teachers and correspondingly students. Sale (1998a), supposedly anticipating a shift in emphasis in appraisal regulations, suggested - and this will be discussed at greater length in the chapters on the four schools - that as "we move from a development model to performance review" appraisal as accountability "carries with it tremendous potential for harm within schools" (Sale 1998a, p. 39). The impression given by writers on appraisal at the time was that IiP had the capacity for diffusing the situation by linking both development and accountability to a focus on improvement. Also, it was seen to remove the explicit threat of an increase in power, associated with appraisal, of managers over subordinates by making all staff visibly accountable for school improvement. By involving everyone, including support staff, IiP becomes additionally effective (Evans 1993). Whether this is seen as giving accountability a more pleasant appearance or encouraging staff to develop for improvement, IiP and the studies associated with it are relevant to this thesis. This is because in the first place IiP is, by DfEE admission, central to PM policy (DfEE 2000b). Secondly, it denotes a very substantial part of the appraisal literature, which is significant in that it does not assess the impact of performance appraisal on standards of attainment. Thirdly, IiP is, arguably, a significant section of the appraisal literature which addresses the problem of its successful implementation. However, and not to labour the point, the majority of studies in the appraisal literature have focused on the culture of successful implementation and improvement in the processes of schooling. As a result of such a focus, there continued to be a need for a study which attempted to assess the impact of appraisal on standards of attainment.

The idea that a successful appraisal policy is one implemented in a climate that is more equal, open, trusting and collegiate recurs throughout the appraisal literature. This is true of the characteristics of the schools documented by Hopkins (1991). It is also implicit in the ethnography of schools in case studies, in the literature, where appraisal policy, based on accountability, is being subverted (Bartlett 1996). Similarly, IiP requires effective management style and processes; as Sale (1998a) points out, IiP requires staff to be in

control of their development and improvement and subsequently to have a stake in the overall improvement of the school. However, whether this is little more than a sleight of hand or a perceived share in the control of their development is not the issue for this present literature review. The purpose of this survey is to identify and explain the focus in the Appraisal Literature so that un-researched areas can be located and subsequently developed.

Discussions linking IiP to school development have been well documented since after the 1991 Appraisal Regulations. They generally link appraisal to school improvement. Thus, for example, Pierce (1991) argues that "target setting [for staff] is an essential part of the appraisal process. But must be firmly tied in to the whole school development plan" (Pierce 1991, p. 16). Here he suggests that the development plan represents the organisational focus, while the appraisal process represents the individual (Pierce 1991). This, once again, emphasises the point that the purpose of a successful appraisal policy focuses on organisational improvement and individual development rather than effectiveness and accountability and is highly commensurate with and typical of IiP. As will be explained at length in Chapter 4, by the time the new Government started preparing for the new appraisal (performance), there was a momentum gathering to focus on school improvement as its main purpose. To be clear, there is evidence in the literature which suggests that when this is the case, the traditional tensions and failings associated with appraisal based on teacher effectiveness and accountability were minimised if not removed. Writers like Bartlett (above) and Gleeson and Husbands (2003) may view this as a sleight of hand, whereas researchers like Sale (1998b, p. 39) and Pierce (1991) may see it as good management practice. However, the need for a scientifically controlled study of the impact of performance appraisal on standards in a school or schools became increasingly evident in my reading.

Appraisal Literature Historical Phase 3 1999-2005: The Performance Management Model Policy Phase

The new PM national policy was first introduced with effect from 1st September 2000. Students who took GCSE in the summer of 2005 were the first cohort to have been the subject of the policy for the whole of their secondary school experience. Students who took SATs in 2005 were arguably the first beneficiaries of an embedded PM policy.

Studies that reported on the de-motivating effects of implementing PM

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate the continuing interest in the de-motivating aspects of Appraisal as PM in the research literature but alongside an emerging focus on standards. This developing focus brings with it incremental reference to the structural dimensions of the PM policy, such as, for example, lesson observation, target setting, use of baseline data, CPD and objectives setting. However, PM is also an ongoing process.

In this context, PM procedure was described by the DfEE at that time as "an ongoing cycle" rather than a series of discrete events and was comprised of three principal stages (DfEE 2000a, p. 5):

Stage 1   Planning
Stage 2   Monitoring
Stage 3   Review

Further, objectives set as part of an appraisal or review were "required to cover pupil progress as well as ways of developing and improving teachers' professional practice, in the context of broader school plans" (DfEE 2000a, p. 14). Evidence of pupil progress would include "internal and external assessments, Performance Assessment and Data Analysis (PANDA) and benchmarking data, to set targets in the school's development plan" (DfEE 2000a, p. 14). Progress was to be monitored throughout the year. This, it was assumed, would be in the form of "short informal discussions and class room observation" (DfEE 2000a, p. 7).

The essential differences between the Performance Management policy of 2000 (DfEE 2000b) as well as that of 2007 (DfES) and the appraisal regulations of 1991 (DES 1991) include the following: the new regulations were much clearer, leaving little doubt as to what was required of the procedures; and the cycle of two years in the 1991 regulations was reduced to one year in the PM policy of 2000. Whereas before 1991, research was generally preoccupied with how to successfully implement appraisal policy, from 1991 to 2000 it was more concerned with the incorporation of appraisal into a school improvement strategy including IiP. However, the main elements of the IiP criteria are given significant if not substantial emphasis in the preparation of the core DfEE policy on PM (DfEE 2000b). In this context, one would anticipate the tensions inherent in the policies developed from the 1991 regulations to be diffused and a consequent shift in the emphasis of research studies in the literature. However, research publications continued to focus on implementation-related issues and James Sale (1998a) has considered some of the potential pitfalls remaining. He, too, was concerned with school climate and questioned whether a development culture, focusing on the individual, could support a performance appraisal system.

Sale (1998a) raised issues relating to rewards associated with appraisal performance, more particularly, "if individuals are functioning as part of successful teams how would it indicate the teams are important if the individuals receive the rewards?" (p. 30). The point is made when increasingly we are finding that schools are expected to operate as teams in order to optimise their performance.

Sale (1998b) is alert to the tensions between development and accountability inherent in performance appraisal as defined by the Government White Paper Excellence in Schools (DfEE 1997) and articulated in the new School Teacher Appraisal Regulations (DfEE 2000c). He points out that linking appraisal with performance targets make it judgmental. While the DfEE advise, schools that are already accredited IiP should have little fear of linking performance with targets (DfEE 2000b), they would have volunteered to do IiP to improve performance. Sale (1999, p. 42-43) argues that performance appraisal introduced by Government is "management done to them" (meaning teachers) which takes the

discussion back to the tensions associated with political control and the associated de-motivating effects of earlier times.

In this context, Sale (1998a) identifies the essential prerequisites for the successful introduction of performance appraisal. These include, he believes, a culture check (quality of communications), school systems and appropriate training in appraisal skills. Significantly for this research, he argues that the developmental and performance aspects of needs analysis do not sit easily together and stresses the importance of separating them. While Sale's work is informative in relation to the successful implementation of a performance appraisal policy, it derives mainly from a perspective on implementing appraisal policy linked to action research. Such an approach would be appropriate to evaluating implementation strategies.

Cutler and Waine (2000) argue that the Government, in the Green Paper and in the PM Model Policy (DfEE 2000b), define it as having a dual role in that they identify alleged motivating effects on teachers in setting targets related to pay while, on the other hand, they see it as facilitating professional development. In essence, their study relates to the control/development contradiction as a source of tension too, through "the pursuit of organisational targets and individual development objectives" (Cutler and Wayne 2000, p. 175). While they recognise that the purpose of the Green Paper is to "emphasise commitment". Quantitative "organisational goals and qualitative organisational goals [such as professional development] are treated as of equal significance in the appraisal process" (Cutler and Wayne 2000, p. 175). The emphasis on pay, they argue, will undermine participation. They also say the use of External Advisers and Assessors to validate the judgement of headteachers "stresses the perceived need to monitor the judgement of insiders" (p. 176). Here they demonstrate a clear emphasis on "the employer's right to punish and reward". This, in itself, they argue, will "create a lot of good old fashioned coercive responsibilities" (p. 178). This would "suggest a central management control agenda" (Cutler and Wayne 2000, p. 178). They also recognise that "unions ... have been hostile to PRP on the grounds that it undermines teamwork in schools" (p. 179). It is possible that the control these writers refer to here is a political one and the suggestion is

that the control being discussed relates not to the managerial but to the political centre. The distinction between the different levels of control is relevant to the analysis of PM model policy and its subsequent implementation and identification as the policy is implemented. As such, these apparently isolated issues are discussed later, in the context of the four schools in the Case Study that are the subject of this thesis. There are also issues related to the power and control of professional workers that need to be considered. The point here is that the appraisal literature is permeated by this type of research, which, at best, considers the impact of appraisal in terms of its motivating, or usually de-motivating, consequences for teachers. Cutler and Waine base their research on a study of the published policies, union responses to them and the literature in general on the reaction of the teaching profession to performance appraisal.

There is some preoccupation with purpose and implementation issues in this phase of the literature on performance appraisal policy, both nationally and internationally (e.g. Gratton 2004). To some extent, this was encouraged by publications from the DfES. In their review of appraisal, Ofsted and the TTA suggested that the development-focused approach (of the 1991 Regulations) had not worked and that a dual system, incorporating standards and development, was required (Bennett 1999). However, Bennett (1999) argued that on the contrary, the development approach had worked. He based his argument on survey and case study reports of teacher coordinators and headteachers in a LA. The main thrust of the paper is the evidence available in schools, both in this and other countries, and in other not-for-profit organisations, that attempts at a dual system have failed and the message was that therefore, we should concentrate on a development model.

Bennett (1999), writing some time before PM, argued that appraisal based upon school improvement and standards of attainment was unreachable. However, this was potentially, at least, a conceptually illuminating paper, which had implications for the methodology of my study, below. Finally, and most importantly, the aim of Bennett's study was an evaluation of development and accountability models of appraisal, and eventually he makes a case for the former. The impact of performance appraisal on standards of attainment in a school or schools was not among the issues that he wanted to address.

Numerous studies, in this phase, discuss the criteria for the successful implementation of PM. Some relate this to a clear sense of purpose for the policy. This is particularly important where the purpose is to raise standards. In this context, Draper (2000, p. 36) challenges the appraisal policies of the 1980s and the regulations of 1991 on the grounds that they have never had "a clear sense of purpose". The very existence of the "development" "control" debate, which dominated the political climate of the late 1980s and the research literature of the early 1990s, is substantial evidence of this. However, "PM is much more clearly focused on raising standards…. interpreted as pupil performance over a period" (Draper 2000, p. 36). There is a strong irony permeating the central theme of his paper relating to externally imposed initiatives. Draper (2000) says that "if any externally imposed initiative is to succeed … teachers (must) be committed to that initiative" (2000, p. 36). The irony is that in the preceding years, policies were locally and contextually developed under the control of those who would use them. However,

> …because of the confusion over purpose, teachers were never committed to appraisal, either seeing it as a threat to their beliefs and values or as an irrelevance and an imposition on their teaching time in the classroom. Too often teachers had no other reason for doing appraisal than that it was what they had been told to do. As a consequence they marginalized it, by going through the motions and setting targets (objectives) that were never looked at again or by subverting it through avoidance. Either way this type of behaviour was a major cause for appraisal being patchy and ineffective. (Draper 2000, p. 36)

This type of comment is not unique. In fact, Crane (2002), in completing a "Practitioner Enquiry" for the National College for School Leadership, has criticised PM as a "mechanistic approach" which was about "performing for the management" and that as "a bolt on activity" it is perceived to have "little impact on the performance of pupils" (Crane 2002, p. 2). However, whereas Crane (2002) attributed the achievements of successful schools to climate and staff motivation, Draper (2000) is able to anticipate the potential of PM. The solution for Draper (2000) is the careful implementation of an appraisal policy

which has a clear sense of purpose namely to raise standards or school improvement. For this reason Draper's assertions offer one way of explaining the root cause of failure of past policies and the root cause of the possible failure or success of future ones, including PM. These research activities are based upon a "critical look at appraisal schemes over the past 20 years" (Draper 2000, p. 35) and a case study employing both interview and documentation for empirical data (Crane 2002). The argument here is that while such approaches provide useful insights into the implementation of policy, in its early days, a controlled study of the impact of performance appraisal policy on standards of attainment in schools, given the requirement to monitor pupil progress within PM policy, would be an appropriate development of their research.

One final point before the review of the quite sparse literature on the impact of PM on outcomes is discussed. The research outlined in this literature survey is concerned directly with the appraisal process. However, bringing NPM back in, there is also a substantial literature on the impact of performativity on teachers and teaching, particularly since the introduction of a national policy on PM. Studies relate variously to changing teacher attitudes to PM (Marsden and Belfield, 2005 and 2006) - this is manifest as "resigned compliance" for Farrell and Morris (2004) - shifting teacher identities under the pressures of performitivity policies for Avis (2005) and Perryman (2006), the commodification of teaching and teachers for Ball (2004) and "Government control of teacher performance, competence and even identity" for Katsuno (2008). While these studies are not about the impact of PM on outcomes or about implementation failure as such, they offer a counter-perspective to such studies. They are to some extent relevant to the methodological framework developed in Chapter 5 but more so to Chapter 10 where they, as part of a 'genre' such as that which perceives education in identity with performativity, are more appropriately considered.

Studies that reported on the positive effects of PM on outcomes
The literature on the impact of appraisal on standards of attainment in schools is very sparse, particularly in the UK where PM has most recently been established. As explained in Chapter 1, in this context alone, therefore, it would be relevant to consider studies of any

school, whether it is one in the UK or one studied overseas. While such findings may not be directly relevant to later discussions, they are nevertheless pertinent to the main thesis about what has or has not been researched on appraisal in the literature.

Jennings and Lomas (2003), in their study, claim, in identifying a bifurcation of the appraisal literature, that it arose from the fact that the Government-linked stakeholders had a preference for accountability, whereas profession-linked stakeholders had a preference for professional development. In their particular study, they wanted to evaluate "whether the new national scheme of PM for headteachers had created a closer linkage between school and management systems" and resulted in new "processes and strategies that improve management practice in raising standards in the classroom" (Jennings and Lomas 2003, p. 371). They also wanted to know if PM had "enhanced target setting and review procedures" (p. 371). They further wanted to decide whether PM had "engineered a rapprochement between the stakeholders to bridge the divide between conflicting views about the purposes of appraisal and PM systems for personal development, performance monitoring and reward" (p. 371).

One of the difficulties of such an evaluation is that other elements of the Government's school improvement programme complicate a reliable assessment of the impact of PM and Performance Appraisal on standards, including other "national policies for schools, 1979-99" (Docking 2000, p. 21; Jennings and Lomas 2003). In fact, many initiatives could have contributed to the improvement of pupil performance: therefore, the effect of PM is difficult to determine. This last point is discussed at substantial length in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, but "a key reason for moving from a professional development model of appraisal to the new accountability scheme was the Government's desire to improve standards within the classroom "(Jennings and Lomas 2003, p. 377) and not to have more control over the teaching force, as it had been during the years of the Thatcher Government (Morris 1991).

Jennings and Lomas (2003), via survey and interview sources, found there to be a general contentment with the scheme in the schools in Kent that they investigated. This led them to

conclude that "the era of performance accountability is now a reality in the public sector, and that, if anything, future schemes would have an even harder edge" (Jennings and Lomas 2003, p. 380). The implication for the present study is the perception, at least, that PM by design has the potential for raising standards in the classroom. However, as a case study of headteacher experiences of PM, the emphasis is on manager (headteacher) perceptions of improvements arising from the initiative. In this context, they conclude that as well as enhancing target setting and review procedures, improving management practice and promoting closer linkage between school and management systems, PM has helped bridge the divide between those who desire a review system based on accountability and those requiring one that promotes professional development. Given that "the scheme [was] still in its infancy" (Jennings and Lomas 2003, p. 380), any attempt at assessing the impact of PM on standards of attainment would require further study.

Kleinhenz and Ingvarson (2004) make three fundamental points relevant to this thesis. They report on the implementation of PM policy in Australian, American and UK schools. In the first place they suggest that research has confirmed "the common sense perception that the quality of teachers' knowledge and skill is the most important controllable factor in successful student learning" (p. 31). In this context they draw on the work of Darling and Hammond (1998), Rowe and Hill (1998) and Rowe (2003).

Secondly, they suggest that "many imposed annual review and performance management schemes were invalid and an insult to the complexity of good teaching" (Kleinhenz and Ingvarson 2004, p. 32). Surprisingly, and as an alternative to this, they assert that "teaching is unaccustomed and not confident at evaluating its own practice and simultaneously providing publicly convincing alternatives" (p. 32). This leads them to the conclusion that "if teaching well is something most teachers can learn over time, then insightful and formative coaching systems would be vital" (p. 32). They suggest that such a system would require the support of experienced and effective teachers, professionally accredited and suitably esteemed by the profession.

Thirdly, Kleinhenz and Ingvarson (2004) suggest that such a performance management system would need to be professionally initiated, designed and controlled. They thus suggest, in the light of their study, that the evaluation of teachers would need to develop a scheme that uses their knowledge and skills as a professional body rather than one that is bureaucratically conceived and executed.

When Kleinhenz and Ingvarson (2004) turned their study to teachers in Western Australia, they found that the approach to accountability was more formative, with a professional focus and with a more positive response and outcome. Further, in their study of approaches used by the Australian National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), they argue that this approach was teacher focused, producing a more positive response, and that a national certification system provided a pointer for the way forward in schools generally. Quoting an NBPTS survey, they claim that it "was an excellent professional development experience; had a strong and positive effect on ... teaching; and positive effects on students' learning" (p. 44).

The thrust of Kleinhenz and Ingvarson's (2004) argument is based on Loose Coupling Theory (Weick 1976 and Elmore 2000), which they cite and discuss at length. Briefly the theory says that a loosely coupled system, for example an organisation like a school, has departments like admin and teaching that demonstrate significant independence from each other but function together. Kleinhenz and Ingvarson (2004) say that an evaluation system must have "the capacity to de-privatise teaching" (p. 44). The evaluation of teaching must not be loosely coupled to it, as evaluations made by the admin "core" are. It should be fully integrated with the teaching process. Administrators and principals cannot do this, as it must be fair, rigorous and lead to professional learning. Loosely coupled assessments are dismissed as invalid. What is required is a more formative national assessment system that relates directly to teaching practices.

Such conclusions are relevant to this thesis. While the sentiment of teacher involvement may well be laudable and appropriate to an effective evaluation, the methodology upon which it is based is not without issue. Kleinhenz and Ingvarson draw data from three

different continents and a far greater number of state authorities in arriving at their conclusions and this raises substantial issues about policy context. In turn, it relates to a second set of issues. Loose Coupling may provide one description, or possible taxonomy, but there are others. For example, as explained below, the stakes relating to both pay and political capital are very much higher than those associated with NBPTS and the Western Australian Level Three initiative. Thus, high and low stake strategies could be taxonomies. Thirdly, that teachers assent to their teaching skills being developed by performance review does not *ipso facto* trigger improvement in student learning. As explained in the chapter on methodology, the identification of a real, sustainable link between performance review and student learning and/or standards could, it is argued, benefit from an alternative methodology. However, that would have been outside the range of questions guiding even their very extensive research.

The rationale for introducing PM in UK schools, as a starting point for one research study, was a drive by central Government to improve school performance (Gregory 2001). Linked to this drive was the monitoring, by governors, of a head's performance and the setting of objectives related to school leadership and management and professional development linked to pupil progress. In short, PM was conceptualised as a management tool. The research was completed by Gregory (2001) on a group of four primary schools in the South and the Midlands. The study centred around semi-structured interviews of headteachers and governors (Gregory 2001).

The author found a positive response to target or objective setting. The response was qualified by comments like, for "target setting to be successful it was an approach that had to operate in a positive manner" (Gregory 2001, p. 41). However, the research expressed concerns about the link between performance and pay, which was compounded by the unproven impact of pay on performance. The most common concern, among both headteachers and teachers, was the experiential and professional knowledge that recognition was traditionally the greatest motivator in the professions.

The notion of objective setting did nevertheless enlist widespread support, according to this piece of research, derived from the underlying desire for both headteachers and governors to maintain a high profile in the league tables. It would seem that the desire for success in a competitive market was an overriding concern and one which pointed to a permeating business ethic within schools. There would appear to be a general assent to the implementation of PM policy, according to this study, consistent with the Government's desire to link it with improvement in schools and therefore student performance. The study examined "the reactions of headteachers and school governors to the introduction of a performance management process for their staff and for themselves" (Gregory 2001, p. 35). It may have been possible to link data about improvements in the workings of the schools in Gregory's case study with improvement in standards. However, as an open ended enquiry into the experiences of headteachers and governors to identify areas of improvement related to the introduction of PM, attainment was not a priority. Nevertheless, like numerous studies in this section, there is an emerging focus on the various structural dimensions of PM like objective setting etc. and the effect that these might have on outcomes.

Studies that reported on the negative effects of PM on outcomes

Improvement in teaching through PM was not happening, according to Gleeson and Husbands (2003). Their study focuses on Government policy and content analysis of associated documentation and developing contradictions. Their argument is based upon a rejection of market principles permeating the education system. They reject the idea of tying the performance of teachers to Government targets, saying that such targets do not connect with "the contextual realities" of the classroom (Gleeson and Husbands 2003, p. 499). They find it unacceptable that the trend in schools is to increased "devolution of market principles" to the classroom performance of teachers, so that the focus becomes performitivity, remuneration and the alleged motivation of teachers (Gleeson and Husbands 2003, p. 499). They suggest that the trend towards performitivity is worldwide, being linked directly to economic performance. This trend is impacting on the public sphere in the form of the NPM, so that the difference between the public and the

commercial/business sphere is increasingly diminished. A major consequence of this, they point out, is that the relationship between teachers and pupils is changing.

The result of all of the changes referred to by Gleeson and Husbands (2003) is the impoverishment of learning, with an emphasis on enterprise at the cost of the welfare of the citizen. "The efficacy of the school" (Gleeson and Husbands 2003, p. 504) is determined by its ability to produce enterprising citizens and its achievement culture as defined by Ofsted. Teaching is therefore defined in terms of its impact upon achievement. Further, they argue, management is realigned around short-term targets required by central Government and the principle of the market, reinforced by competition between schools through league tables and an inspection framework. The central message thus becomes understood by the researchers as one about compliance. Researchers argue that learning and human agency are driven by targets, Government policies and union concerns in the guise of professional agendas. Gleeson and Husbands (2003) suggest that learning and human agency should be determinant. They conclude that there is pressure on schools to deal with ever decreasing short-term targets. As a result, teachers develop skills that are inadequate for providing students with an education for dealing with the modern world.

Gleeson and Husbands (2003) may well be correct in asserting the failings of the educational system but their research, without an empirical base appropriate to a systematic causal analysis, is more inclined to complicate matters for my study. An achievement culture and the drive to raise standards may well undermine the preparedness of students to meet the demands of the modern world. However, unless the researchers demonstrate that PM is driving up standards and is raising achievement, then it would be difficult to claim that this is at the cost of education in citizenship or welfare. It would be difficult to claim that PM is promoting an education in enterprise if it is not delivering this, and if it is not, how can they gauge the cost? Their study may well reasonably assume a link between PM and standards but, as is the case with a number of other research studies on PM in schools, it does not demonstrate the link or for that matter the lack of one. The onus is on Gleeson and Husbands (2003) to empirically demonstrate how a performativity model does actually inhibit the development of citizenship. While the present study identifies a performative

culture and related social relations, it recognises that in the complex constellation of events, such a view is an oversimplification and one-dimensional (Chapters 3, 4 and 11 illustrate the complexity).

Thompson (2003), in an article on target setting for students and their teachers at ages 7, 11, 13 and 16, suggested that there were identifiable increases in the achievement of some but at the expense of others. He wants to refine the "target setting culture so that managers can focus more on education, teaching and learning quality and less on the more bureaucratic and counter-educational aspects of the culture" (Thompson 2003, p. 60). There are two issues relevant to the present study. In the first place, the identification of a feature of PM policy, namely target setting, which demonstrably impacts on standards is relevant to the present thesis because it may well be an over-determining influence and would signal further literature work in the field of target setting. Secondly, a range of publications of work on PM and appraisal in schools, using interview or survey as well as personal experience in this particular instance, is extensively perception- or opinion-based, drawing heavily on consensus as a point of reference. Such an approach may not be entirely appropriate over what was at the time, and less so recently, a contentious if not controversial policy, school teacher appraisal. For example, in such cases, there has been little, if any, attempt made to link what interviewees say with what they think and subsequently what they do, or for that matter, to any outcomes of what they do. The work of Thompson is no exception in this respect. However, his work rests largely upon direct experience in a kind of real life participant observation and, not withstanding the ethical implications of such a study, is a discerning piece of action research concerned with the impact of PM on individual learners. The study never intended to assess the impact of PM policy on the standard of attainment in a school, or schools for that matter.

Storey (2004, p. 207) has argued that capacity building emerges from PM. This idea is relevant, according to her work, to "teachers exercising complex roles in changing organisations" (p. 214). Corresponding changes in such roles do "not mesh comfortably with pass/fail outcomes that are summatively declared" (p. 214), as in a teacher assessment or appraisal. It applies particularly "to teacher performances that are readily observable and

inventoried at the Threshold application stage or elsewhere" (p. 214). She makes the point forcibly that, by the same logic, such an approach to PM derives from the 1986 ACAS agreement which says that appraisal, or the assessment of teachers, should not be "a series of perfunctory events, but a systematic process intended to help teachers with their professional development and career planning" (ACAS 1986, p. 27; see Storey 2004, p. 214). She argues that modernising and NPM have adversely affected teachers in that there is an identifiable need for creative classroom practitioners. This is because while modernizing, in the form of PM, might be a way to provide better value for money in producing allegedly greater numbers of skilled workers, it may not gain the assent of teachers to develop professionally.

Storey (2004) has maintained that prescribing standards for teachers can have a coercive effect and reduce attainment. It has contributed to "the demise of the autonomy of teachers to shape the learning experiences of their pupils" (Storey 2004, p. 211). This coercive effect is a common complaint among the associations and has generated criticism "of the reduction in the potential of teachers to exercise their own creativity and develop that of their pupils" (p. 214). It has been a common theme of the literature on teaching and learning, and particularly the failure of the system to turn out adaptable, communicative, innovative and collaborative workers (National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education 1999; Hyland 1993). Using arguments similar to these, Storey (2004) argues, very strongly, that PM does not raise standards (p. 212). In fact, she suggests the opposite (p. 212). However, the reference she makes to an intuition about some unintended consequences of the Threshold process, which include "the whole exercise of form filling, record keeping and evidence organisation had reduced time for the planning and implementation of improved classroom performance in relation both to themselves and their pupils" (p. 212); and statements like " there is certainly no evidence from this research that the introduction of the Threshold Assessment Procedure had a positive impact on classroom practice" (p. 212) raise significant questions about the methodological basis for the research partly because it is not made conceptually explicit. In this context, she refers to the work of others in the field (p. 213). Nevertheless, there is a substantial literature to

contradict such a view, as well as the findings of this Case Study, which, additionally, point to a ten-year trend of rising attainment (discussed in Chapters 3, 4 and 6).

In summary, the paper can be seen as an argument against the managerial and accountability elements of PM and for its professional development and capacity building ones. The aim seemed to be to promote the latter. There are numerous assertions, in the paper, about the link between standards and PM. However, there is no experimentally controlled attempt to identify such a link, other than to review the appraisal and PM literature.

Finally, in measuring teacher effectiveness, Chamberlin et al (2002) completed a study based on questionnaires and a survey of a thousand headteachers and teachers who were both successful and unsuccessful in meeting the Threshold standard, as defined by the DfEE procedure and criteria. They concluded there has been little impact, if any, on classroom performance just yet. There are a number of issues connected with this study relevant to the present thesis. Firstly, while the number of headteachers and teachers surveyed was substantial, the research was initiated following only one or certainly no more than two assessments of performance outputs. Secondly there was no investigation of the link between those assessed (i.e. Threshold Graduates) and student outcomes for those students with whom they had worked.

In this last section, some vestiges of the past literature appear to remain: for example, the focus on accountability. However, even where studies were arguing that PM had little impact, as they have done in the above, a focus on learning, teaching, performance and most importantly on the structural dimensions of the policy like target setting was beginning to emerge. The change in emphasis in the literature reflected the change in the form of Appraisal as it developed into the national PM policy.

Studies that reported on the effects of PM on standards

From the statutory implementation of PM in 2000, including brief preparation for it before that time, research emphasis moved to assessing the impact of the policy on standards.

Haynes et al (2002), at Exeter University, carried out an extensive study of PM, very relevant to this thesis in that it investigates the attitudes of teachers to PM and looks at the impact of it on their practice from a teachers' point of view. They make a number of key points, including teachers' perceived aims of the policy, its anticipated benefits, how it impacts upon classroom practice, the context of its successful implementation, perceptions about its overall impact and, finally, perceptions about why it has had no impact. For these reasons, the study is considered in some detail.

In investigating teachers' perceptions about the aims of PM, Haynes et al (2002) raised this matter in a series of interviews completed at the start of their very first cycle of reviews. The majority of teachers believed that the Government's aim in introducing PM was to "raise teaching standards" (p. 9). Some felt that they hoped to achieve this by "ensuring that teachers [were] doing their jobs properly", others by "encouraging poorer teachers to leave the profession" and a small minority by introducing "yet another form of inspection" (p. 9). However, the general conclusion of the paper was that "it was clear that most teachers believed if implemented properly PM should…bring about improvements in performance" (p. 10). This important case study of PM identified the potential for this perceived impact on performance, traceable to a range of perceived benefits. Those mentioned include: it would help clarify aims and objectives, it would reinforce teachers' desire to raise standards by improving their performance through constructive comments from their team leaders and the sharing of good practice, and aspects of the procedure like time for self reflection, "the communication with line managers; [and] the identification of staff development needs" (p. 10).

Interestingly, and of particular relevance to the schools discussed in this thesis, the study found that no one identified the observation of classroom practice as an advantage. In fact, a small minority of those interviewed saw lesson observation as a disadvantage in being an unreliable source of information in that it would be no more than "a snapshot of a teacher's performance" (Haynes et al, p. 11). The study concedes that "when the Government introduced PM … it expected that if it were to raise standards of teaching, it would have a positive impact on classroom practice" (p. 14). In fact, when questioned about the impact

on classroom practice, 65% of those interviewed believed that it would beneficially influence their classroom practice (p. 17). A smaller proportion, 35%, argued that it would have no influence by maintaining that they were experienced "teachers who reflect constantly on their practice" anyway, and would therefore not significantly benefit from PM (p. 14). The research qualifies this finding. It states that among those who anticipated a positive impact, many said it would be to some extent contingent upon the quality of the lesson observation. When the same teachers were interviewed at the end of the first review cycle, researchers found that nothing had occurred to change teachers' minds. Those who anticipated improvements in their classroom practice confirmed that it had taken place, whereas those who were doubtful reaffirmed their doubts for a number of reasons, including their attitude to change or inappropriate line management. Interestingly, as the paper explains, the findings of this case study were similar to an earlier one on Appraisal (Wragg et al 1994) in that only a small minority of teachers were able to report having made significant changes to their classroom teaching as a result of being observed through PM (p.15).

Finally, researchers found that "where systematic monitoring of teachers' performance had been in place for some years already, teachers were less anxious about the introduction of PM" (Haynes et al 2002, p. 16). Where the quality of monitoring had previously been poor, the procedure took longer to become embedded. The last point underlines the methodological advantage of the present work in that, as already pointed out, most if not all schools had implemented PM some five years previously. PM policy would have had sufficient opportunity not only to become embedded but also to impact substantially on the attainment of students taking their GCSEs in the summer of 2005.

There are a number of advantages and disadvantages to the Haynes et al (2002) study that are very relevant to the present thesis. In the first place, it is one of the very few studies that have seriously considered the impact of PM on standards in schools. Secondly, there are a number of perceptions reported from their interviews that are consistent with the findings in Part 3 of this thesis, "Reporting from the Empirical Domain". Finally, the data retrieved is very relevant to this present day.

The research itself was based on a case study of PM in twelve primary and secondary schools from around England. It involved some twenty-eight semi structured interviews with teachers supported by the relevant PM documents of their respective schools. There are at least two issues that are relevant at this point. The first is the level of representativeness of the teaching force, in each school, in this small sample. The study does not make explicit how many teachers from each school were interviewed nor does it claim the evaluation to be representative. Assuming that it took two or three teachers from one school, in which there are likely to be some seventy or so, not only raises issues about representativeness it generates doubts about the rigour of the approach. Secondly, in establishing a link or non-link between PM and standards in schools, it would be desirable to conceptualise this, and extrapolating a small sample like the one in the Exeter study across all schools raises questions about the nature of the outcomes. For example, are the results of analytical or statistical significance, and would it not it be unrealistic, anyway, to attempt to connect perceived events of such a disparate contextual nature? Finally, and related to this previous point, the research is rightly critical about the lack of available data on the connection between PM and teacher outcomes. However, as there is no attempt at confirming, and subsequently explaining this lack of data, it raises questions about how reliable such findings are. The remaining chapters of this thesis attempt to address such issues, ultimately through the conceptual abstraction of the object of study, the PM policy, in Part 4.

Smith and Reading (2001) report on research completed at the outset of the implementation of PM policy in 2000. They report on twelve primary headteachers' perceptions of how PM would impact on standards, saying that it raised staff morale and confidence, increased awareness to the use of data and helped generate CPD objectives for teachers (2001). However, they were not convinced that PM would raise standards overall. This conclusion was based upon the anticipated negative impact of making "teachers do certain things only because they [the things that they do] are targets" (p. 6). They also questioned the suggestion that because PM has helped "staff crystallise personalised goals and ambitions" it would make them better teachers (p. 6).

Smith and Reading (2001) confirm many of the findings of previous studies on appraisal, as defined by the 2000 Appraisal Regulations and subsequent Model Policy (DfEE 2000b), in their evaluation of PM. These include the positive effects of CPD and the negative effects of accountability, "another stick with which to beat teachers and reduce union power" (p. 6). However, their research was completed one year after the national implementation of PM policy, so their assessment of the impact of PM on standards in schools is, notwithstanding consideration of the methodological issues connected with their study, premature.

Less than two years later, they returned to ten of the twelve primary schools in the above study (Smith and Reading 2002). They made a number of findings connected with the potential of PM to impact on standards. Thus, headteachers, team leaders and teachers were able to report:

> Enhanced professional dialogue, which was valued by everyone;
> The opportunity to demonstrate, "prove", that teachers meet their objectives;
> The ability of PM to ensure that the school synchronises its efforts to meet shared objectives and so move in the same direction;
> The value of formalising the process so that everyone works together in ensuring that it happens and that the resources and training are available in meeting objectives;
> The positive impact of classroom observation, especially in raising morale;
> Finally, and perhaps a key finding, the facility of PM to link processes and "plug the gaps". (Smith and Reading 2002, p. 22)

There were some issues to do with policy slippage but the overall effect was considered positive.

The suggestion is that PM has the potential to build capacity in a school, which could raise standards. However,

> …while many interviewees could point to improved use of data analysis, the value of whole school targets and a focus on the specific learning of named children and groups, virtually no one could really point to specific and measurable learning impacts for children. (Smith and Reading 2001, p. 6)

In other words, their research does not conceptualise a connection between any particular aspect of PM and standards in schools. However, this was not the aim of the research that they carried out.

A number of more recent studies have stressed the importance of integrating PM policy with other whole school systems, if it is to impact positively on performance (Child 2003; Fitzgerald et al 2003). The latter is one of the very few studies that attempt a quantitative measurement of teacher perceptions. Researchers completed a Likert Scale quantitative survey, which produced a high correlation between appraisal and CPD.

The Fitzgerald et al (2003) study is especially interesting in that it counter-poses the two main definitions of appraisal underpinning this literature review. It considers teachers' views on PM, incorporating Appraisal, as a professional entitlement or as a management expectation. There is at least one issue with this study. It is that correlation does not necessarily imply a causal connection, at least for the Critical Realist. For example, standards may rise nationally with the implementation of a national PM policy but an empirically grounded generative (conceptual) link between the two would need to be established to begin discussions about causation. This matter is taken up in Chapters 5 to 10 of the thesis, where the methodological including the empirical and conceptual are subject to closer scrutiny.

By way of bringing this section of the literature survey to a close, the effects of PM on standards reported appear not to have been conceptually linked. However, there is an emerging focus on the effects of individual dimensions of PM like lesson observation,

target setting, CPD etc. on processes like teaching and learning. This arguably has the potential for further development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the review of the appraisal literature above has been presented in a historical format in order to rationalise or make sense of the lack of research on the impact of the performance appraisal of teachers on standards of attainment in schools. The review suggests that research activity initially focused, in the main, on either development and/or accountability. This "bifurcation" of the literature is linked to the introduction of NPM. Following on from this initial focus, discussions in the literature, it is suggested, entered a new phase arising from the 1991 Education Act, which ambiguously became, for some, "a performance model".

Later studies appeared to be more focused on school improvement with the introduction of IiP in schools. Appraisal, in the context of IiP, in turn became the basis of the Green Paper and the PM Model Policy arose from the 1999 and 2000 Education Acts. These papers were implemented by schools as a requirement of statutory law and, while there have been amendments, represent a third and latest phase in the history of the study of school teacher performance appraisal, including the 2006 Act (DfES 2006).

In essence, throughout, discussions of appraisal in the literature have been implicitly and explicitly about its successful implementation and what this requires. They have also been about the rationale of appraisal, its purpose and whether this should be for development, accountability or both under the aegis of improvement. As a result, the literature is permeated by accounts and perceptions of the tensions between development and accountability, as well as the conditions associated with its successful implementation.

More recently, studies on the performance appraisal of teachers, i.e. performance management (PM) policy, have inherited this legacy and have begun to consider whether it has any impact on raising standards, i.e. pupil progress, in schools. However, the evidence is sparse and inconclusive, partly because of the length of time the policy has been in

operation - a full attainment cycle was not completed until 2005/6 - and, not unrelated to this, because the methodological basis for a scientifically controlled assessment has not been developed. This last point is taken up in considering the methodology for the thesis in Chapter 5. To conclude, the appraisal literature continues to be deficient of an assessment of the impact of performance appraisal of teachers on standards of attainment in schools.

PM and performance appraisal are also comprised of relatively independent processes. For example, lesson observation, target setting, use of baseline data, CPD and objective setting (formerly appraisal), have a history prior to their inclusion within the national policy for PM. They each have a literature that is relatively autonomous from that of PM. It remains to consider a literature of the independent impact of such improvement strategies upon standards in schools. A relatively brief consideration of the literature on these areas would be relevant to the present discussion, as it would contribute to answering the main research question, "what effect does PM have on standards in schools?" It is to this issue that the discussion now turns.

Chapter 3

Evidence of the Influence of PM Processes on Standards prior to their Incorporation within PM Policy

The purpose of this chapter is to briefly consider additional evidence within the literature but with a different focus to the one researched in Chapter 2. The issue in this chapter is what influence might procedures used within the PM policy have had on standards prior to their inclusion within it as part of the statutory requirement. Standards here refer generally to teaching, learning and leading as well as attainment. The chapter considers the influence of processes like lesson observation, target setting, use of baseline data, CPD and objective setting on such standards. This is because each of these is part of the PM cycle. The argument is that, even if studies of the effects of PM and appraisal on standards are sparse, there is a body of empirical evidence, questionable or not, which suggests that some key aspects of PM and appraisal do have some positive impact independently of their role within the PM protocol.

Reports on the Influence of Lesson Observation on Standards

Lesson observation is generally used in schools to share good practice about teaching and learning. Teaching and learning have been variously understood by the research establishment. The definition of teaching and learning within the thesis will add to this range of views. A further point is that teachers could potentially hold a variety of views on teaching and learning and very often they do. There is a need to take into consideration this matter of a potentially disaggregated view of teaching and learning that teachers have. So in the following, the various perspectives of teaching and learning are briefly outlined to draw attention to the uncertainty in what it means to say lesson observation has a positive effect on them. Examples of the literature supporting the use of lesson observation in school improvement and raising standards (including learning and therefore attainment) are given, followed by some of a more questioning nature. This outline concludes with a comment on the effects reported in the present Case Study.

The long-standing culture of classrooms is that teaching is telling and learning is listening and knowledge (understood as new levels of learning) is taught by teachers and found in books (Cuban 1993). This culture might be less noticeable in more recent times. However, it continues to be a focus and challenge for Ofsted inspections. Teacher directedness is a limiting judgement in the evaluation of teaching, even within the most recent Evaluation Schedule (Ofsted 2012). In this respect, others have pointed out that even by the end of the 1990s, teaching involved too much talking at pupils (Galton et al 1999). Alternatively, the research perspectives on learning can be considered as a change in knowledge following its construction or co-construction in which the social context is considered (Mayer 2001). Given these apparently differing views on the nature of teaching as it was and to some extent is, and of learning as it could or should be, intuitively there would seem to be a very real potential for lesson observation to be used to share practice, to affect a convergence, and consequently to bring about an improvement.

Looking at the positive consequences of using lesson observation, one study takes up two issues (Elliot 2009). They are the effects of educational theory on practice and the impact of an experimental/phenomeno-graphic or pragmatic approach to lesson observation on schools and classrooms (Elliot 2009). The study used the VITAL project to test the longer-term impact on school improvement. However, that there is a World Association of Lesson Study (2007) providing for such a project begs the question of the potential of lesson observation to influence standards (Elliot 2009). If there were any doubt about the perceived positive impact of the use of lesson observation on teachers' practice, a survey of the views of over 4392 teachers cites "peers observing my teaching and giving feedback" as particularly useful (Poet et al 2010, p. iv). However, this most recent survey is a report on teachers' comments on their experience of lesson observation, and while it appears to be one of the most positive, and points to the potential effect of lesson observations on standards of attainment, it remains questionable because, for example, there is no reference to changing trends in attainment. This is not to ignore the fact that such studies, completed after the introduction of PM, add to the uncertainty

There are numerous positive examples of the use of lesson observation. The wide-scale use of collaborative lesson observation across a large number of schools by the NSW Department of Education had a positive impact on standards of Maths teaching and learning in primary schools (White 2007). However, standards here refer to quality of teaching developed through collaborative observation and the activity of the learner so that lessons became less teacher-centred. While it was reported that teachers changed their practice, the effect on outcomes like measured attainment were not in evidence. Other research drew on data from lesson observation studies to identify key issues for leadership to facilitate school improvement, including the support of teacher reflexivity and the development of a learning community (Jones and Webb 2006). However, once again the aim of the research, a form of action research, was to change teaching and learning approaches and build teacher capacity. More recently Ofsted (2008) noted the dissemination of good practice through established lesson observation programmes in some eighteen schools and college sixth forms. One study has argued in this context that the most effective lever for raising standards is to improve the quality of teaching, by finding out what the best teachers already do. Observing them was considered very relevant in this respect (Masters 2008). However, again this argument was based on what "at a general level educational science suggests" (Masters 2008, p. 24) rather than on primary research.

Fink et al's (1990) study is a good example of those that are more sceptical of the use of lesson observation. They argue that the performance pressure of being observed may not lead to an increase in standards. It is the historical context that makes it a good example: i.e. almost pre-National Curriculum. In fact, examples of this type, resistant to the use of lesson observation for raising standards, tend to appear earlier in the literature and tend to reflect the unravelling teacher malaise of the time, as outlined in Chapter 2 above as well as by Fink et al (1990). Others too have made a similar point about the impersonal effect of using lesson observation and following this up with targets for improvement (Peacock 2005). The results of a questionnaire completed by the teaching staff of one primary school confirmed the negative feelings when it was used for assessment, but positive feelings when used for self-reflection (Webster 2002). However, there were positive reactions at this time from another study that charted observation processes and identified points for

action as "a Process for Improvement" (Moorse 2002). More measured approaches include, for instance, O'Sullivan (2004), who argues that lesson observation is not always relevant to improving practice: relating to (international) social contexts, he questions its relevance to schools in developing countries. Similarly, others warn against a reductionist view of the impact of sharing practice on professional learning, e.g. through lesson observation (Eraut 2007). Finally, more recent studies of the effectiveness of lesson observation suggest that its increasing use marks an acquiescence to performance strategies on the part of teachers, rather than a way to improve learning (Marsden and Belfield 2006; Katsuno 2008).

In summary, the use of lesson observation for the purpose of school improvement is fairly well documented. Its impact is questioned where it is used is for performance and accountability because it undermines the engagement of learners and the commitment of teachers. Such studies are generally symptomatic of the early 'performativity' era. Recent reports are more positive. This is not to ignore the potential for the views of practicing teachers and research about teaching and learning to be disaggregated. In fact, this is discussed further in Chapter 11.

Reports on the Influence of Target Setting on Standards

This section argues that studies on target setting can be bifurcated in much the same way as they are for lesson observation. It refers below to reports that it has a positive impact (Spinks 2007); alternatively, others argue that target setting constrains improvement (Davies et al 2005). It suggests that reports of the positive impact of target setting could be considered as two broad types. There are those that argue for a more personalised aim to improve its effectiveness (Davies et al 2005) and others that identify particular conditions that make it more effective (Younger et al 2005).

The main argument for personalisation in target setting is engagement in achieving the targets, and it is argued that this is one of the benefits of using it in the mentoring or one-to-one situation (Younger et al 2005). In fact, Spinks (2007), based on schools' value added scores combined with best practice, advised that target setting would need to be highly

personalised if all students are to be effectively engaged throughout their school careers. Conversely, there is a tendency for national targets to shift the focus away from personal educational priorities (Davies et al 2005). The DCSF's Making Good Progress Pilot (MGP) (2008) on 450 schools is relevant here in that improvement, according to interview and survey reports, is related to refinements in the target setting of individual pupils and high-level planning. One study, completed by critical analysis of output data of schools, recommended that target setting be used to drive improvements and suggested how this could be developed by using contextualised data of a more individual specific nature (Schagen 2007). A related paper linked the improvement 'debate' to the national strategy and therefore personalisation, in a constructive and positive way, raising questions about how, for example, target setting could be better incorporated to address individual needs, with an emphasis on teaching and enjoyable learning (Quicke 2005). Similarly, others suggest that target setting is more effective in a culture of openness, with accurate information and data based systems, so making it better equipped to address individual needs (Owen and Alterman 2003). Essentially, they argue that schools should be organisation rather than management/accountability focused (Owen and Alterman 2003). Docking (2000) underlines the importance of reliable benchmarking if target setting is to raise standards. All of this is consistent with another view, based on a case study, that the key features for successful target setting for students include individual and personal motivation, individualized teaching and tutoring and hands-on management of the process (Martinez 2001). What is particularly important about these findings is that they are consistent with the perceptions reported in the Case Study of this thesis (Chapters 7 and 8).

Another case study attempted to demonstrate that there are certain conditions that make target setting more effective, for example when it is carried out as a shared process, particularly accounting for the voice of pupils and parents as well as teachers (Lane 2008). The Program for Student Achievement (PSA) in districts of California and Texas for academic performance was based upon a quantitative evaluation of each district's progress and case studies of each of their experiences. Its main focus was to "improve urban middle grade students' achievement [for each of the] participating districts" (Suh et al 2001, p. 25). The report is significant because from a large and therefore apparently reliable data set, it

concluded that in targeting to promote school improvement, there should be a thorough shared understanding of what meeting standards means, and available and reliable longitudinal data and teacher perspectives in setting standards should be taken into consideration for target setting to work (Suh et al 2001). One study, based on interviews and a small-scale survey, explained that target setting in primary schools is reported by teachers to be perceived in a more positive light and more widely understood because of the stronger team ethos and the more focused whole child approach (Mangan and Hamersley 2004). In secondary schools, where a weaker whole school team ethos prevailed, it was found to be more fully understood and owned by the senior leadership team (Mangan and Hamersley 2004). Finally, target setting was found to be particularly effective where there was an emphasis on the importance of an open school culture, a will to experiment with teaching and learning and where pupils' views were taken into consideration (Beresford 1999).

Conversely, the conditions that render target setting less effective include, for example, where it is incorporated as a 'Performativity' policy. The argument is that this was found to constrain rather than support development, including improvement. Such a view is reinforced by the recently 'observed' increasing acquiescence to performativity policies like target setting, severely critiqued by the research literature for its erosion of creativity and professionalism (Katsuno 2008). This view of the acquiescence to performance policies among the teaching profession is strongly challenged by the study of a proxy sample of the new workforce of teachers in which their meaning systems were accessed (Storey 2007). In this study, the willingness to engage with policy is attributed partly to mid-career entrants recently inducted into the teaching profession as well as work force reforms (Storey 2007). The use of summative assessments as the sole basis of target setting has also been seen to be constraining; similarly, the use of performance indicators in target setting is considered to have an inhibiting effect (Harlen 2009). The conclusion drawn from considering such research is that where the education process is heavily schooled so that target setting becomes more remote and general, it tends not to have as positive an effect on developments.

In conclusion, a significant proportion of reports in the literature are positive about the impact of target setting on school improvement. Studies can be more critical where target setting is less personal and not directed at the individual needs of learners. In relation to these two sets of views taken from the literature, the teachers from the schools in the Case Study were positive about the impact of target setting (Tables 8.1 – 8.4).

Reports on the Influence of the Use of Baseline Data on Standards

The use of achievement data to improve effectiveness, by consultants and researchers, is universally well embedded in the literature. For instance, the systematic collection by researchers of students' achievement data for the entire cohort on the Matura five-subject upper secondary school exam to affect future instructional activities in secondary schools in Slovenia is based on this well-established assumption (Zupanc et al 2009, p. 474). However, research studies with a specific focus on the use of baseline data by teachers in England to raise the achievement of their pupils are fewer in number. This is not to overlook the fact that the five dimensions of PM are interlinked and that, for example, target setting without the use of baseline data is almost inconceivable.

Research into the impact of baseline assessment can, as for the processes discussed above, be set within the two frames of 'professionalism and learning' and 'managerialism and accountability'. The argument has tended to be in support of the former (Chapter 2), so that, for example, Lindsay (2001) initially, and Lindsay and Lewis (2003) concentrate on the benefits of baseline assessment to pedagogy and child development and judge the national policy accordingly to have a positive future. However, in the context of the present discussion, their paper commends the policy for playing down accountability and the purpose of adding value at school level (2003). The paper was claimed to be a good outline of the use of baseline assessment nationally at that time. Nevertheless, its usefulness as a policy evaluation has been questioned by Torrance (2003) because it considers only one perspective - the teacher - as one of potentially a number of policy subjects. For example, they did not include the views of students, middle leaders or senior leaders by interview or survey. Neither did they consider the views of policy makers, at least not explicitly, by interview.

As an evaluation, it is especially vulnerable because baseline data are far less discrete at pre-school level. For example, Social Behaviour, Motivation to Learn and Spirituality are far more complex and their measurement is potentially more esoteric than, say, constructing a type of sentence or completing an addition exercise at, say, Key Stage 2 of the National Curriculum. One aspect of this is that the potential range of outcomes could be more diverse.

An NFER study commissioned by the DFES is probably less dated and more relevant to the present discussion (Kirkup et al 2005). This study aimed to identify how baseline data was used to encourage learning in primary, middle and secondary schools and maintained schools. In this respect, it looked at the use of the data in maintained schools and how successful it was in raising attainment. The use of data was perceived to promote teaching and learning by facilitating more effective allocation of staff and resources; challenging expectations of staff pupils and parents; identifying pupils' achievements and setting targets. Each of these resonates with the findings reported in the Case Study of this thesis (Chapter 7, 8 and 9). However, and most relevant, a recurring theme was that the data "only becomes effective if it stimulates questions about the actual learning that is taking place and how it can be developed further" (Kirkup et al 2005, p. 210). Relevant because it resonates strongly with the comments made in the Case Study of PM here (Appendix B).

Finally, one large-scale study considered the issues associated with the introduction of the Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) baseline assessment scheme into 53 primary schools in Aberdeen in 1997 (Cowie 2002). More to the point of the present discussion, the success of the initiative was found to be constrained to some extent by the tension between managerial and professional accountability. The literature survey on PM in Chapter 2 is relevant in this context. The actions of the teachers were underpinned by educational values and deeply held professional principles rather than the orthodoxies of the 'new managerialism' (Cowie 2002, p. 1).

By way of recapping, there are few challenges in the literature to undermine the view that the use of baseline data has a positive impact on school development. However, what limited number there are support the view that the use of baseline data is more effective in a climate of professionalism and learning rather than one of managerialism and accountability.

Reports on the Influence of CPD on Improvement

Studies into the impact of CPD on standards, considered below, are to a significant extent positive about its potential and tend to focus on the constraints preventing this being realised. In the studies cited, criticism of its impact derives from a lack of personalization of CPD programs within the national framework for CPD.

In one phenomenological study of CPD practices, on health workers as professional practitioners, the argument generally was about the focus on content rather than on the personal learning and a concept about what continuous professional learning entails as part of a professional's lived experience of everyday practice. The suggestion was that INSET mainly consisted of brief didactic episodes, often separated from practice or ongoing support (Webster 2006). Thus, instead of viewing CPD in epistemological terms as a deficit concept, the ontological dimension of professional learning was the starting point in this study. This enabled the researcher to make the point that it is the professionals that shape what and how they learn (Webster 2006).

Storey (2009) critically evaluated the policy for a 'New Professionalism' for teachers, based upon three distinct, but interrelated, policies: Professional Standards, PM and CPD. She points out that much has been written about the vision for a national CPD framework but little about empirical evidence for its implementation (Storey 2009). She concludes:

> The widespread failure to tackle the strategic dimension that links PM with CPD, to engage in criterion-based evaluation of training or to identify appropriate development opportunities in school, have all tended to obstruct the road to the 'New Professionalism'. (Storey 2009, p. 121)

This is a significant paper for the Case Study in that it is so critical of a national framework for CPD (because it could potentially undermine individual professional development), the aim of which was to reinforce PM. However, with such a focus on policy provision, it overlooks the open and flexible interpretation of CPD that teachers might have in their everyday professional practice. Certainly in the Case Study, teachers were reported to have open and flexible perceptions of CPD to the extent that they were reported to be very positive about their personal and professional development in the context of PM (Tables 8.1 -8.5). The suggestion is that teachers in the Case Study completed for this thesis were focused on the ontological dimension of professional learning, even if they were unaware of it (Chapters 7 and 8).

Another study questions whether CPD as it is presently conceptualised by policy practices nationally and internationally (activities which teachers engage in that are designed to enhance their work) is too simple if it is to be at the heart of raising standards of teaching (Day and Sachs 2004). The authors say it would need to account for teachers' thinking and feelings, biographies, social histories and working contexts, peer groups, teaching preferences, identities, phase of development and broader socio-political cultures if it is to be effective (Day and Sachs 2004). This is, to all intents and purposes, another variant of the personalization critique, and there are many in the literature on this topic. In the context of a PM review, the agreement of appropriate CPD could not be anything but personalized, in that it results from a 'one-on-one' discussion. Again, the suggestion is that CPD would need to be personalized in the way that the term is applied in Day and Sachs' study if it were to impact on standards. There is good reason to believe that this has been reported to be so in the Case Study of this thesis (Chapters 7 and 8).

In overview, a significant number of studies that consider the impact of CPD on standards tend to look at generic programs and their local or national effects. In this context, they identify the lack of personalization as a significant shortcoming. However, in the few isolated cases like those included where the study is local and specific to a particular

institution, the effect on standards is more clearly positive. In this respect, the literature, to some extent, corroborates the perceptions reported in the Case Study (Chapters 7 and 8).

Reports on the Influence of Objective Setting on Improvement

A number of studies in the literature emphasize the key role that the objective setting process has in promoting improvement. Those that are critical are in a small minority. The main criticism was related to an overemphasis on accountability. This was found to be a failing of appraisal policies generally, as explained in Chapter 2, and is also consistent with the general perceptions of the Case Study (Tables 8.1 – 8.5).

There are those studies of appraisal, particularly in relation to objective setting, that focus either on the professional needs of the teacher or on the goals of the school. One study considered a very wide range of schools based upon seventeen interviews (sixteen SLT and one MLT) from twelve maintained secondary schools (Mooreland 2009). An interviewee reported that PM and lesson observation must be used to drive up standards of achievement (p. 741). Mooreland (2009) argues it could do this by ensuring that it is "a good thing for everybody" (p. 763). As the study suggested, it is "PM [that] should drive the objectives and direction of the school and not the other way around" (p. 763). On the other hand, another study explicitly synchronized individual aims with school aims. It was emphatic in its evaluation of teacher appraisal, as illustrated by the comment: "linking the school improvement plan to the teacher appraisal process creates a system whereby all individuals are focused on the school's goals and each individual understands his or her part in achieving those goals" (Reddekopp 2007, p. 40). More importantly, "it can be powerful in leading the School toward the common mission of achieving student success" (p. 40). Both of these studies provide empirical evidence that support their alternative views. However, the Case Study provides evidence that both approaches to PM work (Chapters 7, 8 and 9) and in addition explains how they impact on standards of attainment (Chapter 10).

Finally, much has been written about the positive impact of objective setting in the PM and Appraisal literature. The fewer more critical evaluations of its impact are, consistent with

the conclusions of Chapter 2 of the thesis, generally about the potential constraints of using objective setting within an accountability framework.

Influence of PM Processes on School Improvement prior to their Incorporation within PM National Policy: Conclusion

Studies of evidence of lesson observation, target setting, the use of baseline data, CPD and to a much lesser extent objective setting processes have been considered apart from their role within PM national policy. There is a range of evidence in the literature which suggests that, even independently of each other, they can impact positively on school improvements and standards, depending on contexts. Context is used in a general sense, as explained in Chapter 5, and includes both social and policy context (the aims of the school). The trend or pattern emerging is that there is a range of empirical evidence in the literature to suggest that each of the dimensions of PM can be reasonably expected to affect school improvement, whether they are considered as part of a PM policy or in relative isolation from one another. Together, the arguments and discussions within the literature (Chapters 2 and 5) are consistent with the perceptions reported in the Case Study (Chapters 7, 8 and 9). I should add that such findings were also consistent with the expectations and thinking of DfES policy makers (Appendix B). The effects on standards of attainment are difficult to gauge from such studies. However, that some effect is possible adds to the complexity of analysing and evaluating the impact of PM.

Studies in the literature of the performance appraisal of teachers and the processes that comprise it have generally attempted to answer different research questions to the ones being answered here (Chapters 2 and 5). In this respect they would offer little methodological support for the research question posed about the impact of PM on attainment. This is especially true in the context of the plethora of policies introduced at about the same time as PM, all designed to raise attainment in schools. They each had the statutory authority of parliament and were introduced through the Standards Framework. This complex constellation of policy 'interference' is to be considered in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

The Contexts of the National PM Policy

Introduction

The thesis attempts to develop an argument for a link between PM and standards in the four schools in the Case Study based on a coherence between empirical data and a conceptual abstraction. Such a link is not without question or challenge. The purpose of this chapter is to contextualize potential connections between other national policies (beside PM) and standards. The ultimate aim of the chapter is to question the scope of the thesis to determine to what extent PM alone affects standards.

Chapter 2 surveyed the literature relevant to this study about the impact of PM on standards and argued that until the late 1990s when New Labour were elected, Appraisal was not directly linked to standards or any measurable entities like a direct improvement in students' skill levels. As has already been explained, studies of Appraisal focused on professional development and a professional entitlement on the one hand and accountability on the other. The onset of Appraisal, as explained in Chapter 2, was propagated within the wider context of public policy development, which was commonly perceived and reported to be NPM.

Willmott (2002) explains the marketisation of Education through morphogenetics. In this, he uses culture as the irreducible component of analysis and counter-poses the child-centred philosophy and professional autonomy of Plowden against the more structured approach to teaching and learning of the National Curriculum (Willmott 2002). The latter was made more acceptable, he suggests, by the quasi-marketisation of the education system which was blamed for the economic decline of the country. He argues that Sociocultural Elaboration, the outcome, resulted in detailed state regulation where there was once a general degree of autonomy (Willmott 2002, p. 123). He also points out that the quasi-marketisation of education wrongly assumes that reduced funding and competition between schools will raise standards (Willmott, 2002, p. 136). Competition between schools would be encouraged by league tables of output data. Raised standards would be the 'inevitable'

consequence of these league tables. If the 1980s are characterised by the political struggle between Government and Teachers culminating in the National Curriculum of 1988 and the Appraisal Regulations of 1990, the dying embers of the Tory Government could be characterised by consolidation of structural change and political and managerial control of teachers and the development and embedding of league tables and competition passed on to the Government of New Labour in 1997. Increased standards were the anticipated consequence of league tables of schools and competition. "Child Centred Philosophy and the New Managerialism" is especially relevant to one of the main arguments of this thesis in drawing attention to the impact of the New Labour Government on Education (Willmott 2002). New Labour, through its pursuit of performance, constituted as Targets and Benchmarks and Literacy and Numeracy Hours rather than solely through comparison with other institutions, takes the drive to raise standards to another level (Willmott 2002, p. 74). The point he makes is the cornerstone of the present chapter.

Chapter 2 acknowledged the very slow onset of studies of the impact of PM on standards early in the new millennium. The purpose of the present chapter is to demonstrate that, more than any of its predecessors, the New Labour Government emphasised standards, performance and league tables and also Public Policy Management. However, in addition, it raises serious questions about the difficulties of measuring the impact of any one policy (not necessarily directly connected to Governments' main commitments). It also emphasises the challenge of identifying a generative link between individual policies, including that of PM for teachers, and standards.

The point is that if there were no association between PM and attainment, could there be a generative link between them? This would raise the question of the significance of any potential disaggregating of teachers' views of teaching and learning, within the Case Study, compared to the research establishment as well as to teachers' views nationally.

The 'New Labour' and Standards (1997-2000)

First, there is a need to address aspects of the political context underpinning New Labour's commitment to standards. According to Pollitt and Bouckaert (2005), "the New Labour

Government of 1997 reversed very little of what had gone before" (p. 295). They argue that "if anything they intensified the 'league table' system still further and 're-branded' the *Citizen's Charter* programme as the 'Service First' initiative" (p. 295). They claim that "many of their [New Labour's] proposals shared the underlying assumptions about the transformative capacity of better, more professional [the inference here is quality rather than autonomy] public management … characteristic of their Conservative predecessors" (p.295). They illustrate this by reference to "the idea of a benchmarked Procurement Excellence model or the 'Best Value' initiative in local Government" (p. 295), typical of both Governments.

More importantly, the New Labour Government, like the Conservatives before them, seemed to believe that educational standards and the economy were very closely linked. Thus, at the 1998 Labour Party Conference, the new Secretary of State for Education, David Blunkett, said "the best economic policy we have – [is] 'education'" (1998, p. 116). In "Better Schools" the Conservatives argued that, not least in the light of what is being achieved in other countries, the standards generally achieved by UK students were neither as good as they could be nor as good as they needed to be (DES 1985). In "Choice and Diversity" they argued that the UK could match and outstrip the standards of other leading nations (DES 1992). In New Labour's White paper (DfEE 1997a) the Government draw explicit attention to England's place in the international league tables in criticising the standards in schools. They use the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) to demonstrate that students were not achieving their potential (Harris 1998, p. 10). While the conclusions they reach are undermined and contradicted by others, such arguments demonstrate the seamless continuity between the strategies of these successive Governments (Harris et al 1997; Keys et al 1996).

Are Standards Improving?
All of this raises the question: how can we be sure if standards, in the sense of raised levels of attainment, are actually improving? After all, the rising trend in attainment at KS4 was graphically illustrated in Chapter 1 (p. 12). Assuming that SATs and GCSE are reliable indicators of the same phenomenon, and this is questionable, national test results suggest

that the percentages of 11-year-olds achieving level 4 or above have been increasing year on year. On the other hand, studies using adapted versions of the Richmond Tests of Basic Skills found that standards in Maths had fallen from 1976 to 1996 (Galton et al 1998). A similar increasing trend was observed in the percentage of 15-year-olds achieving five A*-C passes. In this case the Basic Skills were found to show a parallel decline (Moser 1999). Other issues in the debate on whether standards were actually improving concern the variation in standards in relation to gender, ethnicity, social class and locality. On another front, business leaders and university lecturers argued that the apparent rise in standards could, generally, be put down to less rigour in marking examination papers. Indeed, in response to this threat to standards, the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority set a programme of reviews by panels of specialists to ensure that examination demands and standards of grading were being maintained. This strategy was continued by SCAA's successor, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). To be clear, the argument developing here is that it is extremely difficult to conclude that standards were actually improving because of the variation in assessment practices as at least one complicating factor. There are many more: for example, Coe (1999) compared changes in GCSE and A-Level grades in a range of subjects since 1988 while holding constant the effects of general ability, as measured by certain tests. He found that grades achieved by students of the same ability had tended to increase by at least one grade for A Level and nearly half a grade for GCSE over a ten-year period. He concluded that the reason for this was that grade standards were slipping. However, there are a number of possibilities including more effective teaching, better exam tactics, the introduction of coursework and modular exams which help candidates to demonstrate their ability more easily and demographic changes resulting in increases in numbers of students better suited to passing exams. The point is that it is difficult to conclude that, given the improved attainment, the population was becoming better skilled, or that attainment was increasing year on year. Potentially, a more appropriate conclusion could be that the apparent measured year on year increases in attainment were the result of no more than an increase in engagement of learners with an assessment system and its related curriculum, whatever that might be, and greater learning, whether that was appropriate or not. This may not necessarily arise from better teaching. In short, rising attainment may have been no more than a measure of the engagement of the

student population with assessment tests, which is to challenge the very simple assumption that increases in standards can be measured even when they are defined in simple terms, as in this thesis, like the percentage of a given cohort that pass five A*-C GCSEs. Increases in attainment so defined could arise from changes unrelated to the skilling or deskilling of the workforce.

All of this adds to the argument that any policy analysis of PM linked to standards is one about a highly complex constellation of processes. There are several other issues, more relevant to a discussion about causal connections, to consider. First, there are a number of Government initiatives, White Papers and Acts, including "Excellence in Schools" (DfEE 1997a) and the "Schools' Standards and Framework Act" (DfEE 1998c) based on New Labour's premises that standards need to rise to support a more effective economy. To what significant extent do they circumscribe a raft of measures about raising standards? Secondly, if there is a raft of measures targeted at raising standards, any one of a number of these policies, including that of PM, could impact on standards. What are the implications of these measures for the present research question about the impact of PM policy on standards in schools? Very simply, Experimentalist methodology involving the isolation of variables would have difficulty in the extreme in establishing a link between PM and standards. The third issue is, given the complex nature of any concept of standards, to what extent is it possible to predict how the policy initiatives outlined, above, can have an impact? The discussions so far have related to a whole range of policy developments that could potentially impact on standards. In addition, this is without allowing for the policy initiatives of the development of the teaching profession and the effect these might have.

What standards policies were introduced by New Labour?

It is difficult to deny that New Labour at least intended to raise standards. However, whether this was translated into any real improvement in schools is questionable. Looking at the first issue, which questions the extent to which Government initiatives were directed at raising standards, one need only refer to the White Paper "Excellence in Schools" (DfEE 1997a) to demonstrate not only the apparent importance of Education to New Labour but also that raising standards, so it would seem, was at the centre of its whole approach. For

example, the White Paper sets out six policy principles. On the first principle, "Education will be at the heart of Government" (DfEE 1997a, p. 11) and was seen as the Government's number one priority. On the second principle, "Policies will be designed to benefit the many, not just the few" (p. 11). The funding for the Assisted Places Scheme (for the more able) was used for smaller class sizes to improve teaching and learning (and raise standards). On the third principle, "Standards matter more than structures" (p. 12), as demonstrated by the Government's declaration to challenge schools by promoting comparisons among similar schools to further raise their performance. The fourth principle, "Intervention would be in inverse proportion to success" (p. 12), suggested that the greatest intervention would take place in those schools that needed to improve or raise their standards most. The fifth principle, "There will be zero tolerance for underperformance" (p. 12), was presented as a threat to underperforming schools: those with the lowest standards would have to improve or close. On the sixth principle, "Government will work in partnership with those committed to raising standards" (p. 12), New Labour apparently wanted to increase the involvement of parents, teachers, governors, LEAs, churches, business, private schools, voluntary organisations and volunteers in raising standards. These policy principles, New Labour claimed, were designed to have a wide-ranging effect through a raft of policies on standards in schools. That they had the desired effect is not without question. However, the intention and policies generated would complicate the analysis of the effect of any one policy, for example PM.

There are a number of publications, beside the White Paper (1997a), to support the view that New Labour wanted to raise standards. These include, for example, the Secretary of State for Education's speech to the CBI (DfEE 1999). There were four key elements to the speech. The first key element was "laying firm foundations" (DfEE 1999, p. 4 – 5). It required coordinated education for parents and young learners. It also involved increased investment to reduce class size and the development of literacy and numeracy strategies involving parents. The second key element (DfEE 1999) was "Improving all schools" (p. 5). The Government would achieve this, so the Secretary of State claimed, by supporting schools through a range of policies related to increasing resources; generating benchmark data to help schools gauge how well or badly they were doing and to set targets

for improvement and giving access to best practice advice through the Standards Website. Improving schools was also possible by using policies designed to challenge them and call them to account. Such policies that were introduced include more frequent and regular inspections, performance targets for schools and published tables of achievement that would enable intervention "to ensure pupils get the education they deserve" (p. 5). The third key element in generating policy included "the drive for inclusion" (p. 6). Following the 1997 Green Paper, more funding was invested in students with special educational needs (DfEE 1997b). While the thinking behind this derived from inclusion values, it would also conflate the excesses of competition between schools in driving up standards. This third element would have had minimal interference with any attempt at answering the main research question of the thesis. The fourth key element was that of "modernising comprehensive education" (DfEE 1999, p. 7). This entailed a commitment to diversity, developing strategies that worked, such as abandoning a dogmatic commitment to mixed ability teaching, and introducing greater choice through the expansion of the specialist schools initiative. This would also bring with it greater flexibility in a school's curriculum provision, including vocational and workplace learning, i.e. more curriculum relevance and, probably most importantly, substantially increased resource provision (funding). It also entailed the Excellence in Cities initiative. The Government injected an additional £350 million through this programme to arrest the underachievement of secondary students in some twenty-five different LEAs. It involved a range of support strategies, such as the provision of two learning mentors in each school for those students needing extra help, support for disruptive students, support for the gifted and talented, support for failing schools through mini education action zones and incentives to attract good teachers. These incentives included salary bonuses for high performance, subsidised loans to buy computers and fast-track promotion for young teachers dependant upon inner city experience. This wide array of policy initiatives was anticipated, by New Labour, to have substantial impact on standards in schools, including those measured by attainment, i.e. GCSE pass rate. The effect of such measures is not without challenge (e.g. Fielding 2001). However, such uncertainty about the impact that these policies might have makes any analysis of the effect of a policy like the PM of teachers on standards all the more complicated.

The Secretary of State seemingly made standards the priority for New Labour's vision of education in a speech to the CBI (DfEE 1999, p. 2). He was also responsible for setting up the Standards Task Force and the Standards and Effectiveness Unit, which together led to the generation of additional policies directed at raising standards (DfEE 1997a). The Task Force was responsible for policies such as, for example, greater involvement of parents and the community in schools, the Standards Website and the identification of Beacon Schools to spread good practice to raise standards. In fact, the Standards Unit was responsible for a number of standards directed policies and initiatives, including the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, 'designed' to raise standards of key skills that could have an effect on GCSE attainment as well as employability; Education Action Zones, which entailed private sponsorship and required collaboration between good and deficient schools, leading to the improvement of the latter; target setting in schools both for schools and within schools for the students which, in turn, were incorporated eventually into the new national PM for teachers policy (the focus of the Case Study); and Educational Development Plans for LAs. This is not necessarily to suggest that such policies actually did raise standards. My purpose here is to emphasize the potentially complex range of policy influences on standards that were implemented at the time and the related difficulties of identifying a connection between standards and PM national policy.

Finally, there were three other broad areas of policy related to raising standards that resulted from the White Paper. The first related to funding by Government of information and communications technology, ICT. This was aimed at the development of "a confident work force at the cutting edge of change" (DfEE 1999, p. 15). It would have also facilitated learning for all, creating a more level playing field in bypassing literacy and language restrictions, thus raising standards. The second related to creating new partnerships, not only between education and other public services but also private sectors. Special initiatives involved schools working with libraries, museums, universities, football clubs, and commercial enterprises including banks to help raise students' morale and motivation as well as provide learning opportunities through the provision of learning mentors and more relevant and favourable contexts for learning (p. 16). The third policy area, and probably the most significant, because it included the particular policy that is the

focus of this thesis, was the reforms to the teaching profession (p. 16-18). The areas relevant to enhanced standards, indicated by their impact on GCSE pass rates, could include, in contradiction to the Gove administration (DfE 2010), the development of a General Teaching Council through enhanced teacher morale, expanded provision of staff development and training and finally the PM for teachers policy. All of these could have had an as yet unmeasured if not indeterminable impact on standards in schools, as indicated by the GCSE pass rate.

In addition to all of this, the Government set out its proposals for modernising the teaching profession in the Green Paper "Teachers: Meeting the Challenge of Change" (DfEE 1998a, p. 14). It was underpinned by a framework of standards that took on a sharper significance and pointed to changes of a qualitatively different nature to those in the policies propagated by previous Governments. The new framework consisted of published standards for, for example, the award of QTS; the ratification of NQTs, a performance threshold (through which teachers would pass to enter a scale for higher salary levels); advanced skills teachers (to collaborate with groups of schools in supporting their improvement); and also headteachers. So in the development of the teaching force, the underlying rationale of policy continued to be raising standards, but also with a sharper focus on the restructuring of the profession and the granting of rewards. The impact, if any, that they might have had adds to the complexity of the analysis.

The legislative basis for the policy areas above, relevant to analysing the role and impact of the national policy of PM for Teachers, in 2005,was given by two Education Acts. "The Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998" (DfEE 1998b) included clauses to set up a General Teaching Council, as explained above, introduce an induction year for teachers, create the requirement for headteachers to have a professional headship qualification (NPQH) and allow HMI to inspect teacher training establishments. Such legislation could have had some impact on standards leading up to 2005. All other legislation was contained in the "Schools' Standards and Framework Act" (DfEE 1998c). This Act was probably the most important piece of educational legislation brought forward by the Labour Government. It has had some fundamental consequences for schools and educational

authorities. Following this Act, raising standards (as defined by Government: see below) became the first priority for schools and LEAs. LEAs were given a new statutory duty to promote high standards of education by setting performance targets as well as by challenging and supporting schools in their efforts to improve. LEAs were subsequently set targets by Government and subjected to Ofsted inspections to ensure that they were suitably focused in these practices. All of this leaves very little doubt about the Government's intention to raise standards in schools or the existence of the wide range of strategies and policies it generated to achieve this end.

There are other policies that could be considered in the analysis of what is already a complex situation. The White Paper and the related Educational Acts - Standards and Framework - offer the guiding principles behind policy developments and cover most of the areas relevant to the analysis of PM policy and its impact on standards. These policies were directed at meeting a range of Government targets. Targets ranged from the percentage of 11 year olds achieving level 4 at KS2 tests in Numeracy (75%), 16 year olds to achieve 5A*-C (50%) through to 19 year olds achieving NVQ Level 2 or equivalent (85%). They also included targets that related more to inclusion, like, for example, controlling attendance and exclusion rates as well as creating an alternative provision for students who were excluded. All of these could in turn have had a cumulative effect on increasing attainment at GCSE and therefore would appear to have significant potential for raising standards. The argument is that a wide range of policies were statutorily imposed by the New Labour Government on schools with the intention to raise standards, as defined by attainment, which in turn means increasing the pass rate at GCSE. Given this broad strategic approach, it would be quite difficult to measure the exact contribution that any one of these policies would make to the total impact such changes would have had on standards.

Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) criteria are viewed as particularly critical in shaping professional orientations of new entrants to teaching and in providing the starting point on which standards of induction, performance as in PM policy and Threshold, as well as those of advanced skills teachers, were based. The question is how criteria would impact on students' attainment in schools. The problem is that there is no associated explicit account

of how teaching was conceptualised according to such criteria; neither is there any account of the learning outcomes that may be associated with such a conceptualisation. It is therefore unclear what the related assessment criteria might be and consequently how standards might vary. There was no indication that there were different representations of teaching. In other words, the educational establishment, including new teachers and their trainers (tutors), was required to accept a set of professional standards without any account of a definition of teaching and learning and therefore consequently what impact such shared changes would have on standards of attainment in schools (Mahony 2000). The implication is that a link between NQT criteria and standards of attainment of learners was less than explicit. More to the point, this particular deficit obfuscates any link between the policy planned, the policy implemented and its outcome, making evaluation of its impact on standards difficult in the extreme.

Other complicating factors derive from QTS criteria. Subject knowledge and craft skills required for assessing National Curriculum levels became much more important. The point is that it suggests that the NQT is perceived to be more of a technician than a critical professional. In fact, one of the underlying requirements of the Standards Framework was the need for effective teachers to "produce" an up-skilled work force in order to enhance the UK's competitiveness in the global economy, as explained above. There was much more focus, for new teachers, on raising levels of attainment. The question is what would be the overall impact on standards when these 'technicians' joined a traditionally autonomous profession.

Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) have identified another dimension of technocratic control that could impact on standards. They call it the "egg crate school" (Fullan and Hargreaves 1992). This suggests that teaching is an individualistic activity. The only reference made to relationships by the Standards Framework is about "effective working relationships with professional colleagues" (TTA 1998, p. 11). However, these so-called "working relationships" should, according to the Standards, be managerially structured (Hextall and Mahoney 1998, p. 545). This is not to develop a conspiracy theory about policy decisions

at Government and Senior Civil Servant level. The suggestion is that such decisions affect managerial practices with the standards agenda in mind.

There were so many changes introduced- connected to teaching criteria- that they would have had an indeterminate impact on standards. Alongside this, numerous studies have questioned whether such policy changes directed at classroom practices would have a significant impact anyway. Such studies have suggested poverty and economic background to be the over-determining and substantially the most significant influence (Robinson 1997; Shropshire and Middleton 1999; Creemers 1997; Glennerster 1998; Gibson and Asthana 1998). Regrettably, a number of Government statements, performance tables and many press releases have led the public to believe that examination results (attainment) are in some way causally linked to the efforts of headteachers and their teacher colleagues. So much so that it has encouraged studies like the present one that attempt to answer questions about the impact of teacher performance on standards of attainment in schools.

Appropriately last but certainly by no means the least important are issues directly linked to the New Labour PM policy and its impact on standards. PM policy, recalling the Survey of the Literature in Chapter 2, is the result of a complex evolutionary process. It was introduced, as explained above, in the context of a wide range of related policies aimed at raising standards. So far in this chapter on "The Contexts of the National PM Policy", the focus has been on those elements that could directly relate to raising standards of attainment. The policy on PM has been considered in previous chapters. This part of the chapter is about a critical assessment of the link between objective setting of teachers and raising standards of attainment within the policy. It is not unrelated to a previously identified historical need for teacher autonomy within the profession (Chapter 2). There are three relevant aspects to this. They occur in the section of the national policy that relates to objective setting with teachers. There are three objectives required by the policy (DfEE 2000a, b and c). One objective should relate to teaching and learning, in which the teacher is involved; a second relates to pupil progress of any one particular group of students taken by the teacher; a third relates to the teacher's professional development, not necessarily attached to some teaching deficit.

The objectives set on teaching and learning could relate to virtually anything from more effective use of ICT to more regular assessment of students' work. Given the array of possible objectives and given, potentially, their piecemeal and almost incidental and unique nature, apart from the limits set by the general framework of the school development or improvement plan, any impact such objectives could have on the attainment of a particular group of students, let alone the whole school, would be indeterminable. This, of course, assumes that it would have any impact on attainment and this assumption, while not justifiable, was generally taken for granted from the comments made by teachers in the Case Study (Chapter 7 and 8). The research base of the effect of teaching on attainment is less than formidable especially when other teacher related practices are not included e.g. CPD, data analysis, target setting, lesson observation (Chapter 3). On the face of it, it is reasonable to assume that changes to such practices in the school may increase its potential, or build capacity to improve attainment. However, such potential or capacity to improve may never be realised. The suggestion is that such conclusions seriously challenge the assumption of a link between this particular aspect of PM policy and raising attainment. However, it does provide additional justification for a semi-empirical study like the present work.

The objective about "pupil progress" and any assumption about its impact on raising standards of attainment would seem more reasonable (DfEE 2000b). However, the logic of this is also questionable. For example, if each teacher in a school sets objectives for different classes so that objective setting is not synchronised, the probability is that it will not have a cumulative effect on attainment in any one particular cohort. Conversely, in the case where it is synchronised, if each teacher of a particular teaching group were to agree a pupil progress objective in each subject, then for that particular cycle, some twelve teachers' key PM objectives would have been used up. In a six form entry school there are usually about fifty-five full time equivalent teachers. They would be insufficient in number to account for one cohort, let alone others where there may also be priorities, so that even if there was a total allocation of teachers to raising attainment at GCSE, there would be no guarantees about outcomes. When this is considered alongside other priorities, such as

raising attainment at KS3 and Post 16, notwithstanding the effectiveness of the strategy employed, and addressing issues elsewhere in the school, once again one would anticipate increasing capacity and potential rather than standards of attainment. This potential and capacity may never be realised. The suggestion is that even a link between a pupil progress objective and raising standards of attainment is far from being a foregone conclusion in even the ideal situation.

Finally, the objective of the teacher's continuing professional development (CPD) is similar in that it is linked to raising standards of attainment in certain circumstances (DfEE 2000c). Quite simply, the requirement is more to do with the professional development of the individual teacher linked to a general school need. It could range from writing schemes of work to counselling individual students about personal problems they may have. Every CPD objective could be unique to the individual teacher, yet still meet the requirement of fitting the school development/improvement plan. Once more, one would anticipate increasing capacity and potential rather than standards of attainment through the CPD objective. This potential and capacity may never be realised. The comments from the respondents in the Case Study, Chapters 7 and 8, would be relevant in this context. Similarly, as was pointed out in Chapter 3, when headteacher perceptions were sampled from schools nationally with the highest (10%) and lowest (10%) value added in the country, although respondents were unanimous about the positive impact of PM, they were equally positive about it not being a key lever for improvement (Appendix C). Finally, this should be compared with a more recent survey of two thousand teachers in which only about half were positive about the impact of PM on standards (Poet et al 2010). Most importantly, when such reports are considered alongside the complex constellation of policies pursued by New Labour, not only from within the Standards Framework but including all of the changes they initiated on taking up office, as explained, any positively reported findings, e.g. this present Case Study, become questionable.

A conclusion about standards

This chapter has argued that PM policy for teachers was developed by the New Labour Government within a culture of raising standards: standards that are both in form and

content a complex product of the maximisation of utilities and the interaction of ideas and ideologies of various social and political groups and organisations including political parties and Government.

The development of public policy, particularly that of education, from the end of the 1970s, the Callaghan Labour Government, and the beginning of the Conservative Government, was significantly influenced by the political and ideological debate precipitated by Plowden, as well as the social and economic circumstances of the time (Willmott 2002). In addition, the whole debate about the nature of teacher appraisal in the lead-up to the introduction of PM in 2000 has centred around where the focus of the policy should be, on support or accountability of teachers, not whether the policy has impacted on standards of attainment or not. This last conclusion is consistent with that of the Literature Survey of Chapter 2.

The start of the Labour Government of Tony Blair in 1997 marked a qualitative change in the emphasis on standards between two successive Governments. True, there was a marked rise in the 5A*-C pass rate and therefore one indicator of attainment or standards, but this takes place within a maelstrom of policies introduced for that very purpose. This is the context of the introduction of the PM national policy.

PM policy was developed by New Labour to replace the Appraisal policy of the Conservative Government, in the context of a drive to raise standards. The policy of PM for teachers is just one aspect of this drive. The impact of this raft of policies on standards of attainment has been demonstrated to be extremely difficult to measure, further complicated by the failure of policy makers, particularly with respect to teacher related policies like PM, to build a standards of attainment raising function into the policy. It is very difficult if not impossible to link PM and standards of attainment within the Empirical Domain. This is a most important conclusion and as well as having implications for the overall argument of the thesis, it raises difficult questions about the Realist Framework used generally and particularly the methodology of conceptual abstraction (Chapter 10). However, this obfuscation of any link between policies, including that of PM, and

standards of attainment puts into context the difficulties confronting other approaches like Experimentalism and Constructivism as well as that of Critical Realism. All of this begs the question of which methodological approach to use to investigate the relationship between PM policy and standards. This is discussed next.

Chapter 5

Methodology Underpinning the Study of the Impact of PM on Standards in Schools

Introduction

In the survey of the PM literature above, two areas are identified with scope for development. In the first place, few if any attempts have been made to link PM policy with standards of attainment in schools. Secondly, research has been preoccupied with a methodology which in essence is traceable to a cultural and epistemological relativism. The latter is not unconnected with the former. In addition, compounding these two issues, the evolution of PM policy has followed a path which, arguably, is a complex product of social, political and economic processes, as illustrated by the struggles between unions and successive Governments throughout the 1980s. In this respect, the development of a coherent methodological framework is key to this critique of PM research and an analysis and evaluation of a link, if any, that might exist between the policy and standards in schools.

There are three parts to this chapter. Section A attempts to give an account of why the research question and hypothesis underlying the thesis do not help to discriminate between potential research strategies and therefore facilitate the selection of a research method. Research strategy here refers to a mode of inference or plan for collecting data. The second part, Section B, reviews the main approaches in deciding upon the most suitable methodology. The purpose of the research is to establish a link or non-link between PM policy and standards in schools. Ontology - what real things are the focus of the study - should come first. The overall focus in this respect is on the object of study: PM and standards. The thesis needs to decide on a strategy for establishing a link between the two, which is what Chapter 5 is about. Ultimately, it will need to explain this link as in Chapter 10. This is why in completing Section B the major epistemological disadvantages of the various approaches that are considered less useful are discussed. The aim is to lay the foundation for a methodology that is capable of dealing with the results in a scientifically controlled way as well as to provide a general framework for the research design. Finally, in Section C, the plan is to develop the core research design, including the relevant

instruments, within the epistemological and ontological framework of the research strategy developed in Section B.

Section A

Can the Methodology be Determined by the Research Question: Four Research Strategies?

The main purpose of this section is to consider the full range of strategies at the researcher's disposal to decide which is most appropriate to the research question. Which strategy is the most appropriate for this study?

The spectrum of research methods used by social scientists have been categorised into four types. These are "regarded as ideal or constructed types" (Smaling 1994, p. 233). They were derived by Smaling (1994) from the work of many writers and practitioners in the Social Sciences to identify clusters of characteristics that are typical of approaches to social research. Some writers may even include a mixture of these types in their work. The descriptions of these strategies are abstractions that were designed to make it possible to cope with the diversity of views and practices. The purpose of this heuristic device was to explain why a particular research strategy was eventually chosen.

The four identified research strategies, outlined and tabulated below, provide different ways of answering research questions by specifying a starting point, a series of steps and an end point (Smaling 1994). They include: the abductive, the inductive, the deductive and the retro-ductive. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate the difficulties of enlisting the research question to develop a research strategy and to show that they relate to distinct methodologies that can be derived from the Constructivist, Experimentalist and Realist approaches.

In the context of the present discussion, Blakie (2000) has categorised research objectives and linked these to the types of research question they pose and the frequency with which they tend to be associated with a particular research strategy. These are summarised in the

table below. The last two objectives in the table are of particular relevance to the present discussion. The table illustrates the problem for this study in that the whole range of research strategies would be appropriate to research questions like 'what?' and 'why?', and the related objectives to do with evaluation and impact.

Fig 5.1 Research: strategies, objectives and questions

(From Blakie 2000, p. 124)

-----------------------Research strategy-----------------------					
Objective	Abductive	Inductive	Deductive	Retro-ductive	Type of Research Q
Exploration	xxx	xxx			What
Description	xxx	xxx			What
Explanation		x	xxx	xxx	Why
Prediction		xx	xxx		What
Understanding	xxx				Why
Change	xx		x	xx	How
Evaluation	xx	xx	xx	xx	What & Why
Impact	xx	xx	xx	xx	What & Why

The number of xs indicates the relative frequency with which a particular strategy is used for a given objective.

Based on the table quoted from Blakie, I am suggesting that all four strategies are adept at handling evaluation and impact objectives and 'what?' and 'why?' type questions. Therefore, the research strategy and subsequent methodology cannot be determined by the research question posed or hypothesis set in the case of this study because of the nature and context of the questions that it asks. What I am suggesting is that, in determining the most appropriate strategy for meeting the requirements of the generic research question posed, alternative strategies should be examined or considered at the level of meaning. Strategies

and the methods they incorporate could be considered at the level of explanation or epistemology and existence or ontology.

It might be useful to briefly consider how research strategies explain events. For deduction and induction, the social reality exists independently of the observer and actors. However, they differ in description and explanation: epistemology. Description is limited, for the deductivist, by the critical evaluation of theory through deductive argument and the conclusions rigorously tested by attempted refutation by empirical data (through experiment) (Popper 1972). It is impossible for a deductivist to determine whether a theory is 'true' without explicit reference to an external reality. Explanation is obtained by the relationship between concepts. The inductive strategy produces descriptions of regularities that form a hierarchy of generality; the activity of observing and the possibility of establishing the truth of a theory are accepted uncritically without clear and explicit reference to an ontology. For the retro-ductivist strategy, the Empirical Domain is an external reality in the case of the structuralist, whereas for the constructivist it is socially constructed. For the structuralist, structures and mechanisms that produce regularities are in the Real Domain. Structures have an influence on social actors they are external to them. For the constructivist, explanatory mechanisms are cognitive rather than social structural. Concepts are used in the retroductivist research strategy to initially describe and test social reality. For the abductivist, reality is, based on a constructivist view, socially constructed (Schutz 1972), although there is again a gap between the data and the reality it is supposed to represent; however, the abductivist does not recognise this, omitting to distinguish between reality and the conception of it.

Each of the research strategies covered relates to different sets of epistemological and ontological criteria. The inductive explanation is achieved through a comparative analysis of observed experimental data. In the deductive strategy, explanation is derived from the relationship between concepts refutable by experiment. Whereas for the abductivist explanation is based on thick description derived from every day language, the retro-ductivist strategy explains by means of real mechanisms and structures (Bhaskar 1998; Sayer 1992). By separating ontology from epistemology (Collier 1994), it can treat events

'independently' of their conception. Given the social and historical background to the development of PM policy outlined in Chapter 2, such an approach has the potential to explain any impact PM might have on standards in schools scientifically.

In conclusion, the meaning of the research question and the ontological implications of the four approaches have been considered. It remains to critically review the epistemological implications of these approaches and their related methodologies. In this respect, the Constructivist (deriving from abductivist strategies), Experimentalist (deriving from inductivist and deductivist strategies) and Realist (deriving from retro-ductivist strategies) would be appropriate methodological approaches to review.

Section B

Methodology: Incorporating Epistemology and Ontology

Some Disadvantages of Constructivism for a Study of the Effect of PM on Standards of Attainment

The main focus in research for the constructivist, both generally and for the present study, is the social. Evaluation is directed primarily at the internal dynamics of policies, by seeking the views of those present on why (if at all) the implicit ideas behind a development have crossed their paths and changed their reasoning. However, the focus as explained above is on context and culture rather than purpose and reasons for doing, as is the case for Objectivists like Marx and Dewey, or, for that matter, Realists like Pawson and Tilley (2003). As Marks (2002, p. 16) argues:

> The aim of constructivist research is to understand different situations and events for people, and the social processes whereby these meanings are created. Consequently constructivists investigate how context and interpretation, including those of the researcher, influence our experience and understanding of the world. Constructivists collect contextualised data in the everyday language of the participants, and encourage reflection on the social and subjective processes

influencing the interpretations that are constructed. The aim of the research is to develop meaningful insights, which are useful to specific groups of people.

The dynamic of the method is an exchange of meaning between the researcher and all policy subjects and managers.

The perspective begins with a theory of the social policy constituted in the everyday meanings attached to it within the reasoning process present in all social interaction. This view is prone to charges of relativism in its belief that the truth is always attached to some standpoint rather than external to the beliefs of a group. It gives research the task of examining stakeholders' meanings qualitatively in an attempt to reconcile them through negotiation to produce consensual constructions. It thus regards policies and programs as the loose amalgam of the constructions of a range of stakeholders involved in the initiative. These are not treated as findings but are open to further negotiations in an ongoing process, which has open-ended goals to enlarge the collaborative process to empower and educate everyone involved.

To recap, evaluations are seen as negotiable. The constructivist approaches in the literature on PM, generally omit considerations of a point of reference or conflicting power interests. Since, from this view, there is no single independent reality that would serve as a point of reference to report on, this type of hermeneutics depends upon consensus between views, rather than on a linear advance on 'a truth'. In this respect it is the most inappropriate approach for accessing the impact of performance management on standards in schools, given the history of "bad attitude" between Government and teacher unions in the development of the policy.

Constructivism is restricted to context, so that as Guba and Lincoln (1989, p. 45) argue:

> …phenomena can only be understood within the context in which they are studied, findings from one context cannot be generalised to another; neither problems nor their solutions can be generalised from one setting to another.

The generalisation of research findings is important to the understanding and explanation of the policy, but so is context. Experimentalist approaches, in the search for universals, would overlook the latter, whereas Constructivist approaches have a solipsistic preoccupation with the former. In attempting to identify mechanisms that link PM with standards of attainment, the methodological position being developed incorporates both.

Constructivist studies suffer from:

> the standard weaknesses of phenomenological approaches, the inability to grasp those structural and institutional features of society, which are to some extent independent of individuals' reasoning and desires. The conceptual parity to which Guba and Lincoln (1989) aspire fails to recognise the asymmetries of power, which allow some people to advance their ideas while some have their choices foreclosed. (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 23)

Given the history of the development of PM policy, this methodological approach to research presents a serious difficulty for this study.

Pawson and Tilley (2003) suggest that an appropriate way forward is to synthesise what they perceive to be the best of all evaluative worlds. In other words verify a programme works and then find out why. This is in line with Chen and Rossi's comments:

> [We should not be drawn away from a very] important task in gaining understanding of a social programme namely developing theoretical models of social interventions. (Chen and Rossi 1983, p. 284; cited in Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 26)

One priority for my research was to find out what it is about PM policy that could make it work, and therefore enable it to generate increased attainment. So it was important to consider the social contexts of the policy implementation in the present Case Study, rather

than compare outcomes between contexts, one where the policy was present and another where it was absent. This would be the approach of an Experimentalist.

Some Disadvantages of Experimentalist Approaches for a Study of the Effects of PM on Standards of Attainment

It is most important that this approach be considered in some detail. As it derives from both the inductive and deductive strategies, it could, arguably, meet the requirement of the scientific approach evoked by the research question.

The main focus of the Experimentalist approach is causation (Hempel 1966). In this respect, experimental and control groups are selected so that they would be identical except that the experimental group would be subjected to the policy. Any difference in outcomes between the two groups would thus be attributed to the presence of the policy. As Pawson and Tilley (2003, p. 51) suggest, "the whole edifice of experimental and quasi experimental evaluation" is founded on such a principle.

Experimentalism, in this study, could be used to assess the impact of PM by identifying experimental and control groups (where PM had not been introduced) to 'isolate' the effect on standards. Such an approach is based on successionist causation through experimental control. Thus the experimental approach is understood to be based upon a before/after metaphor:

Fig 5.2

	Pre-policy	Policy	Post implementation of Policy
Experimental (e) group	Oe	X	'Oe
Control (c) Group	O	----	'O

"The Classic Experimental Design" (Pawson and Tilley, 2003, p5.)

Oe = Output of e group before policy; 'Oe = Output of e group after policy X is implemented
O = Output of c group before policy; 'O = Output of c group after policy X is implemented

This is considered, by many, to be an oversimplification of the complex interactions that occur between social processes (Chalmers 1999; Keat and Urry 1975). In essence, if PM 'caused' standards to rise, then they would with Oe but not with O. In short, objectivity derives from the constant conjunction between events (Newton-Smith 1981) and not from the unification of what subjects (teachers, policy makers etc.) think and what they do, nor from the fact that there is a structure in the real that has the power to produce particular outcomes, including social action (Chapter 10).

There are a number of issues for the experimental approach in the evaluation of PM for teachers, i.e. national policy. In the first place, there is the impracticality of using the approach in the present study. There is a need to consider the general weight of empirical evidence required to make a recommendation about the effects that PM has or in what respects it works. It would, for example, be an extremely time-consuming process attempting to access information relating to the context in which schools had implemented the national policy. Even if this information were readily accessible, there would be the compelling need to open up the black box and to confirm the comparability of data. Quite simply, when results are inconsistent, it would be essential to find out why or how the measure has this effect. Given the mixed history of PM, referred to above and in the literature survey, the need for accessibility would not only be a requirement: it would be essential. Accessing teachers' thinking would not only be helpful: it would be necessary, especially in these difficult circumstances.

The Experimentalist method, applied to institutions, has produced a catalogue of inconsistent findings. One example, in illustration, is taken from the study of prison reform (Martinson 1974; see Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 9). The point is that if there are difficulties linked with scientific consistency in a closed institution like a prison, how would this pan out in the study of a more open and therefore complex institution like a school, especially with a policy as complex and, as referred to in chapter 2, historically controversial as PM? The approach produces no more than descriptions of outcomes, treats an institution as a black box and explains at the general level rather than the institutional level why policy implementation succeeds or fails. There are explanatory ingredients

missing from the traditional experimental approach. Causation needs to be seen to act internally as well as externally so that cause describes the transformative potential of the structure of the policy.

There are therefore weaknesses in the experimental and quasi-experimental methods based upon their weakness as Science. The remaining critique is based on the epistemological assumptions of the method related to the nature of causation and the difficulty of applying this methodology to the implementation of PM in schools. Because the nature of experimentalist causation is successionist in essence, it is incapable of linking what teachers think about policy with what they do as a result of incorporating it into their real everyday professional and practical life. It is incapable of explaining in the conceptual sense what teachers do in response to the PM structure to raise standards.

The point here is that it is not policies alone that work: teachers have a role in cooperating and choosing to make them work. In the language of generative causation, policies work through subjects' inclinations. In other words, choice is an essential condition of social and individual change and not some sort of practical hindrance to be normalised or "controlled" out. In a further effort to be clear, in choice making, it is the agent that contributes to the change process. Thus a policy does not necessarily produce outcomes in isolation; rather, it provides the opportunity, which may be triggered by a teacher's (subject's) capacity to make choices, and this act marks a moment in a learning process (Note 2). Thus a teacher would, amongst other possibilities, consider or not, volunteer or not, cooperate closely or not, learn about the policy or not, apply the lessons learned about the policy or not, and each of these decisions would be internally complex and would be different in the changed circumstances of different subjects. In fact, Pawson and Tilley (2003) point out that Experimentalist methodology is not equipped to deal with the problem of subjectivity in this way. In short, it would not consider the thinking of teachers within the PM structure, nor how the latter might be conceptualised to explain an increase in standards.

Note 2: This is not a voluntarism or methodological individualism. A subject's capacity to chose would be influenced by their beliefs and dispositions as well as their biological makeup.

Further, certain groups of teachers, including senior and middle leaders, have a greater facility to benefit from PM than do others. A straightforward comparison between two broadly equivalent aggregates of experimentees and controls makes it a clumsy instrument for detecting resonances of subject and provision, to identify the causes of successful policy implementation.

The Experimentalist approach follows "successionist" law in attempting to locate an empirical regularity which happens to generate a consistent outcome over a contrived range of experiments. Unfortunately it remains short on explanations on why there might be a particular regular outcome pattern. For example, it could not explain a situation in which all schools might successfully implement a national policy. It could not explain why a policy might become embedded in all schools, or, for that matter, why it should affect standards.

PM would be reduced to a simple input/output model by an Experimentalist approach. However, the policy on the ground is likely to be far more complex and multi-faceted. This is because policies as implemented are likely to be the outcome of volition, the outcome of skilled action and negotiation between leaders, teachers and students as they perceive how the policy worked, and not reducible to a single event. So, in contradicting the Experimentalist approach, what needs to be investigated, in relation to PM policy particularly, is the fine detail of the event, the whole process (Bennett 1996).

The point is that a policy like PM will or will not work according to whether and or to what extent its structure enters teachers' reasoning, so changing their thinking processes and therefore future action (Note 3). A simple input-policy output-standards model operating at the level of the school, avoiding the thinking subject, would be inappropriate. A fundamental question, in explaining the effect of PM on standards, would be what conceptual structure of PM, if any, is coherent with the thinking of its subjects, the teachers.

Note 3: It would depend upon to what extent they were disposed to enact the role structures in committing themselves to implement the policy. This would in turn be governed by a range of influences including the beliefs and dispositions they brought to the school as well as its prevailing influences and their role within it.

Turning to the reception of a policy rather than its delivery, there are a number of other deficiencies. The quasi-experimenter's method of random allocation represents an effort to cancel out differences to find out whether a policy would work without the added advantage of the conditions that would enable it to. The point is that making no attempt to identify especially conducive conditions can obfuscate matters, leading to support for a mix of results. One of the arguments of this thesis is that it is important to understand what it is about school communities that vary the effect of PM policy. In other words, what it is about schools and the policy that might generate variation in strategies for raising attainment? The inclination for the Experimentalist method is to flatten out such conditions, regarding them as confounding variables. The strategy of the Experimentalist would be to eliminate their influence to 'isolate' the impact of the policy on standards (outcomes). Such an approach would never guarantee that conjunctions are ever constant. The remedy, so it is proposed, is to ensure that contextual factors, linked to an independent reality, have their proper place in the analysis. That is the contextual factors, including the elements of the policy, as they relate to the thinking of the teachers (the policy subjects) in each school in the Case Study (see Chapters 7 and 8).

The suggestion is that the logic of experimental evaluation is such that it either ignores the above processes or incorrectly treats them indiscriminately as inputs, outputs or confounding variables. Objectivity arises from confounding consistency between input and output at the cost of ignoring the generative link between what teachers think about performance appraisal and how it impinges on what they do in incorporating it.

The following exposition of the Scientific Realism of Pawson and Tilley (2003) explains how it can overcome the difficulties associated with potential experimentalist approaches.

Scientific Realism: Generative Causation and the Study of PM

This section argues that generative causation is key to knowing whether or not a policy like PM impacts on student attainment in an organisation like a school. It indicates the scope of this research and the significance that Realist thinking (Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2002), including that of Pawson and Tilley (2003), has for it. Following the critique of successionist causation above, it will consider generative causation and how it can explain

the impact of PM. It will do this by using the explanatory formula: **outcome = mechanism + context**.   There are four aspects to the explanation.

In the first place, the present section on Scientific Realism will explain the mechanism as the causal link between outcome and context. The research design in Section C is a derivative of this. The conceptual abstraction in Chapter 10 is also an integral part of this Critical Realism.

In the second place, it will show how a general theory of social change can be expressed as a special case in the form of a PM policy. Policies are successful only in so far as they introduce the appropriate ideas and opportunities or thinking (potential mechanisms) to groups in the appropriate social and cultural conditions (context), so generating a particular action or a type of doing (outcome).

In the third place, it will show how the 'context, mechanism, outcome' configuration of Pawson and Tilley (2003) translates into an explanatory matrix for a successful PM policy implemented in a school. However, as a development of Pawson and Tilley (2003), this translation is facilitated by conceptual abstraction, arguably a significant development of their approach (Chapter 10).

Finally, this development points to key shortcomings in the Scientific Realist methodology, particularly the work of Pawson and Tilley, for this research. The purpose of the critique will be to bring the discussion of methodology to a focus on its more practical implications in the form of the research design of the thesis and, more importantly, signpost how the data was collected (Part 3) and ultimately conceptualised (Part 4: Chapter 10).

1. The mechanism: the causal link to outcomes

Realist explanation derives from the idea that causal outcomes follow from mechanisms acting in contexts, and this is represented as:

Fig 5.3

Context   Mechanism

Causal action----
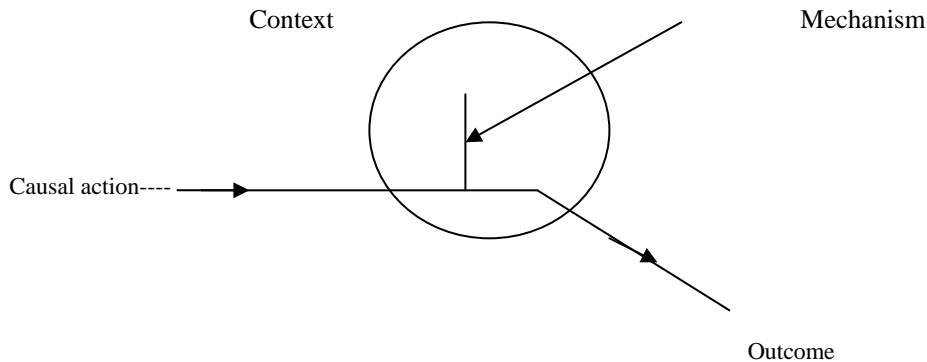
Outcome

(Pawson and Tilley, 2003, p. 58)

The sequence is Action + Context ------Mechanism------Outcome

Outcomes are explained by particular mechanisms that link them to actions that take place in a particular context. This explanatory structure, according to Pawson and Tilley (2003), is put in place by a combination of theory and experimental observation. This means that progress in theory development occurs by linking contexts with law-like regularities through the mechanism. In this respect, a mechanism is a theory, but in linking two separate aspects of existence, the real, it has ontological status. This ontological link between action and outcome (regularity) distinguishes generative from successionist causation. The advantage of the generative approach is that it is able to explain outcomes conceptually. This can apply to the operation of a policy because Realism has a standard set of concepts for describing the operation of any social system. These are transferable to policy systems, including that of PM (see Chapters 6 and 10).

An explanatory mechanism is often referred to by Realists as the underlying mechanism. The concept of the causal mechanism is central to the argument of the thesis. It is implicit in the question: "why does performance management impact on standards?" Like Pawson and Tilley (2003), causation is assumed to be generative, not successionist. A mechanism can explain an outcome at a particular level of social reality and this implies a distinctive and generative conception of causality. "To generate is to produce, to form, to constitute" (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 67). So when an outcome is explained generatively, in the

Case Study, it is dissimilar to the experimentalist's successionist perspective above. It does not refer to variables or correlates that associate one with the other; rather, it explains how the association itself came about. The generative mechanisms actually constitute the regularity: they *are* the regularity.

2. Social change can be expressed as a special case in the form of a social policy including PM.

Pawson and Tilley (2003) make the distinction between the macro and micro social. A social mechanism can be macro, e.g. in suicide, which is to do with social structure, because reduced organic solidarity increases the capacity for suicide in society. It can also be micro when it is derived from individual circumstances and choice. These mechanisms are about the choices and capacity "they derive from" the social group (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 66). However, the argument here is that choice is socially presented as well as agency selected, so that the same combination of agency and structure employed across all sociological explanation operates across the explanation of the impact of a social policy, including PM. This reaches down to the level of individual reasoning (what is the desirability of the ideas associated with the social (PM) policy?) and up to the collective resources on offer (does the policy provide the means for teachers, subjects, to change their minds?). It would, for example, if it met the social and professional requirements of teachers by career enhancement (Note 4). The point is that both the macro and the micro level require Sociological explanations and any mechanisms generating events emanate from the Sociological Layer of the Real, as further explained in Chapter 10.

3. The explanatory matrix of context, mechanism, outcome (cmo)

The purpose of this section is to highlight the relevance that the cmo (lower case: the empirical level) configuration has in explaining the impact of PM on standards in the schools of the Case Study. (When Pawson and Tilley use the lower case, they refer to the perceptions of a policy subject, whereas in using CMO, they refer to the concept developed by the policy evaluator). Policies are always introduced into pre-existing social contexts

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Note 4: This would increase teachers' disposition to enact the policy. If it were the case that they perceived PM policy as a mechanism for career progression and they were appropriately career minded.

and these prevailing social conditions can be important to explaining the successes and failures of social policies (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 69). In understanding the success of the initiative, evaluation needed to search out the substantive match between the context in which PM was implemented and the mechanism which linked it to standards of attainment. This is not to exclude the possibility that PM could have been instrumental in driving up standards in all of the schools in the Case Study.

In setting up an analysis of a connection between a context a mechanism and an outcome, the realist would find it necessary to select a representative range of contexts for study. Thus it was important to identify polarity in the way policy was implemented, as well as some polarity in its context, in evaluating the impact of PM policy. This is because as PM policy was considered to be embedded, it was assumed that contextual factors other than PM were contributing to the significant differences in the Value Added (VA) that schools in the Case Study were adding to pupil progress. So the aim was to consider a representative performing range of schools in the Case Study to compare the associated range of cmos as derived from the perceptions of their teachers (the subjects interviewed from each respective school).

The aim next is to emphasise the ontological nature of the link between contexts and outcomes, as the main task of the study was to explain the range of perceived outcomes, as well as those suggested by DfE data (Chapter 1). All are considered, when conceptualised, to be outcomes (O). Explanation, in the Real Domain, consists in positing some underlying mechanism (M), which generates and thus consists of propositions about how the interplay between structure (policy) and agency has constituted the regularity: in this case, increased standards. There is also the empirical investigation of how the workings of these mechanisms (m) as perceived by teachers are contingent and conditional and potentially extant in a particular institutional context (c). Therefore, whereas in the natural sciences the mechanism is "identified" by the "observer" from observation, in the Empirical Domain, and the current state of scientific knowledge, in the social and policy sciences, as in this study, it is derived from agency perception (at the interface of what they think and chose to do: Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 71) in the Empirical Domain.

Context   **Fig 5.4**
                 Mechanism (agency derived)

Outcome
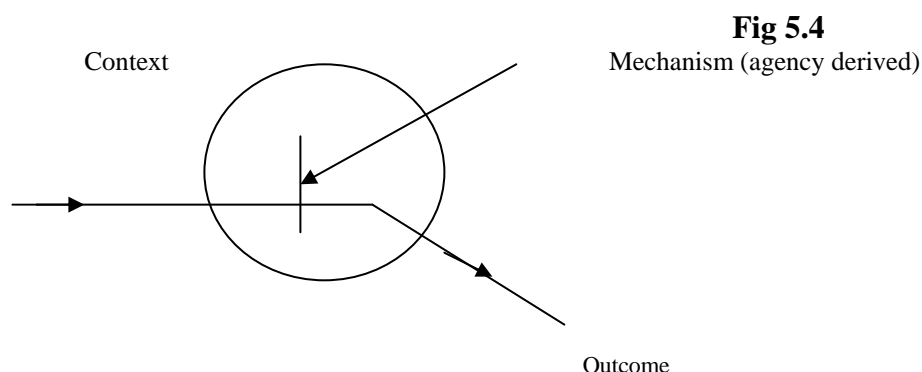
(Pawson and Tilley, 2003, p. 58)

The above diagram (Fig 5.4) demonstrates the continuity between natural and social and policy science explanation. Scientific, conceptual explanation would require propositions to combine all three elements – M, C and O (upper case). In researching the impact of PM on attainment in a particular school (o), it was necessary to demonstrate why it was (m) coherent with PM policy, who it worked for and in what circumstances (c) in each particular school in the Case Study or what it was that prevented the 'observation' of a mechanism in a particular school, assuming the latter was the case.

To be clear, a mechanism would be a theory derived from a teacher's perception for Pawson and Tilley, and for this study, a potential mechanism, located at the interface between their thinking and their doing, i.e. through the enactment of the policy. It would be ontologically linked with both the context in which it arose and the change or outcome it "generated". It was, given the complexity of the policy context, essential that this research produced hypotheses (proposed cmo configurations) which in general followed the overall logic of Realist explanation and in particular incorporated explanations of change which maintained the coherence between CMO, the Real, and cmo, the Empirical, referred to above.

It remains to illustrate how the present study uses Pawson and Tilley's cmo explanatory matrix. In any one of the four schools in the Case Study of PM, the context would be (c). A subject interviewed might perceive an outcome of the use of one particular dimension of

PM policy as improved teaching (o) and they might explain this by saying that this particular dimension of the policy was generated through (a potential mechanism) improved planning (m) of the lesson to be taught. This is not to deny the usefulness of the way that Pawson and Tilley deal with this cmo configuration, and therefore the explanatory matrix that arises from the accumulation of cmos, but it is a difficulty for the present study.

In summary, the task of the research was to conceptualise the different ways in which the mechanisms, contexts and outcomes inter-relate. The aim of such a study for Realists like Pawson and Tilley (2003) would be to find ways of identifying, articulating, testing and ultimately refining conjectured cmo configurations into a theory via the "ladder of abstraction" (Fig 5.5). In the present study, configurations, while they are considered to exist, would need to be coherent with a suitable abstraction from PM policy, its structure, and would thus include, at the very least, data analysis, lesson observation, target setting, teaching, learning, performance review, leadership and management and CPD. This is because these are the irreducible dimensions of the national policy for PM (Note 5). In Bhaskar's view they would be the parts that comprise PM as an emergent entity (Bhaskar 2008).

One final point on Scientific Realism and change, accepting the systematic nature of the list based on the PM model summarised in Section C below, is that an investigation around these configurations would be far more worthwhile than comparing changes in attainment before and after the introduction of PM policy or by the development of quasi-experimental control of dependent variables. In short, without a theory of why PM was effective, including why teachers buy into it, research into the use and evaluation of it would be more limited. However, this is not to deny the incompleteness and/or shortcomings of the Pawson and Tilley approach for the present study.

Note 5: This assumes that the PM policy was embedded and conversely that teachers were committed to enacting its role structure.

4. Difficulties with the Pawson and Tilley Approach for the Case Study

There have been a number of criticisms of the realist method, particularly that of Pawson and Tilley (2003) (e.g. Breese 2002; Holmwood 2003; Marks 2002; Greasely and Stoker 2004). These are not discussed, as they are not directly relevant to the development of the design of this research (Note 6). However, it would be appropriate to discuss the shortcomings of the Pawson and Tilley approach for the present study. There are two key issues for the research design.

The first is symptomatic of Critical Realism and the philosophical Naturalism of Roy Bhaskar. Collier (1994) points out that Bhaskar, "who ejects epistemology from the central place it has had in philosophy from Descartes onward" (Collier 1994, p. 239), only considers the epistemology of the sciences and that everyday pre-scientific knowledge cannot be read off from this. He concludes that "the whole question of the epistemology of everyday life, and its ontological foundations, is left open" (Collier 1994, p. 161). Further, Bhaskar, in this context, is concerned with theories of truth, a kind of epistemological relativism in rejection of correspondence theory (Bhaskar 2008, p. 249). The point is that while there is a truth reference or criterion of truth within the domain of the Scientific Realist research worker, there is not one for the researcher's subject. Similarly, one is not made explicit by Pawson and Tilley in their study 'Realistic Evaluation' (2003). Collier (1994, p. 239) says "the two main alternatives to correspondence theories – coherence theories and pragmatic theories – gain their plausibility from the importance of both coherence and practice as criteria of truth". This would seem to offer at least two choices for this research. The researcher could verify the subject's comments either in relation to the coherence between all of the comments a subject made in interviews or in relation to the subject's explanation/conceptualisation of their material practice in its effect on the attainment of the students they taught. The former, which could be considered to have wider application, is implicitly that of Pawson and Tilley, whereas the latter, more limiting but arguably more reliable for the present study, is consistent with the way the Critical Realist perspective is used in this research. Another advantage is that actors are less likely to be "mistaken about

Note 6: Pawson and Tilley apply the same methods to both Physical and Social Science (Breese 2002). To a degree this is reasonable but their method involves a triple hermeneutic.

Generative causation cannot be a means of predicting the future (Holmwood 2003). But experimental control can be affected by abstraction from the object of study in thought. 'How different is this to prediction in successionist causation?' The Realist method has been challenged as the construct of a researcher's reasoning on the basis that eliminating subjectivity is impossible to achieve (Marks 2002; Greasely and Stoker 2004). Reasonable, but abstraction of the object of study in thought provides a point of reference.

the social world which their activities sustain" (Manicas 2006, p. 102). In this respect, "ethnographic scepticism" (Manicas 2006, p. 102) would be minimised. To be clear, it is the situationalism of Dewey (Lewis and Smith 1980; Schilpp 1989) that underscores this pragmatism, not the holism of Marx (Avineri 1970).

Naturalism as well as structure is relevant to the Scientific Realist position taken in the research. In commenting on the status of social knowledge for Bhaskar, Collier (1994, p. 160) says: "the life of society is governed by laws which interact and codetermine events. They operate at a multiplicity of emergent strata, rooted in but irreducible to natural strata". It is the material world, incorporating the natural and the social, that is the point of reference in everyday life for the pragmatist in this study in contrast to a relativist stance such as that of, for example, Rorty (1982). So "the study of social practice must start with the agent's conception of it. But unlike the hermeneuticist and like the positivist, social science can refute these conceptions. Bhaskar holds that social explanation can be both causal and interpretive" (Collier 1994, p. 167). Structure and agency are both irreducible (Willmott 2002).

Arguably, it is this omission of Bhaskar's "emergent" naturalism, depth realism (Benton and Craib 2001), that seems to lead Pawson and Tilley (2003) into an eclectic use of middle range theory incorporated into a cumulative synthesis which would appear to be verificationist and operationalist in its application. The use of middle range theory in this way by Critical Realists is considered overly empiricist and deductivist in its mode of inference (Danermark et al 2002). For such an approach, a reliance on the existence of an independent reality would seem to be irrelevant. In attempting to establish a causal connection between PM processes and standards of attainment, this study takes up the retro-ductive mode of inference in asking the central question "what is it about PM policy that causes an increase in standards of attainment". It also assumes that the object of study has causal powers, whether they are active or not (Harre and Madden 1975). For this reason, conceptual abstraction of the object of study PM is at the centre of the research design and a cumulative synthesis, developing cmo configurations in the Empirical Domain as hypotheses, of increasing levels of abstraction, in the way Pawson and Tilley

(2003, p. 121) appear to suggest, is avoided. A subject's explanation/conceptualisation of their material practice, presupposing an independent reality, is also a significant point of reference. Unlike many of the studies of Pawson and Tilley (2003), in relation to the structure of the policy, subjects as teachers and law-abiding citizens are obliged to implement PM. As Sayer (2000) points out, Pawson and Tilley (1997, in Sayer 2000) fall short of developing their approach to incorporate structure. The suggestion here is that it is their questionable preoccupation with policy subjects' cognitions and cumulative synthesis that leads them away from policy structure and conceptual abstraction. Cumulative synthesis is not employed by the research design of this study and at this point it is important to explain why.

Looking at Scientific Realism as it is used by Pawson and Tilley (2003), the purpose of representation or cumulation is not generalisation, for the Realist. Science does not arrive at laws inductively. Experimentalists may recognise the difficulties associated with this view, but it is worth it to them to be able to assert that this policy results in this outcome under these circumstances. Constructivists assume that each policy situation is unique and therefore place little emphasis on generalisation. The purpose of cumulation for Pawson and Tilley was improvement of practice and the secure transferability of knowledge arising from **their version of abstraction**. However, the former is concerned with descriptive particulars, which would inhibit transferability. But transferability of ideas from one context to another does not mean that they are similar or based upon typicality; rather, it refers to ideas that can work in both contexts. This process is a particular feature of the work of Pawson and Tilley (2003) and it needs to be addressed as a potential issue for this thesis.

Pawson and Tilley (2003) argue that by developing a (middle range) theory about how a policy works, they would be able to explain its operation in different contexts. They also state that "researchers would ascribe to the importance of toing and froing between the empirical and the theoretical as the route to progressive understanding and transferable knowledge" (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 120). However, Pawson and Tilley (2003) give the impression that they begin in the Empirical Domain, arrive at a range of cmo configurations, which seem to work for a given range of circumstances/cases, draw out the

common elements and move to the next level of abstraction, where they can generate refined hypotheses that will make it possible to produce more focused cmos. They call this 'configuration focusing' (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 125). Pawson and Tilley explain this cumulation by reference to a "ladder of abstraction" Fig 5.5 (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 121).

Fig 5.5 Ladder of Abstraction Adapted from the Realist Cumulation used by Pawson and Tilley (2003, p. 121):

THEORY   *Abstraction*

a. Methodology: generative causal propositions

CMO

----

b. Analytical frameworks: programs as rational choice situations

CMO

----

c. Middle-range theory: hypotheses about risk calculations

c1m1o1 etc

D. Empirical uniformities: outcomes and regularities

o1   o2   o3 etc

_____

E. Evaluation case studies: CMO configuration focusing

c1m1o1   c2m2o2   c3m3o3
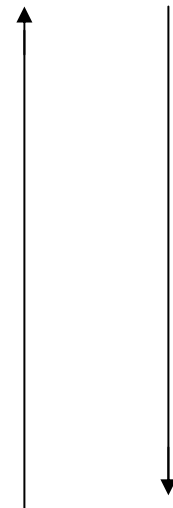
_____   Specification

At the top of the ladder are the theories a – c, which capture the essential ideas and structures of all social policies (dotted lines). Then at D and E the notation is the concrete and substantive: there is a change to the Empirical Domain (continuous lines). The impression Pawson and Tilley give is that "the movement up and down the ladder of abstraction" (2003, p. 120) is continuous, with the number of common elements decreasing at each stage going up the ladder of abstraction until they, CMOs, allegedly become content-less. It is this notion of abstraction that Pawson and Tilley (2003, p. 120) appear to have that presents a difficulty for the Critical Realism used in this thesis.

Critical Realists assume that the Real is structured or layered. The implication is that the Mechanisms within the Real are layered so that Physics' Mechanisms beget Chemical Mechanisms, beget Biological Mechanisms, beget Social Science Mechanisms etc. Pawson and Tilley, in their cumulative synthesis, take events within the Empirical Domain, access subjects' perceptions, cognitions or explanations of them, give them the status of mechanisms or theory and ascend "the ladder of abstraction", taking what could be a qualitative mix of mechanisms with them. If this is the case, qualitatively different mechanisms could easily be incorporated into a causal analysis, which would raise questions about explanations being realistic.

Critical Realists assume that causation happens because mechanisms are instantiated when contexts, including the relations between things/entities, are appropriate. When a social agent enters into a contractual relationship with someone hiring out their house, the internal relationship between them changes: they become respectively tenant and landlord and this, in certain circumstance, "causes" the observed event to pay rent. The relationship between them is based on exchange. This would be one explanation or one mechanism. The trouble is that in an event like the paying of rent, mechanisms from within other strata of reality combine to produce this concrete event: e.g. tenant may feel physically unfit to cope with the confrontation of not doing so, they were about to die and so at long last pay up, they take pity on the landlord who has mental health problems etc. Such mechanisms would not emanate from the Social Science layer of reality. Pawson and Tilley (2003) are not in a position with their cumulative synthesis to extract a mechanism or mechanisms from a given layer. It is suggested that they do not extend their approach to incorporate structure (Sayer 2000) or the Real. This structure would be determined by the object of study. The Critical Realist, used as a point of reference in this study, focused on the object of study and by abstraction isolated its irreducible constitutive structures and associated causal power(s) and hence the mechanism for study (Sayer 1992, p. 116). For the present study, this would be the one that "generates", enables a rise in standards from within the irreducible constitutive structure of PM (Fig 5.6 and Chapter 10).

Looking at Fig 5.5 above, Pawson and Tilley (2003) cite c1m1o1 as including a mechanism perceived by respondents. This can be confusing because it could produce uncertainty about which layer of reality the mechanism is rooted in and therefore which mode of explanation and epistemology to use with it. Arguably such a study would still be working in the Empirical Domain and the mechanism that m1 refers to is little more than a perception of the respondent. The present study avoids this ambiguity by identifying m1 for what it is, an explanation based on immediate perception, and by continuing the distinction between the Empirical and Real Domains, the ontology is consolidated. The abstraction of PM into the Real Domain would clarify the mode of explanation as being rooted in a particular layer of the Real, which would be coherent with or incorporate explanations of immediate perceptions reported in the Empirical Domain. Such a methodological separation would not only make the ontology and epistemology more distinct (Bhaskar 2008, p. 93). It would make them more explicit.

In summary, the Constructivist model is based upon analytical representation and in a sense a non-cumulative model of cumulation and is therefore not realizable. It merely takes findings literally "as a case of". Similarly, "the moribund search for cumulation as empirical generalisation" (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 127) of the experimentalist, based upon many instances, is described as statistical representation. The Realist model of cumulation for Pawson and Tilley (2003) is in essence theory development through cumulation, and this was found to give rise to a methodological ambiguity. This, it is suggested, can be resolved by recourse to the Transcendental Realism of Bhaskar (1994), which is taken up and developed in 'Searching the Empirical Domain', Part 3, particularly Chapter 6, and in moving 'From the Empirical to the Real Domain', Part 4. However, either approach, it is suggested next, would be enhanced by involving more than one school in the Case Study.

Section C

Designing the Research

The aim of this section is to both adapt the Realist method of Pawson and Tilley (2003) for the study and to format the policy to focus on its irreducible elements. It highlights a

number of potential CMO configurations for use in the research design. This is done by abstracting from the object of study – i.e. the PM policy - its essential elements, to assess potential CMO configurations that could be developed into a research design that could be used to access subjects' thoughts about PM affecting standards. These CMO configurations are shown to be linked to a concept of PM. This concept and related CMOs are the basis of the questions asked in a structured interview (Fig 5.6 and 5.7, p. 103).

In developing the structured question format, specific questions were set about the different dimensions of the policy as conceptualised by the policy makers, i.e. the DfEE. These dimensions of the policy are illustrated below both in Fig 5.6 and Fig 5.7. Looking at the PM policy structure as abstracted in Fig 5.6, the order of arrangement of the concentric circles is of no significance at present. The format is no more than representative of the tiers of activity linked to the PM policy. It is not a middle range theory that could be used for explanatory purposes, as Pawson and Tilley (2003) might suggest. However, it is a diagrammatic preliminary representation of the object of study, i.e. PM.

Fig 5.6: The Policy Model

Four-tier diagram representing the national policy for performance management illustrating the link with teaching,
learning and leadership.

4. School Development Planning

3. CPD

2. Performance Review

1. Target Setting (Students), Data Analysis, (Lesson) Observation
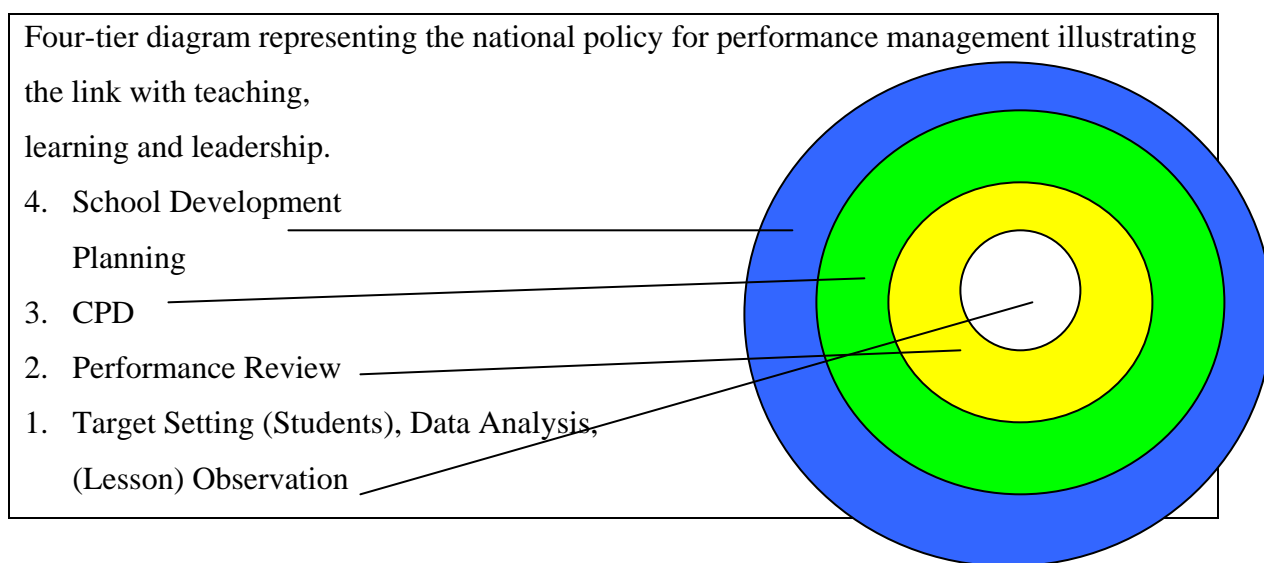
The structure, Fig 5.6, squares with the statements about how PM would raise attainment, in the Model Policy document published by the DfEE (2,000), Fig 5.7.

Fig 5.7

PM provides a review structure and focus for raising attainment activities for inexperienced and less committed teachers through review and ***objective setting***;

PM reinforces ***target setting*** and academic review of students;

PM leads to the sharing of good teaching practice through ***lesson observation***;

PM leads to sharing of effective learning, e.g. through ***lesson observation;***

PM facilitates the ***development*** of effective leadership;

PM leads to the effective ***use of student data***;

PM might lead to teaching ***development*** linked to raising attainment.

(DfEE 'Model Policy' 2000)

By way of identifying a typical CMO within the PM policy structure, Objective Setting is a dimension of PM and is a part of the context (C), which generates improved performance and raised standards (O) by enabling review (M) to take place. Capitals are used in this illustration because CMO is derived from the potential conceptual workings of the policy. Had a teacher, being interviewed, said that objective setting (c) generated improved performance (o) by enabling review (m) to take place, then cmo would have been appropriately incorporated. This is because for the subject, (m) is an explanation of a perceived event (o) in the Empirical Domain.

The statements in Fig 5.7 represent the background thinking to broad changes, which may be associated with raising attainment, and they relate to the more important dimensions that underscore the PM policy, as outlined in the above Fig 5.6 of the model policy. The first task in the research was to check the coherence of an abstraction from policy dimensions like these with practitioners' accounts of how they see teachers' practices being impacted on by PM processes. A substantial part of the research involved checking the coherence between perceived PM mechanisms (m) and teachers' circumstances (c), which were conducive to raising attainment (o) and the conceptually abstracted object of study PM (Chapter 10 and Note 7).

Note 7: This was considered to be a reasonable approach to take because the schools were considered to have embedded the PM national policy. Teachers within these schools were considered to be committed to the policy. PM was considered to be an entity made up of real parts – structures enacted by (these committed) teachers (Chapter 12).

In this context, the literature is well placed to provide ideas on raising attainment, particularly those related to teaching, learning and leading. Examples of raising attainment strategies that are commonplace in schools include: sharing good teaching practice through lesson observation; creating a focus on learning through target setting, improving teaching through objective setting and so on. Each of these is a dimension (or role structure) of the model of PM outlined in Fig 5.6. While there is very little in the Realist Research Literature to reinforce the hypotheses (potential CMO configurations illustrated in Fig 5.7), the effects of the individual dimensions of PM policy, like lesson observation, on school performance are quite well documented, which is why this was given some consideration in Chapter 3.

It was most important in documenting potential CMO configurations that appropriate consideration was given to which combinations of circumstances provided the most compelling possibilities for change and for whom. In this respect, it was relevant to find out how teachers at different levels in the organisational hierarchy were variously affected by the policy. It was necessary to develop questions for practitioners that would elicit what it is about PM that seemed to have the most impact in raising attainment. Questions like these would help to identify the contexts and mechanisms that were conducive to raising attainment in the four schools in the Case Study.

The precise method of data collection at the level of subjectivity was chosen according to the sub-questions asked and subsequent "hypotheses" set. This is not to be confused with the overall research strategy adopted to answer the research question. For example, asking about what impact (o), if any, lesson observation has on teaching is quite different to asking what impact a national policy has on standards. In addition, answering questions like "what is happening and why?" (m) requires a qualitative approach be taken. However, in asking to what extent a particular CMO configuration is operating then more quantitative measures could be needed, which would be beyond the scope of this study.

The approach was to ask questions about the impact of PM on raising attainment by asking questions related to what was it about the policy, its dimensions (Fig 5.6 and 5.7), that

worked for whom, in what circumstances, in raising or lowering standards. Thus the research question was modified into what types of teachers were associated with which PM mechanisms that linked to increases in attainment/learning (Pawson and Tilley 2003). This underlines a particular strength of Critical Realism, namely its ability to treat policy research as an open system. It has the facility, therefore, to increase specificity of understanding of the mechanisms by which a policy accomplishes change and the structural aspects of it as well as the contextual conditions necessary for generating its mechanisms.

To sum up, this section has explained the source of CMO configurations in PM national policy. It has also suggested how these were to be demonstrated to operate at the level of individual thinking - teachers' and leaders'- in the schools in the Case Study, cmo. How these operated was shown by asking policy subjects and managers questions about what effects the policy had on performance in their schools. The questions asked, in the interview strategy adopted, were based on a theory about how the PM policy operated at the level of cognition to raise standards of attainment. Eventually, the subjective views of both interviewees and interviewer were checked against the conceptually abstracted object of study as a point of reference. This is explained in Chapter 10.

The Theory Relevant Interview

This section explains how the method of interview was decided. It also outlines how the research tools used were refined and made fit for the purpose.

The purpose of the research was to find out in detail about what impact performance management had on standards of attainment and why, and its concerns were mainly to do with practitioner and subject perceptions. For this reason, the favoured research instrument was the structured interview (see below).

The approach to this study assumed that the subject and the subject matter of the interview were one and the same thing. This research assumed that there is a real, it does exist but it is dependent upon theory – i.e. concept dependent but not concept determined. Therefore, for this thesis, theory was the subject matter of the interview. The role of the subject or practitioner, teacher or manager was to confirm the mechanisms perceived to impact

positively on attainment. For the Critical Realism taken up here, it was subjects' reported explanations of the perceived effects of PM on attainment that were collated. These explanations of perceived effects were accessed by asking policy subjects and managers questions that were based on an analysis of the PM national policy. These were eventually checked against a conceptual abstraction from the object of study, the national policy on PM incorporating teachers' roles within it, which is explained at length in Part 4.

The questions used in the interview were designed to access teachers' thoughts, if any, about the effects of PM. In this respect, Realist theory was a useful starting point for empirical inquiry because it helped to identify what data to gather as well as to coordinate its collection. This, in turn, raised questions about who could know and how to ask. Interestingly, policies, or at least those implemented, had a division of labour and therefore a potential division of expertise (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 160).

Those who could be asked include policy subjects: i.e. those whom the policy acts on, teachers, were likely to be more sensitised to the mechanism(s) (m) in operation within a policy than they were to its contextual levers (c) and outcomes (o). Other practitioners, mainly managers but also line managers, translate policy theories into practice and so were also considered useful in terms of collecting information. They would have adapted initiatives to get the best out of teachers/subjects and so would have specific ideas about what works in a policy (m). They were also likely to have experienced success and/or failure (o). They would also therefore have knowledge of the people and situation/context in which the policy works (c). However, they would not have systematic knowledge of this, i.e. what works for whom in what context: CMO configurations. For Pawson and Tilley (2003), they would be too involved to "abstract, typify, and generalise their understanding of policy" (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 161). For the Critical Realist they would be too involved to conceptualise the range of perceived effects of PM on standards of attainment. This would require the involvement of an independent observer.

All of this should be considered alongside Giddens's "knowledgeability of the social actor" (Giddens 1984, p. 5; Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 162). Giddens (1984) argues that people

are always knowledgeable about reasons for their conduct, but in a way that could never carry complete awareness of the conditions that prompt their action or its consequences. There is always the anxiety about the reliability of the data with respect to its immediate author – the research subject. In the present study, this was substantially removed by locating the subject's view in their material practice, at their thinking/doing interface. However, the final test of the data is whether it accurately reflects a subject's understanding or thinking relevant to the theory behind the research. Teachers would know better than anyone to what extent their thinking and decision-making have been influenced by PM policy. "To this end they are the mechanism [m] experts" (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 164). "The researcher is the [CMO] expert" (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 164) in that they explain the impact of policy by showing how the teachers' partial view is absorbed into or paralleled by the concept under test. It is not about describing all of the teacher's ideas, beliefs, hopes and aspirations about a policy but about demonstrating which conceptualised aspects of the policy under analysis contribute to the underlying mechanism affecting attainment, so that they, as researchers, would be able to facilitate its development (Note 8).

In summary, theorising the structure of the interview was based upon a CMO configuration derived from both the literature and the national policy for PM. These set the frame and enabled fine-tuning of the questions using a pilot study for the structured interviews that were carried out in the schools of the Case Study.

The Realist Interview

There are two essential stages to the Pawson and Tilley approach to subject interviews. Within the first stage the researcher would explain "the overall conceptual structure of the investigation to the subject" (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 167) and ensure that it was understood. The purpose of this would be to get the policy subjects to explain how the policy worked for them. However, this was unnecessary in the Case Study on PM. This is because the subjects - teachers - were fully conversant with PM policy, its effects and how it worked. They had been implementing the policy for the past five years. Thus, even in the pilot study, initial cmo hypotheses were established through subjects saying how events

Note 8: This important comment by Pawson and Tilley (2003, p.164) is taken up in Chapter 12 where this and related issues are considered in a general evaluation of the thesis.

related to PM policy e.g. by explaining why teaching improved in certain contexts. The nature of theory for Pawson and Tilley (2003), so it would seem, would require taking the accumulated cmos to the next level of abstraction with a view to revise an abstracted CMO. They would take this revised concept back to the subjects for further revision – the second stage.

In the second stage of the interview process the aim, for Pawson and Tilley (2003) would be to get subjects to think: "this is how you have defined the potential structure of my thinking but in my experience of those circumstances, it happened like this…" (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 167). The aim, for Pawson and Tilley (2003), would be to create a situation in which conceptual structures under investigation are open for inspection in a way that allows the subject - the teacher - to make an informed and critical contribution to them (there are difficulties linked to the derivation of these structures). This can happen if research is organised around Realist propositions linking cmo through cumulation.

There was such uniformity and coherence of response from all of the subjects interviewed in this study that it may have been possible to confirm the conceptual abstraction with little additional research. However, it was not possible to confirm the conceptual abstraction immediately. One reason for this was that the uniform response raised questions about the interview process and the possibility of coaching, a particular vulnerability of this type of interview. So the follow-up interview had to confirm subjects' thinking, to eliminate coaching, without specifically sharing findings or potential abstractions. This is not to forget the methodological ambiguity referred to in the above discussion of cumulative synthesis, the ascending/descending of the Pawson and Tilley (2003) abstraction staircase through multiple interviews (Fig. 5.5). Their focus was on agents' perceptions rather than structure and conceptual abstraction. For these reasons, the elimination of potential interview interference took on a much higher priority.

The Contribution of DfES Policy Makers

The policy maker was also considered to be a source of theory because they would have influenced managers' and line managers' interpretations of policy. So the policymaker's account, like that of others, has a specific significance as a potential source of theory,

which, in the diagram, takes the form of an explicit or reconstructed cmo pattern configuration. However, in the case of the DfES policymakers, the researcher needed to be familiar with the subtle nuances of the policy implementation if data collection was to reflect the policymakers' thinking about policy. In this respect, Fig 5.8 illustrates how the policymakers' cmo were incorporated into a more rigorous check of the PM concept.

Fig 5.8 Evaluator elicits cmo configuration theories (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 208)

Evaluator feeds back improved CMO configuration findings

Policy put in place & acted on	Policymaker CMO Configurations	Senior Manager CMO Configurations	Teacher CMO Configurations	Evaluator formalises tests arbitrates & refines CMO configuration theories

Evaluator elicits CMO configuration theories
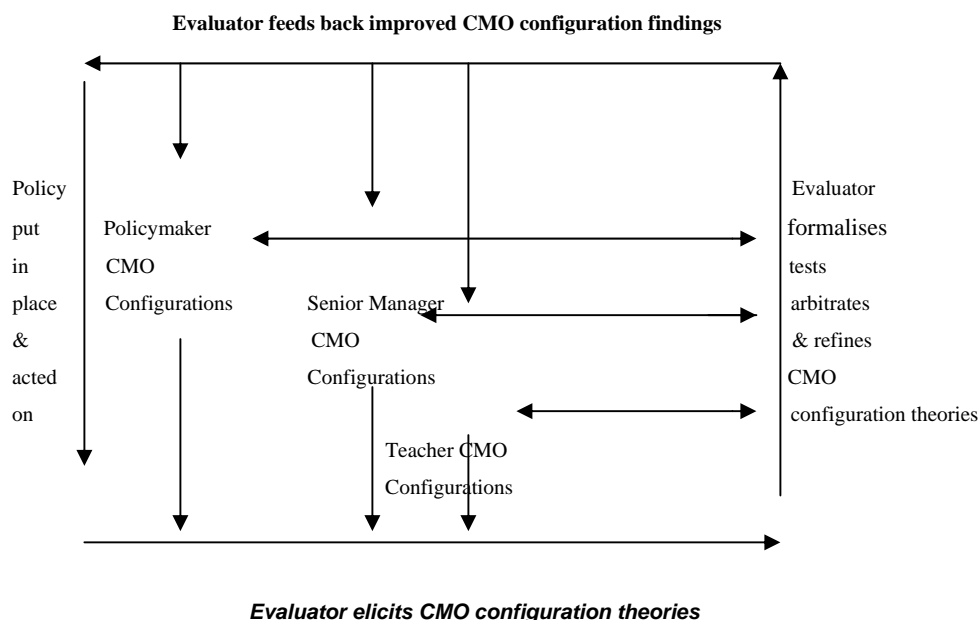
The main subjects of this study were teachers and leaders in schools. It is their behaviour that the policy was aimed at and which was seemingly affected. They were the experts on the impact it had on their thinking and the choices they made. PM policy was intended to work through teachers in improving the education of students. Configurations of cmo and/or the perceived effects of PM on standards derived from Realist interviews with teachers were particularly relevant in this respect. The basic task of the analysis was about cmo configuration focusing and CMO checking. The Policymakers' cmo configuration had a contribution to make too. It provided more rigour to my understanding of how PM worked in schools.

In summary, generative causation was used to explain the effects of PM. This was based on an ontology which supposes that the patterning of social activities and the

implementation of the policy are generated by a mechanism composed of teachers' thoughts about how it works in their particular social context. The perceptions of policy subjects and managers - i.e. teachers and leaders - were collated to check an abstracted concept of PM. This was made possible by a kind of teaching and learning process in which the participants' not so disparate expertise was coordinated and then refined to test this PM concept and therefore assess the effect of the national policy on standards.

In this context, the suggested research design chosen was case study. The model of representation this required was not statistical or analytical: it was synthetic. It was enhanced by studying several policy contexts to achieve a reasonable range of representation of cmos. In assessing the enactment of policy, the mass of data was collated by using simple coding procedures. In collating the data, low and high examples of policy implementations were matched with high and low value added (the progress learners make in the school as defined by their attainment on entry, at the beginning of year 7, and on leaving, at the end of year 11). This necessarily required the completion of a study of four schools. The initial research instrument was structured interview, which was theory dependent. The initial crude conceptualisation of PM driving the interview is outlined above in Fig 5.6. This was derived from policymaker (DfEE) documents and provided the main resource of questions and hypotheses for the interviews (Note 9). The aim of the interviews was therefore to elicit the theories of the main participants or stakeholders. They were policymakers, senior leaders, line managers and teachers. The theories elicited were in response to what aspect of PM had impacted on their work and in what circumstances. There was also close scrutiny of whom the policy impacts on. This ultimately enabled theory to be articulated about what impact performance management had on attainment and why.

Interview Design

The interview design was based on generative causation and is related to but not the same as the Pawson and Tilley (2003) approach. In addition, there was always the possibility

Note 9: The five dimensions of the policy are an essential part of the policy that teachers generally would relate to. They would have an objective existence in the day to day practice of schools where the PM national policy is embedded and reinforced by statute.

that interview responses could be influenced by a culture that stems from the history of the reluctance of teachers to "buy" into performance appraisal. This reluctance, identified in the introduction to the literature survey, Chapter 2, was linked to the political control of teachers by the Government of the early/mid 1980s. Consequently there was a particular need to be objective and for a degree of scientific consistency and control. Correspondingly, in articulating links between the practices of PM and an outcome as precise as attainment, the approach to the research would also need to be accurate (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994). The interview design and implementation had to reflect all of this. These are the main reasons for adopting a structured question approach to interview.

On the matter of what questions to ask, PM policy evolved from a need for both development and accountability as well as a need to successfully implement the policy (Chapter 2). This form of the policy was introduced by the statute on the DfEE Appraisal Regulations in 2000. So while the literature on appraisal is wide and varied and does consider its relevance for school improvement, there has never been a study of its impact on anything nearly as precise as an assessment of its effect on attainment or standards. This development area in the literature has implications for the questions and hypothetical causes that are constructed below. This means that proposed causes, CMO configurations, linked to the conceptual abstraction are generated from those aspects of the policy that have both a direct research literature and research question link. The questions prepared for interview accounted for this.

This is far from the end of the matter of what questions needed to be asked. In assessing a policy like PM, it was also important to access the 'actual' thoughts and deeds (this relates to the Pragmatist 'thinking and doing' definition of truth referred to above) of those who participate in its implementation. PM is assumed to work by instigating a chain of reactions. Critical Realism is about linking the thinking of policy makers, participants (leaders and managers) and subjects (teachers) into a comprehensive theory of the mechanisms through which PM enters their minds and the contexts needed if its (PM's) potential is to be realised. Generative causation implies, as already argued above, an ontological link between context and outcome in the form of a mechanism. The perceived

context, the way in which it is transformed to a product, an outcome, entails a thinking process. The aim of the research design was to access the thinking of those involved (the knowing subject whose cognitions are accessed at the thinking/doing interface), at every level, with the development and implementation of PM national policy. The information required relates to who had the thought, in implementing the policy, what that thought was and in what circumstances it took place, e.g. aspect of implementation, role of participant and school (including performance and policy type). The thinking was that it would then be possible to identify the mechanism by which the outcome, related to enhanced attainment, was constituted or generated. It would thus become possible to accumulate a range of context, mechanisms (subjects' explanation of the outcome) and outcome, or cmo data, where outcomes refer to perceived outcomes reported from interviews. These, for Pawson and Tilley (2003), would then synthesise into a theory, whereas in this research, partly because of the uniformity of the results and partly to avoid any methodological ambiguity, they were linked to an abstraction of the policy. The latter approach was used to explain why PM impacted on standards in schools as perceived by policy practitioners. Most importantly, the questions asked needed to access what practitioners thought they did in implementing PM policy as well as their explanations of the effects they perceived it to have.

The questions asked are directly related to a simplified abstraction of the model policy shown in Fig 5.6. This was derived from DfEE documentation on performance management (DfEEb 2000). The significance of this is that it represents the impact of the various tiers of PM on standards as a regression from the centre or core of the diagram. This so-called regression is based on the assumption that activities at the centre are nearer to the teaching, learning and leadership processes. It is also based upon a significantly less than contentious research literature (Chapters 2 and 3). These distinguishable tiers are linked to proposed causes (see below), which in turn relate to a range of research questions and subsequently interview questions, generated for the pilot study, below. All of this is

seen as being an essential part of the research process of making the interview theory dependant (Pawson and Tilley 2003 and Note 10). The Research Questions that ultimately formed the basis of the Case Study, not surprisingly, are similar to the original ones that generated the pilot study below (Fig 5.10). They are, as shown in Fig 5.9.

Fig 5.9 Research Questions

1. What impact does the use of baseline data have on teaching? Why?
2. What impact does the use of baseline data have on student learning? Why?
3. What impact does the use of baseline data have on leading? Why?
4. What impact does target setting have on teaching? Why?
5. What impact does target setting have on student learning? Why?
6. What impact does target setting have on leading? Why?
7. What impact does lesson observation have on teaching? Why?
8. What impact does lesson observation have on student learning? Why?
9. What impact does lesson observation have on leading? Why?
10. What impact does objective setting and review have on teaching? Why?
11. What impact does objective setting and review have on student learning? Why?
12. What impact does objective setting and review have on leading? Why?
13. What impact does CPD have on student learning? Why?
14. What impact does CPD have on teaching practices? Why?
15. What impact does CPD have on leadership and management practices? Why?

Potential Causal Mechanisms or Hypotheses

The following potential causal mechanisms were used like hypotheses, because they have a direct literature as well as a Model Policy link: for example, improving teaching practice is linked to the use of regular review and hypotheses like these are also less likely to generate a historically derived attitudinal response among interviewees, than questions like "how does appraisal affect standards?"

a. PM raises attainment because it improves teaching through co-ordinated review (Chapter 3).

b. PM raises attainment because it improves learning through co-ordinated review (Chapter 3).

Note 10: The theory dependant nature of the interview - the Pawson and Tilley (2003) approach - is reviewed in the section on "Reflections" Chapter 12.

c. PM raises attainment because it improves the leadership process through co-ordinated review (Chapter 3).

d. PM raises attainment because it improves student learning through co-ordinated data analysis, lesson observation and target setting (Chapter 3).

e. PM raises attainment because it improves the teaching process through co-ordinated data analysis, lesson observation and target setting (Chapter 3).

f. PM raises attainment because it improves the leadership process through co-ordinated data analysis, lesson observation and target setting (Chapter 3).

g. PM raises attainment because it improves student learning through co-ordinated CPD (Chapter 3).

h. PM raises attainment because it improves the teaching process through co-ordinated CPD (Chapter 3).

i. PM raises attainment because it improves the leadership process through CPD (Chapter 3).

These "hypotheses" are derived from the initial theorising above and are related to an accessible research literature, which is essential, as previously explained (Chapters 2 and 3) (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994). However, if any hypotheses (proposed causal mechanisms) had not been confirmed, then the postulated model would have had to be modified. The hypotheses, in turn, relate to the complete range of research questions trialled in the pilot study. These are presented below.

The Role of Pilot Interview Questions

The main purpose of completing a pilot study was essentially to check that the proposed mechanisms, "hypotheses" and research questions could be converted into a workable interview. For this reason, a pilot interview was constructed using exactly the same questions as the research questions outlined in Fig 5.9:

Fig 5.10

    (i)   What impact does the use of baseline data have on teaching? Why

    (ii)   What impact does the use of baseline data have on student learning? Why? etc.

    (See Appendix A)

At the start of each interview, respondents were reminded that PM policy might not have any impact whatever on any aspect of raising attainment. Eventually, in the Case Study, the possibility of no effect was reinforced through each question as outlined below.

These questions were moderated following the pilot study, essentially to minimize the imposition of the interviewer's ideas and thinking on the interviewee and reduce Hawthorn effects (Adair 1984). The number of each question in the interview was not related to the order in which it was asked in the pilot, to discourage the interviewee from "guessing" the answer the interviewer might want. There are a number of reasons related to this: for example, teachers commonly relate teaching with learning and are inclined to give the same answer to these quite different questions. By separating them, the interviewees were made to think about the answers they gave. The over-determining aim of the structured question interview was to access the interface between what interviewees thought about and how they do performance management and so help to test the theory/concept of PM in how it raises standards.

The structured questions that formed the basis of the Case Study

The pilot study facilitated the development of fifteen questions, like the following, that were used in the interviews of the teachers in the Case Study:

1. What impact, if any, does/has the availability and use of student data have on student learning?
2. What impact, if any, has the availability and use of student data had on teaching?
3. What impact, if any, has the availability and use of student data had on leadership and management practices? etc.

Each of these questions related to a particular level of the PM policy (see Fig 5.6). They asked each interviewee to assess the impact of each level of the policy and why it had this

impact and therefore why they engaged in implementing each of these levels. By theorising the interview and asking questions about the policy in this way, it was possible to access the interface between what interviewees thought and what they did with the policy at each level of its implementation. This, together with the background information of each of the schools in the Case Study and the level within the structure at which each interviewee is located, enables the individual and context (implementation, subject's role and school type), mechanism (subject's thinking), outcome (subject's doing) or cmo configuration to be identified. It enabled the objective identification of a subject's reality in relation to PM policy and, ultimately, each school's reality in the Case Study of the policy.

The Interviewees

The structured question schedule above served as the basis for all who were interviewed. Those interviewed included teachers, middle leaders and senior leaders in each of the four schools and the policymakers, the DfEE/DfES. Certain questions were subject to modification/rephrasing according to the interviewee, i.e. policy maker, participant or subject. However, the essential structure and meaning of the questions asked remained constant.

The significance attached to the answers given by each type of interviewee varied according to the relative contribution they made to the implementation of the policy. For example, policy makers had no participation in the implementation of the policy. Their cognitions did resonate with the conceptual model proposed to some extent, but not entirely, and they were not expected to. Participants like senior leaders, for example, were also expected to give a reasonable fit. The most significant variation from the proposed model was anticipated from subjects' (teachers') responses. The point here is that within each tier of the conceptual model, the cmo configurations elicited were anticipated to vary according to who, in the organisational and extra-organisational structure, made the cmo connection (which presupposes the circumstances in which they made it). The positions of interviewees in their organisations (schools) are summarised in Fig 5.11 below.

Fig 5.11: Numbers of interviewee types and their position in the organisational structure

Policy Maker	Senior Manager	Middle Manager	Teacher
2 SEOs	Deputy Headteacher	2 Heads of Year	4 subject teachers
	Assistant Head	3 Heads of Dept	Including core subjects 1 Science 1 English and 1 Maths
Total: 2	2 x 4 = 8	5 x 4 = 20	4 x 4 = 16

Total number of interviewees for four schools = 46

(Total number of interviewees that would have been required for nine schools = 101)

On balance, because there was sufficient overlap of responses between the four schools chosen, it was decided that there was very little to be gained in extending the study to nine schools and 101 interviews. As a result, four schools were used in the Case Study (see p. 137 for more explanation).

Management of Interview Data

Each of the cmo configurations, the perceptions reported, was codified to make the data more manageable. A taxonomy, or Parallel Coding (Chapter 8), of these configurations was produced to make the data more inclusive when checking its coherence with the conceptual abstraction from the object of study. The theory was used to: accurately identify the impact that PM had on attainment in the four schools and explain why it impacted in the way it did (Chapter 10).

Refining/Confirming Interview Responses

A typical Pawson and Tilley (2003) approach, as has already been explained, would have identified anomalies and similarities from the responses to the structured interviews. It would have used these to refine cmo configurations to confirm in a follow-up series of interviews. However, in the Case Study, there was such uniformity of response to the interview questions that the data did not, apparently, require further refinement. Other

issues also began to appear, including questions about the reliability of the data. As a result, 'refinement' through the so-called follow up interviews became more about confirmation of the original responses. In other words, what it was about the policy that worked for teachers in the schools in the Case Study was confirmed using an approach that was different to Pawson and Tilley's (2003). The ultimate explanation was based upon a different epistemology (Chapter 10).

Eventually, it was possible to check the coherence of the concept of PM and standards in schools generally with the perceptions reported by respondents about why PM affected standards in the schools in the Case Study. For such a research design bias, selection and representation or any interview effects on the data collection would always be important. In this context, it is essential to be able to typify or categorise the schools in order to indicate what schools the theory refers to.

The Types of School in the Case Study

In accessing the data, it was decided to carry out the research on four schools that were representative of a range of achievement and types of policy focus. 'Representative' here refers to schools that were representative of the performance spectrum (high and low value added) of "Challenging Schools" that focussed on either CPD or whole school criteria (in line with the bifurcation of approaches identified in the literature on appraisal in Chapter 2) when they rolled out PM national policy.

A Challenging School

Each school in the Case Study was characterised by DfEE criteria as "Challenging". In this respect, all of the schools, at the time that PM was introduced, had:

- A high percentage of students on roll that were eligible for free school meals, i.e. >51%;
- Attainment less than the national average, but all schools were improving;
- Rates of attendance described by the DfEE as low, i.e. <90%;
- Exclusion rates described by DfEE as high, i.e. >20;
- A high proportion of students who spoke English as a second language, i.e. >20%;

- Mixed gender;
- An entirely non-selective intake.

The four representative types of school include:

i. A school with high implementation of policy and low value added, as defined below (School W).

ii. A school with low implementation of policy and low value added, as defined below (School X).

iii. A school with low implementation of policy and high value added, as defined below (School Y).

iv. A school with high implementation of policy and high value added, as defined below (School Z).

High and low Value Added are used in the conventional Ofsted sense in that high Value Added refers to learners who have progressed to higher attainment/standards in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. So a school that has high VA is one where the average rate of progress for the students in the Year 11 cohort (passing out of the school over the five years, Year 7 –Year 11 since the introduction of the national policy for PM) is above the average for schools nationally. The data used to approach schools was obtained from the DfES (2004 Families of Schools, The London Strategy).

High and low applied to policy are arbitrary descriptors. High refers to a focus on the institution, the school, in the roll out of policy whereas low refers to a focus on CPD. In the former, pupil progress objectives in common with school attainment targets are prioritised, whereas in the latter, CPD addresses the needs of the teacher in relation to the School Development Plan, as agreed between appraiser and appraisee. Most teachers would be responsible for five or more teaching groups, so that, for example, prioritising a school benchmark indicator, i.e. GCSE results, would exert an additional institutional constraint on priorities and objectives for the high PM school. Types of policy implementation were collated by telephone interviews with representatives (heads and deputies) of high and low VA schools.

Two difficulties with the typology of schools:

Difficulty 1

The first related to representation. The subjects' perceptions - their cmo configurations for Pawson and Tilley (2003) - would be collated (synthesised) from four polar but arguably representative types. Significant issues about representation could arise, particularly if cmo configurations for each school were unique, i.e. resembling an organisational "fingerprint". For this reason, the number of schools used was kept under review. The progression to the possibly more representative nine-case alternative was considered, in the circumstances described. Thus:

High PM – High VA,   High PM – Medium VA,   High PM – Low VA.

Medium PM – Medium VA, Medium PM – Low VA,   Medium PM – High VA.

Low PM – Low VA,   Low PM – High VA,   Low PM – Medium VA.

In the first instance, four schools were selected for the Case Study, and because there was sufficient commonality of response to check the conceptual abstraction, a case study based upon four schools was considered appropriate.

Difficulty 2

The second difficulty related to the selection and sampling of schools. In the first instance, four schools were sampled from an original fifty-two schools. This was done across the Local Authorities for Greater London. Sampling was based upon the best fit of high-low value added and high-low implementation of national policy. The final four were selected from six schools largely determined by their priorities in implementing PM. The final selection was based upon convenience of access. The main issue was to what extent four schools, in challenging circumstances, were representative of schools nationally. The difficulty was that it was more probable that as Challenging Schools, the four schools were more representative of institutions in challenging circumstances than of all schools.

By way of summarising this section, the thesis has developed a framework based upon generative causation that relates to findings in the research literature. The framework is

shown to be a secure theoretical base for a range of interview questions, listed in the form of a series of structured questions, for the study of a selection of schools. The main focus of the research was to find out what it was about PM policy that worked for each of the different types of personnel in each of the schools in the Case Study. The starting point had to be the participants and subjects involved in the implementation of the policy and how they used it in whatever way they did in their schools. In the Case Study, the schools were the main focus of interest.

Conclusion and Overview

Taking an overview of the whole chapter, the discussion about methodology began with an attempt at selecting the research strategy through the research question. This was concluded to be inappropriate. However, by examining the research question more closely, together with its implied requirements, a methodology for the research was derived from its purpose at the level of ontology and epistemology. As a result, a form of Scientific Realist methodology has been developed, more extensively expounded in Chapters 6 and 10, based upon the conceptual abstraction of the object of study PM. It assumes an independent reality which is an assumption that is based upon the Transcendental Realism of Bhaskar (1994). This enabled a research design, which was a variation of the approach of Pawson and Tilley (2003), to be constructed and applied to the four schools in the Case Study.

Collecting the Data

The focus until now has been on PM policy and what methodological approach should be used in studying the effects of the policy on standards in schools. It remains to consider in more detail the teachers interviewed, the schools in which they "perform" and their locations or the context in which the research design was implemented. It would be appropriate to use this context to explain how the data/results were collected. So, having surveyed the Empirical Domain, it would be apposite to describe what was observed in it. An account of "Collecting the Data" and the story behind it is the logical next step for the research. The focus now turns to Part 3, "Observing within the Empirical Domain", and the next chapter, containing the details about the data collection.

Part 3 The Case Study

"Reporting from the Empirical Domain"

Introduction

The main purpose of this part of the thesis is to explain how the data was collected and therefore how observations were made and reported about in the Empirical Domain. This includes what was reported by policy makers, leaders and teachers in the Case Study, about what they perceived some of the effects of PM to be in relation to increasing standards. In order to fully appreciate how the data was collected, as well as acted on, it would be appropriate to consider briefly its historiography. This is the starting point for Chapter 6.

Chapter 6

Collecting the Data

Introduction

In this chapter I aim to give details of how the data were collected. The story begins with an historical account of the study (including the data collection). It briefly states when and how the schools were chosen and gives a chronology of the shift in the ontology underpinning the study. The "brief history" outlines details relating to respondents interviewed and the methods used, which leads into an account of the schools involved in the Case Study. It raises the question about where exactly on the ontological map of the Critical Realist the thesis is by the end of Part 3 (the Case Study and its context) and the start of Part 4 (the Discussion of the findings). The answer to such a question is suggested by the title to the closing section of this chapter, "The Empirical to the Real Domain". However, "A Brief History" would be an integral part of this answer.

A Brief History

Context

In 2003, as the headteacher of a comprehensive school of about 1700 students, I wanted to find out if we could use PM policy to raise standards of attainment. Initially, the method was to complete a 'Practitioner Enquiry' (Evans 2007). My main concern was to carry out a study that would have some credibility with my peers.

Sampling the Schools

As I worked in the inner city, it was important that the study be appropriately representative of schools in challenging circumstances. This requirement placed some limitations on the study that I did not anticipate at the time: for example, it might be suggested that the study does not consider schools in non-challenging circumstances where PMR might not be needed or as well received. However, by focusing on such schools, I was able to make a fairly broad selection in terms of where they were on the school improvement journey and

how they had implemented the national policy for PM. 'Representative' here does not mean statistically representative. It relates to school outcomes and the way PM policy was implemented. The categories 'high PM, low VA' and 'low PM, high VA' represent qualitative categories that provide a representative range of responses from four types of school (as explained in Chapter 5).

The selection of the four schools was based on value added data provided by Strategy for London on its 'Families of Schools' (2004). Some twenty-two schools from the 'Families of Schools' database were contacted by phone to test their interest and also to find out whether their approach to PM would facilitate the generation of disparate types of schools that could be used in the Case Study. Initially, the approach was open-ended, but it was gradually narrowed down to the constructed types identified: the four schools that became the subject of this thesis.

In order to develop the academic authority associated with the research, I enlisted the support of a local university by registering for a part-time research degree in 2003. I set up a collaborative relationship with four schools to share improvement strategies and these schools became the focus of the Case Study. The initial project focus was PM but the common and general interest later centred around Maths/Numeracy and English/Literacy, and the schools later collaborated on a range of issues related to these. After about a term, we came to a consensus that the data from the Case Study of PM yielded few quick returns for improving attainment and colleagues were very concerned to address attainment in Maths and English instead. I agreed to focus solely on the PM study, as I had been accredited by the DfEE as a PM Consultant and had also worked with a number of schools nationally on implementing PM policy as well as advising governing bodies on schools' and headteachers' performance. The DfEE, Ofsted and Cambridge Associates, contracted on behalf of the DfEE, were suggesting publicly that PM contributed to school improvement (DfES 2003; CA 2004). In this respect, the data collected in the Case Study was initially disappointing, with no obvious causal links emerging. However, the information collected was too substantial and wide-ranging to dismiss without further analysis.

At the time of setting up the collaboration, I applied to NCSL to fund the Case Study, the research work, a part-time degree and supply cover for the schools, including my own school (to release me to carry out the interviewing essential to the Case Study). This Practitioner Enquiry, which was funded entirely by NCSL, required an empirical approach. The work of Pawson and Tilley (2003) seemed most apposite at the time, particularly as it offered, in addition to a practical/ fieldwork approach, a retro-ductive and Realist dimension (Chapter 5).

This retrospective approach of Scientific Realism seemed to be a reliable if not powerful evaluative tool at least for practitioner work, and in fact there were some substantial successes, 'quick returns', with the later studies of the Collaborative on Maths and English with 'sea changes' of improvement in the 5A*-C pass rate in the school where I am the headteacher. However, I grew increasingly wary if not concerned and confused by the notion of 'Cumulative Synthesis' as an academic research tool (Pawson and Tilley 2003) (Chapter 5). I not only questioned it as a point of reference, as it did not seem sufficiently rooted in the material world of professional practice, but also began to doubt its reliance on 'middle range' theory. On balance, I began to think that it was no more than a coherent synthesis of what people thought. It was losing its objective scientific appeal, the very characteristic that had attracted me to it in the first place. It helped to generate significant 'finds' for the Core subjects in the collaborative, but it seemed to have fallen disappointingly short on the main focus of this thesis, that is the impact of PM on standards in schools.

On completion of the Case Study there were a number of domestic pressures: a publication, a report about school improvement for NCSL based on the field work, was required; the write-up was insufficient for a thesis after 21/2 years part time research; the school at which I was, and continue to be, the headteacher was coming to the end of its Ofsted cycle. As a result of this pressure of work, I had to temporarily halt the academic research, but continued it in April 2009, at the University of Sussex, some time following publication of the empirical findings (Evans 2007).

Publication of the report on the empirical findings, presentations and live debate took place in 2007. The report aroused a 'good deal of interest' among professional practitioners and I made some twenty or so replies to email enquiries about the findings, including how PM policy was implemented in the four schools of the Case Study (Evans 2007). This was particularly surprising given that the report came out some seven years after the national policy on PM was first implemented. A year later, our Ofsted arrived. After all of the turmoil and anxiety the school did extremely well. It received an excellent report at the end of June 2008.

Practical to Conceptual

A break in India followed the summer of the Ofsted. I became partially immersed in the history of Indian philosophy and that led to an interest in Transcendental Idealism. This precipitated a brief interest, by way of contrast, in the history of Western Philosophy, then Kant, arising partly from a preoccupation with the noumena and phenomena because of a longstanding scientific interest in, and commitment to understanding, the significance of an 'independent reality'. This led to some reading of Transcendental Realism and Bhaskar (2008). Following this, I finally accepted that there was a lot more I wanted to do on the PM research. This 'more' relates to a change in emphasis from the practical to the conceptual (Button 2008).

In this context, it would be appropriate to understand the shifting ontological emphasis in the research. The detail of the research is integral to an understanding of its journey along an ontological map (Fig 6.2). This refers to the shift in focus of the research, as it developed, from the Empirical Domain to the Real Domain (Bhaskar 2008). So, it is this detail that I discuss next.

The Schools in the Case Study

This section details how the data was collected. It will outline: who and which teachers were interviewed and why; what was actually done in the process of structured interviewing; why the structured interviewing was carried out in the way it was; when and

where the research was carried out and by whom; and what additional biases, including interview and interviewer effects, might have arisen because of "local" choices made.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with six temporary teachers in July 2004. This was prior to those of the Case Study. In this pilot, the research tools, including interviewing skills and the structured questions derived from the national PM policy, were tested against a group of temporary teachers. The main purpose of this was to check against potential and unanticipated issues arising from known problem areas and my limitations as a research interviewer and to refine the research instrument in particular the wording and order of the questions in the structured interview. This was carried out on a group of experienced main scale teachers who were prepared to offer "advice" in this context. A good deal was learned from this practice exercise, particularly about the rank order of questions in the schedule, and ambiguities in the finer detail of the wording of the questions and the inappropriate responses this might evoke.

Sampling 1: Interview Subjects from the Schools

The subjects interviewed, at least those directly responsible for generating 'perceived effects', fall into three distinct categories. First are those responsible for executive leadership (senior leaders), because they have an awareness of the impact of the different aspects of PM on standards. This is a primary function of their role. Middle leaders (heads of department) were selected for core subjects. This is because they had an awareness of the effects of PM on standards of learning for all of the students in any one cohort. They were responsible for the students' learning in curriculum areas that generally make the most significant contribution to measurable standards. Finally, the majority of interview subjects were main scale teachers because their practice affects learning most directly and more significantly they were the policy subjects in the strictest sense.

Sampling 2: The Schools

As previously explained, interviews were carried out in four schools that were considered to be in challenging circumstances. They were selected as a good cross-section of such

schools in challenging circumstance in the Greater London Boroughs. They were good in the sense that they were performing at different levels and with different emphasis in the way in which they implemented national PM policy. Funding for the study was approved through the NCSL (Note 11). All of the schools' achievement was at or above the national average. Achievement is not to be confused with attainment, the standards reached at the end of Year 11, i.e. GCSE. Two of the schools were substantially above national averages and two were near to the national average at the time of the research. The two schools substantially above the national average were, for the sake of argument, described as having 'high value added' and those at the average or below as 'low value added', as defined by the Ofsted database. The schools that were assigned low value added were significantly below the national median score (instead of using negative numbers, a 1000 would be added to all median scores) i.e. < 1000 and the two assigned high value added were significantly above the national median i.e. > 1000 (DfES 2006b). Similarly, two schools focused on whole school improvement in implementing PM policy, including the accountability aspects of it, described as high implementation of policy, and the other two focused on the CPD aspects of the PM policy and their implementation was described as low. The point here is that schools were chosen as representing a good range of value added and the emphasis they placed on how PM was implemented. The use of low/high implementation of policy and value added was not a means of statistical control, as would be required of an Experimentalist investigation; rather, it was a means of representation related to the nature of PM implementation and levels of achievement (VA).

Each of the four schools is located in a Greater London Borough. Schools were selected from different boroughs because, at the time of the research, league tables had a relatively high profile and collaboration between local schools was quite fragile. There was always the risk of biasing the research data by interviewing subjects/teachers from schools that were considered to be in competition with each other. For this reason, the four schools

were selected from four different boroughs. Practicalities like transport links and time of travel to interview locations, in completing a part-time research study, had to be allowed for. So, proximity was taken into consideration in choosing the schools and the boroughs for the Case Study. However, this is not to suggest that matters of bias in generating data were not always a key determinant in implementing the research design.

Structured Interviews

It was especially important to be consistent in completing the structured interviews of all subjects, the main reason being to minimise bias and to keep interview-related error to a minimum. The main sources of error and bias derive from the approach to introductions, questions in the schedule, the way the answers given by the subjects interviewed are recorded, accessing subjects' knowledge and closing the interview.

Introductions at the start of each interview were consistently concise, so reducing the scope for error. Each interview was prefixed by a clear identification of the purpose of the interview. This was to evaluate the effects of the policy, if in fact there were any, on standards of attainment in the four schools of the Case Study. Subjects were informed that there were no 'correct' answers *per se* and that their cooperation and honesty in answering the structured questions was in their interest and their schools', as this would support greater consistency in interpretation and would be more likely to result in an improvement in their practice and working conditions. Ultimately, the findings were to be shared discretely in the sense of 'this is what was found' rather than 'who said what'. The importance of confidentiality was underlined as key to the success of the study. This is, of course, apart from ethical considerations. These are discussed below.

Openness about the identity of the researcher was also relevant. As a headteacher, who could have been known to interviewees, it was most important that the nature of the research was made explicit. Any oversight in this context could have generated suspicion and introduced additional bias into the interview process. One potential bias related to a specific form of the placebo effect that is arguably identifiable as a Hawthorn effect (Adair 1984). This was about interview effects that might arise from teachers being interviewed

by a headteacher. In particular, there could have been effects arising from the formal authority of the interviewer. An illustration of this is the possibility of respondents saying things that they believe senior managers may want to hear, e.g. 'PM is an excellent way to raise standards' when they do not believe it is. A number of factors were considered to be instrumental in minimising such interview effects and these are discussed more appropriately below.

This preliminary dialogue with each subject was considered essential to building confidence as well as trust between the researcher and the subject. The aim was to establish a good working relationship with each individual subject interviewed. For instance, each subject was asked about the use of a tape recorder and the recording of notes. In this latter respect, every attempt was made to maintain eye contact as far as practically possible. Every effort was made to ensure that, even though eye contact may have been lost at times through note taking, for instance, subjects were made aware that they were always being very carefully listened to. Appropriate body language was used, such as nodding and standard forms of oral encouragement when subjects might 'detect' any apparent signs of disinterest by the researcher. Every subject was advised of the potential for the researcher to appear preoccupied with the logistics of running the interview. In addition, subjects were given every opportunity and encouragement to respond freely to each question asked in the interview schedule.

In the pilot interviews, some of the question order in the interview schedule was varied, and while there was no apparent impact on the response, the research literature warns that altered question formats could impact on results (Appendix A). Both Schuman and Presser (1981) and Mayhew (2000) suggest that there can be some demonstrable effect, although this is dependent on question type. For this study, the concern was that answers given to questions about learning would influence those given about teaching. Nevertheless, subjects generally realised or were made to realise that the one was not necessarily linked to the other. If they implied that they were the same by saying so or by giving the same answer, this was very briefly pointed out to them. The message from the literature is that, in the course of structured interview, it is important to be aware of the potential effects of

the order and proximity of questions asked so that the interview does not impact on the subjects' responses. The sequence of questions asked was constant throughout and the same questions were asked of all subjects/teachers. Consistency of approach to questioning also included avoiding embellishments and intonations so that the meaning a question might have was not subject to variation from interview to interview. Similarly, the approach to probing and prompting was also standardised, e.g. 'could you say more?'

Consistency of approach was critical in all of the interviews so that interview effects were minimised as far as was possible. Another aspect of this related to the way subjects'/teachers' replies were replicated. All interviews were recorded and detailed notes taken for each and these notes were checked and enhanced using the recordings. The recordings were used mainly as a point of reference for the notes taken, and while they were not transcribed, the tapes were retained as evidence. This was important because recorders are not reliable. The questions asked were closed rather than open so as to minimise the variation in interpretation of the answer given (Fowler and Mangione 1990) as well as the question asked (Conrad and Schober 2005).

The end of the interview was treated with some caution. Care was taken to avoid additional discussions when the interview was formally at an end. As many as eleven subjects/teachers were interviewed from each school over a period of two days. It was vital therefore that cross-fertilisation of responses between subjects/teachers did not occur from any inconsistency or informality (including 'loose comments') of closure, so that any potential post-interview analysis by subjects, therefore, was minimised. All subjects/teachers were also asked if they would be happy to participate in a follow-up series of interviews at some time, seven or eight months later, i.e. during the summer term. The response to this request was unanimous and positive and was taken to be an indication of their level of engagement in the interview process.

The eleven interviews in each of the four schools were completed by spending two consecutive days in each of the schools. One of the reasons for this, as explained above, was to minimise the cross-fertilization of ideas between interviewees. Each interview took

less than one hour and each of the schools operated a five-period day, so that subjects/teachers in the schools had fewer opportunities to inadvertently make comparisons about their interviews than they would have done if they had been interviewed in smaller clusters over a longer period of time. Colleagues understood that there was a moral obligation for confidentiality and there was very little evidence of collusion in the recording tapes or the enhanced interview notes.

The interview schedule was adhered to rigorously. Headteachers felt that much could be gained from the study and were very cooperative in preparing the schedule. However, this rigour was essential, as failure to complete each interview to time would have repercussions on all of the remaining interviews carried out in any one of the schools. This is because each interview was linked to the teaching schedule of the subjects/teachers and the school. Nonchalance in adhering to the structured question interview and therefore the interview schedule would have had disastrous consequences for implementing the research design.

There was always the possibility that interview and interviewer effects could impact on the generation of data because of the choice of fairly "local" schools. As has been explained, every effort was made to minimise these, by trying to engage and encourage the subjects/teachers in the interview process, maintain an atmosphere of calm in the interviews to inspire confidence, motivate subjects/teachers to make an impartial contribution to the research findings in their interests and the interests of their schools and make them feel assured that the contribution they had to make was important and valued so that any inhibitions or distortions about their responses to the questions asked were minimised. However, there was always one overriding objective point of reference: this was the retro-ductive linking what the subjects/teachers thought, how they explained what they did, in their everyday professional practice. The "theorised" follow-up interview arrived at prior to "conceptual abstraction" would also be an arbiter in attempting to minimise bias. As explained in Chapter 5, the unification of thinking and doing is perceived by some as a criterion of truth or verification (Dewey 2007). Consistency of response about this unification from subjects/teachers in the follow-up interview some seven or eight months later was a consideration in evaluating the reliability of the data and the impact of bias.

This is not to assume that people always say what they actually thought/think they were/are doing (Brandom 2008). However, there was a remarkable consistency between the two sets of interview data.

In explaining the implementation of the research design, I have considered the participation of the teachers, their schools and their locations. In so doing, I have outlined what I did in the Case Study and why. How and where the research was completed was important in considering interview-related issues of bias. How the research was completed also helps to contextualise its verification. The names of teachers, schools and LAs are a matter of confidentiality but are available if required. In summary, the implementation of the research design, collecting the data, has been placed in its 'Empirical', factually detailed context. It remains to explain how the data from this Empirical Domain was worked up, developed, reconstituted and conceptualised, as it would be, in essence, within the Real Domain. It is to this next ontological 'grid reference' that the discussion now turns (see Chapter 5 and Fig 6.2).

The Empirical to the Real Domain

Data Analysis

Quantitative data is cited for the four schools in the Case Study in Fig 6.1 (p. 151). The purpose of doing this is to illustrate that it is in line with the national trend of a significant increase over the five years from the time PM was introduced in 2000.

The use of quantitative data in this way does not imply a typical mixed method approach. Nor is this thesis dismissive of the use of quantitative data in enriching an understanding of the 'real'. In the present context, what the quantitative data does is point to the possibility of certain regularities. It suggests that the introduction of PM, in 2000/2001, was accompanied by a corresponding increase in attainment. It does not mean that PM has caused a rise in standards. A mechanism by which PM might generate a rise in attainment could be enhanced by reinforcing ones (mechanisms) or for that matter neutralised by interfering ones (mechanisms), so that in the case of the former, the effect would be

magnified, whereas in the case of the latter, it might be so diminished that it might not be manifest at all. Further, an interfering mechanism might have a bigger impact than PM, which would result in a decrease in attainment (Note 12). So for a Critical Realist, quantitative data like this posits possibilities. It said to this researcher that PM might impact positively on standards and that further investigation would be necessary. Further investigation was initiated in the form of the qualitative Case Study.

Fig 6.1   Use of Quantitative (Attainment) Data (DfE 2012 [1996-2005]; Note 13)

Year of %age 5 A*-C Results	W School LVA/HPM 5A*-C %	X School LVA/LPM 5A*-C%	Y School HVA/LPM 5A*-C%	Z School HVA/HPM 5A*-C%	National Average 5A*-C%
1996	8%	13%	32%	14%	44.5
1997	10%	18%	26%	11%	45.1
1998	9%	20%	33%	21%	46.3
1999	13%	19%	24%	26%	47.9
2000	10%	19%	34%	32%	49.2
2001	22%	22%	29%	36%	50.0
2002	23%	34%	37%	70%	51.6
2003	33%	35%	37%	79%	52.9
2004	47%	35%	40%	81%	53.7
2005	44%	35%	58%	82%	56.3

Note 12: An organisation like a school would be vulnerable to numerous group and structural influences. For example governing bodies and external advisers would be inclined to enhance the impact of PM whereas unions and teacher associations would, arguably, constrain it.

Note 13: Any correlation between VA and Attainment would be tenuous particularly where pupils in different schools progress from different baselines on entry. Thus high VA could produce low, medium or high attainment. The rate of increase of attainment of the schools in the Case Study substantially exceeds the national trend. This could be for a variety of reasons including the enhanced resource provision made for challenging schools by the Labour Government through e.g. the Excellence in Cities' programme.

The increased rate of attainment for School Z is excessive but was attributed to the vocationalisation and personalisation of its curriculum in stark contrast to the curricula of the three other schools in the Case Study.

Use of Qualitative Data

From the enhanced notes of the interviews given by teachers and leaders at the four schools in the Case Study, a number of themes were identified. These themes were then coded and tabulated. The tables summarising this data are included at the beginning of Chapter 8. They actually depict the perceived outcomes believed to be identified by the teachers and teachers' leaders in their interviews. The use of codes is a useful if not more efficient way of managing the interview data. These perceived outcomes are made ready to compare with the outcome of the conceptual abstraction of the PM policy. The conceptual abstraction of PM is developed and explained in Part 4. The main purpose of Part 4 is to explain the consequences of the PM abstraction and to demonstrate that these are coherent with the empirical findings of the Case Study as well as those of the Education and Sociology Literature.

Ethical Matters and Data Analysis

Transparency

Those who participated in the research did so with their full consent (Silverman, 1993). They met with me as the researcher and my intentions, identity, role and purpose were clearly explained from the very beginning before they were included, by their consent, in the sample of subjects to be interviewed (Neuman 1994). They were also advised that if they felt uncomfortable about the questions asked, they could retract and withdraw at any time during the course of the interview or after it had taken place (Seidman 1991).

One of the reasons for initiating the research was that it was hoped that it would enhance the development of PM policy in the four participating schools and contribute to school improvement by impacting positively on standards of attainment. If at any time the research was a threat to the collaboration between the schools or to their operation (Miles and Huberman 1994), it was understood that the study should be brought to a close.

Anonymity

Throughout the interview process, anonymity was maintained both for the interviewees and for the participating schools. This was maintained both for the publication of the study nationally and for its circulation within and between the participating schools. This was achieved by coding all names including individuals, their departments and their institutions. The names were and are available, on record, to the researcher but not to anyone within or outside of the participating schools. As Bryman (2004) advises, the interests of the participants were protected at all times.

Follow-Up Interviews

All of the staff interviewed confirmed, as explained, that they would want to take part in the second interview. However, while the large majority of them were available, a small minority did not return the call for a follow-up interview. Thirty two of the original forty four teachers or policy subjects, from the first series of interviews, were interviewed the second time around. The majority of cases of absence were understandable. Some who did not make themselves available for the second interview had moved on, one was in bereavement and another was on leave of absence.

Conceptual Abstraction and Data Analysis

This process of inquiring about interviewees' version of the 'real' and reconstituting it by abstraction raises significant questions about the underlying ontology upon which the research must be founded. It implies a shift from an 'observed' reality to a conceptually deeper one. In his seminal work on the Philosophy of Science, Bhaskar (2008) raises the very simple question about what the world must be like for there to be an experimental science. Briefly, he identifies three domains in this world, the Actual, the Empirical and the Real. The Actual is made up of events whether they are observed/experienced or not. The Empirical is made of those events that are observed/experienced. Intuitively, the vast majority of events are within the Actual. In the Real Domain there are, metaphorically, 'Mechanisms' that can produce events in the world. These three ontological domains, and how they relate to this study, are illustrated by the diagram Fig 6.2 below.

Fig 6.2   **The Domain of the Actual**

	The Domain of the Empirical Includes themes of perceived effect of PM dimensions.	
The Actual		**The Actual**
The Real Ex. PM	**A Part of the Domain of the Real** that includes objects of study conceptually abstracted, e.g. PM and reconstituted elements that originated as perceived effects.	**The Real Ex. PM**
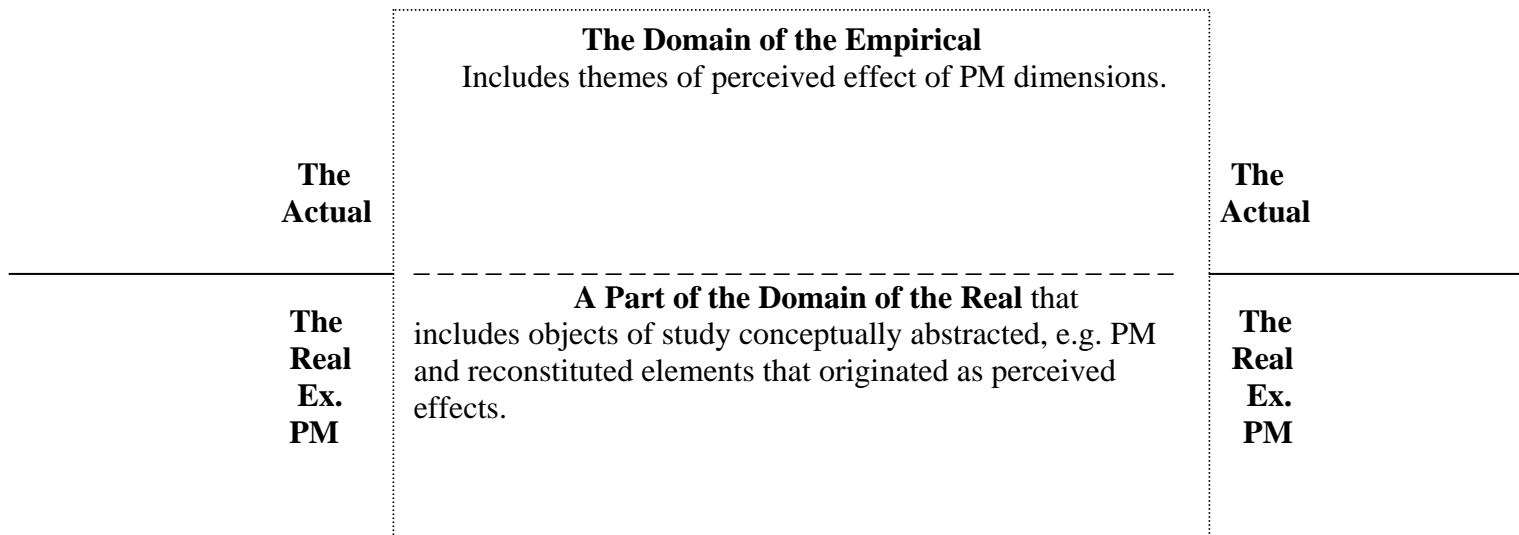
The Domain of the Real Excluding PM

(See Chapter 5 for related discussions of the Realist ontology).

It is the Mechanisms within the Real Domain that produce the empirical events observed in the Empirical Domain.

This is predominantly metaphorical, and open to the charge of vagueness, but all that is required for now is that the story of the development of the thesis is made transparent. The primary aim here is to demonstrate that the Case Study began prior to its formation in the Actual Domain, and from the process of the study up to its initial publication, moved into and remained within the Empirical Domain (above the dotted line). However, to be clear, this is to use the Critical Realist's frame of reference, a reasonable one to take. It is not the only way a study of this nature could have been conducted, but it does have advantages over at least some, as will be argued in Part 4, the closing stages of the thesis.

Critical Realism, or more abstractly, the Transcendental Realism which underpins it, is the main provocation for the development of the thesis following the publication of the empirical findings of the research. This is because potentially it offers a more rigorous conceptual base than the 'middle range theory' and the inherent eclecticism of the Pawson

and Tilley (2003) approach. Going beyond the thesis, it offers the potential for the development of 'grand' theory, the juxtaposition of 'middle range theory', a science of social action applied to Education. In effect, it would treat Education as a Social Science with its own core concepts built around Teaching, Learning and Leadership (see Chapter 10 for an explanation of this). However, the purpose of this paragraph is to ontologically 'grid reference' the continuation of the thesis following the publication of the 'empirical' Case Study. It is to say where in the 'ontological map' it will move to eventually. Conceptual abstraction ends in the Real Domain and that is where the study is brought to a focus and where it moves to in Part 4 of the Thesis. This assumes a Critical Realist frame of reference. The method or research strategy by which the conceptual model was tested is retro-duction. However, before outlining how, in principle, the data was collected and addressing the substantive issues of how the research instruments were used in this respect, it is advisable to relate this to some aspects of the transcendental method of Conceptual Abstraction.

There are two key aspects of conceptual abstraction that need to be considered in order to avoid potential confusion. First there was the conceptual abstraction of PM policy. This required the isolation of PM policy in thought, which is tantamount to completing a controlled experiment in thought, in the mind. The purpose of this was to answer the question "what would be the essential constituents of a PM policy that would cause, in the generative sense of the concept, an increase in standards defined by a rise in attainment?" This is the concept that is under test in the retro-ductive method. This leads to the second aspect, the articulation of the concept of PM iteratively, from the two series of interviews of respondents from the four Schools. The retro-ductive method incorporates both of these processes.

The retro-ductive method used in collecting the data followed the general understanding or preliminary conceptualisation of PM policy. Data collection priorities were set within this conceptualisation. In this context, interviewees were asked about the impact of the five main elements of PM on standards. By convention, interviewees were 'taught' "the overall conceptual structure of the investigation" (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 267). The aim was

to put them in a position that allowed them to think (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 267). Normally this would be followed by a process of conceptual refinement and a follow-up interview in which "respondents are offered a formal description of their own thinking followed by an opportunity to explain and clarify that thinking" (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 268). However, the responses given were highly coherent with the conceptual model of PM under test. There was a concern that interviewees were inadvertently coached to give an appropriate response. Consequently, in the follow-up interview, the emphasis was on giving 'respondents the opportunity to explain and clarify' their thinking (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 268), in the context of seeking to remove any interview bias from answers they had given previously.

So the research instruments used, in chronological order, were secondary quantitative data about attainment in schools nationally and in the four schools in the Case Study before and after the introduction of PM; the rising attainment observed, attracted a preliminary conceptualisation of the national policy on PM. This was based upon on its essential constituents in raising attainment; structured interviews in the four Case Study Schools based on this conceptualisation of PM; these were followed six months later by non-structured interviews of the same respondents as part of a process of conceptual articulation. The instruments used are not distinctively those of the Critical Realist but they were used sequentially in a process of conceptualisation that is in line with the retro-ductive method.

Much has been said about how the data was extracted and formatted. In fact, this has been discussed in quite some detail, above. It remains to unpack the data describing the themes identified and how they were developed, 'codified', presented and made ready for comparison with the products of the conceptual abstraction of the object of study PM in Chapter 10. It is to the detailed results of the interviews carried out in the four schools in the Case Study, the thematic analysis and the 'codification' that the discussion now turns.

Chapter 7

Results and Trends in the Four Schools of the Case Study

Introduction

In Chapter 5, under the sub heading of Designing the Research, the thesis outlined how the impact of policy in the four schools in the Case Study would be assessed. It explained that questions would be asked about the effect of the five dimensions of PM policy on standards in each of the four schools. These questions, detailed in Chapter 5, were repeated in each of the four schools in the Case Study to both identify the effects of PM and the mechanisms by which they were generated.

The purpose of the chapter is to organise interviewees' reported perceptions about the ways in which the five dimensions of PM policy generated improvements in teaching, learning and leadership in the four schools of the Case Study. It organises these reported perceptions into themes of processes that generate improvements that are identified by the thesis as mechanisms. There are four inter-organisational contexts - cw, cx, cy and cz - and these could relate to interviewees' explanations (m) for the effects, or outcomes (o), of the dimensions of PM on teaching etc. Identifying the themes could be important to locating cmo configurations. However, a minimum requirement of a thematic analysis of interviewees' perceptions would be to link themes as potential mechanisms to outcomes.

Interviewees' quoted comments are assumed to be representative of "their thoughts, about what is happening" (Patton 1987, p. 104). The common elements between these were organised into themes considered to be representative of perceived mechanisms (m) generating effects of PM on standards in each of the four schools or outcomes (o). This is why a thematic analysis was completed on all four schools. In the chapter, school W is used as a focus for all of the themes identified in the four schools, by which I mean that the themes identified for School W are compared and contrasted with those of the remaining three schools. The aim of this 'analysis' was to help identify the full range of perceived

mechanisms generating improvements in the four schools. The contexts linked to these mechanisms and outcomes were nominally cW, cX, cY and cZ.

It was not necessary to use a sophisticated code in sorting out the data arising from individual interviewees' answers to each of the fifteen questions in the interview schedule in advance of the main thematic analysis. This is primarily because the interview was heavily structured. It was therefore unnecessary to analyse each answer, as these were recorded almost as reported in the tabular summaries 8.1 – 8.4. There are, for example, fifteen questions per interview and each question set the limit to the potential range of themes that might be generated by any one subject's discourse in response to the question asked, i.e. their answer to the question. Answers were generally short and directed at the question. This should not be surprising, as questions like "what effect if any does x have on y?" are partially closed and would not generate the range of themes that an open question like "what do you think of x?" might. In fact, for any given subject, the range of themes generated by one of these questions was never greater than three and very often one and much less frequently two. Some - anti-realists, for example - might argue that because of this, the study has artificially constrained the interview situation. However, a restricted primary coding is used to sort out the range of answers to a particular question given by the forty-four interviewees, the teachers from the four schools, not including the two policy makers (see Appendix B). I should add that the focus was tight so that extraneous data was easily excluded.

To summarise, interviewees' responses were in essence pre-coded because the questions they were asked were rigorously structured. As a result, the data did not require further codes to be added. A restricted primary code was used to sort out the answers given by interviewees across the four schools in the Case Study, as outlined in the thematic analysis below. However, to clarify the process, a second or parallel coding was used later as an integral part of the method/process in preparing the data for comparison with the products of the conceptual abstraction of the object of study, PM (Part 4 Chapter 10).

The Status of Quotations and Themes

It is relevant at this juncture to consolidate the methodological status of the quotations used to identify themes. Patton has said:

> Quotations reveal the respondent's level of emotion, the way in which they have organised their world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences and their basic perceptions. The task for the qualitative evaluator is to provide a framework in which people can respond in a way that represents accurately and thoroughly their point of view about the [policy]. (Patton 1987, p.104)

In the Case Study below, the framework for the interviews was given by the national policy for PM. The framework serves two purposes. In the first place it presented a shared objective framework to which interviewer and interviewee could dispassionately relate, as suggested by Patton (1987). In the second place it provided the interviewer with a natural sorting device for separating out the different parts of the policy as potential influences on standards. The five different potential influences of the policy have already been identified in previous chapters. The aim of each interview was to access the interviewee's thoughts about what impact each part of the national policy for PM had on standards and the practices of teaching, learning and leadership. As explained above, there were at least fifteen (5x3) identifiable categories of interaction between the five levels of the policy and the three principal areas of practice - processes - that these could potentially impact upon. These are summarised in Tables 8.1 - 8.4, below. The overriding purpose was to answer the research question "What impact (effect) does the national policy for PM have on standards?"

Themes Identified in Analysing Subject/Teacher Responses Interviewed in the Four Schools of the Case Study

There now follows an outline of responses and quotes, representative of themes in each of the three process areas (teaching, learning, leading) for each of the five policy elements (lesson observation, target setting, data analysis, CPD and review/objective setting [or appraisal]). In effect, this is a compilation of representative perceptions, as reported by the teachers interviewed, of the impact of the five different levels of policy on the three

principal processes that affect standards from all four schools. School W, having an even spread of themes, is used as the main focus and the themes identified in the interviews from other schools are included for the answer to a given question where their emphasis varies. For the sake of clarity, all of the themes identified in the Case Study are common to all of the four schools. For this reason, the thematic analysis of each of the remaining schools, X, Y and Z is only included for reference (Appendix B). The full range of mechanisms (m) was observed in each of W, X, Y and Z. Similarly, the full range of themes was found in each of W, X, Y and Z. I should add that the different contexts for W, X, Y and Z do not appear to substantially vary the outcomes for these schools, which is another reason why the discussion of the thematic analysis within the thesis is focused on one school only, i.e. W.

Teachers are referred to by code rather than name or specified title. Interviewees were coded as follows: for W4; W represents the school and the number refers to the code for a particular teacher. The numbers 1-4 denote main scale teachers (on Standard Scale M1-M6 and with responsibilities < TLR1 (Teaching and Learning Responsibility) Middle Leader Level, TLR1, i.e. little if any PMR responsibility; 5-9 denote middle leaders (those who held a major curriculum responsibility TLR1+, i.e. with PMR responsibility, line managing teachers with < TLR1); 10 and 11 denote senior leaders (assistant and deputy heads with PMR responsibility for middle leaders). The range of interviewees, teachers, middle leaders and senior leaders, is representative of the range of expertise and knowledge of the implementation of the policy. Eleven interviews were completed at each of the four schools of the Case Study.

Themes Identified with a Focus on School W

The Impact of Lesson Observation on Teaching, Learning and Leadership processes

On Teaching (Note 14)

In School W, teachers did not always explicitly state that lesson observation improved

Note 14: PM policy requires that all teachers are observed teaching. Lesson observation is a commonly accepted feature of the policy.

teaching (the outcome). However, they always referred to the process (potential mechanism) by which it improved. The impact of lesson observation on teaching was positive and favourable and, for the vast majority of those interviewed - nine out of eleven - there was an explicitly acknowledged improvement in teaching through what could be termed informed review facilitated by the lesson observation feedback.

There were a number of commonly identified themes. Three teachers claimed that lesson observation promoted review and reflection (W7, W9, and W11). Four teachers thought that it specifically influenced teaching strategy and planning (W2, W4, W6 and W8). Two teachers said that it encouraged them to share practice (W5 and W10). The remaining two interviewees thought that lesson observation helped them to identify strengths and weaknesses (W1 and W3). Each of these themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms, by implication, presupposes review and evaluation of teaching practice.

Three interviews were explicitly linked through review and evaluation. In one of these the theme is self review and reflection: thus, for example, in the case of one senior leader, the symptomatic comment is "it makes me stop and think about what I am doing…look at my lessons again and develop them further" (W11). In an interview with a middle leader, the theme changed slightly to monitoring as well as to some extent sharing practice: "you know that they are fulfilling the correct criteria for that subject" (W9). In Schools X and Y, the emphasis on effect through review and evaluation was less explicit, whereas in School Z, as already explained, this was almost the entire focus (see Chapter 10).

Four interviewees indicated that lesson observation improved teaching through better planning in one form or another. One of these, a middle leader, claimed that it helped to develop teaching strategy without asserting that teaching actually improves. The teacher said that strategy might change so that "linked with PM you are looking at specific things such as questioning and answering techniques [to improve student progress]" (W8). Similarly, a main scale teacher commented, "in terms of lesson planning, I have found that it is quite effective in that you will never be caught off guard in terms of teaching a particular lesson" (W2)… "[It helps you] to be a little more flexible in the classroom,

because you will be able to monitor your progress [against levels of attainment] and work within a plan" (W2).

Two teachers thought that teaching improved through sharing practice. One comment, that we use lesson observation "to look at and share good practice among colleagues" (W10), is illustrative of this. Another reported, "it is a good way of getting out there and seeing how things are taught and how kids are learning elsewhere" (W5) (learning here refers to progress against levels of attainment).

Finally, two teachers explained that teaching improved through the identification of strengths and weaknesses. Their comments that lesson observation, "gives you another opinion which helps you improve and adapt" (W1), enables you "to work on your weaknesses" (W3) and "it highlights your strengths and weaknesses" (W3), are relevant in this respect. Strengths here refer to those aspects of a teacher's practice that promote increases in levels of attainment among learners.

At School W, there were four distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which lesson observation improved teaching. These were replicated with varying frequency in Schools X and Y and with isolated reference to the motivation of teachers (X3) as a mechanism for improvement in School X. In School Z, the emphasis was predominantly and explicitly on review and evaluation as mechanisms for promoting progress in learning, and to a lesser extent, enhanced motivation (Z1).

On Learning

On the whole, the impact of lesson observation on learning, while not as strong as in the high VA schools, was reported to be positive and favourable for the vast majority interviewed, ten out of eleven (displayed in Table 8.1). There were three themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms about how lesson observation affected learning. Six teachers thought that it improved teaching and so improved learning. Two teachers thought that it enhanced the way teachers reviewed and reflected on the way that students learned. A further two teachers thought that it helped planning. However, one teacher thought that lesson observation did not influence student learning significantly.

There were six teachers who thought that because lesson observation led to an improvement in teaching or a change in teaching strategy, it *ipso facto* precipitated improvements in learning (W3, W7, W8, W9, W10 and W11). A middle leader made the comment "if feedback is given to a member of staff, then any points that need to be developed, will be in future. Hopefully the impact would be positive even if the comments were negative" (W8). Similarly, a main scale teacher reported, "inevitably it is going to improve my teaching and therefore improve their [the students'] learning" (W3) and the progress made through the levels of attainment. As one senior leader asserted, "it develops the teacher" (W10) and so "students will learn better" (W10), making better progress.

Two teachers perceived learning to improve through the opportunity for review and reflection promoted by lesson observation (W1 & W6). A middle leader made the comments "expectations are quite clear about how lessons are run" (W6) and "teachers are thinking more about how students are learning and what is the best way to deliver the content of the lesson so that students are learning" (W6) i.e. progressing through levels of attainment as a result of feedback from lesson observations.

In two of the interviews, the inference was that improved planning generated improved learning (W4 & W5). One middle leader was emphatic about this impact:

> I think it has an effect because staff put more planning into the lesson. If the lesson is better planned it would impact on student learning. …. If it is maintained in the long term then it would definitely impact on student learning so that they made better progress [through the levels] and attainment. (W5)

One of the teachers interviewed was almost dismissive of lesson observation having an impact on student learning (W2). This main scale teacher seemed unaware of any potential impact in saying "I don't think lesson observations have that much impact on the students or their learning" (W2).

At School W, the impact that lesson observation is reported to have on learning fell into three quite distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms. The three included 'teaching therefore learning', reviewing learning 'strengths and weaknesses' and 'planning'. These categories were replicated but with varying frequency in each of the Schools X and Y. In School Z, the emphasis was reported to be more on learning than in the other three schools in the Case Study. However, there were other interviewee perceptions: for example, lesson observation was reported not to have any significant effect on learning (Z7); alternatively, others reported that 'sharing practice' also affected learning (Y1).

On Leading

Looking at the impact that lesson observation has on leadership practices, the research can confirm that all interviewees with the exception of one commented on how it improved these practices. However, not one interviewee stated clearly whether they believed that changes in leadership practices resulted in improvements in learning and therefore impacted on standards. There were three themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which lesson observation was reported to enhance leadership. Five interviewees perceived lesson observation to improve leadership through enhanced monitoring and evaluation (W1, W6, W7, W8, and W9). Three interviewees claimed that it worked through the enhanced management of shared practice and gave greater consistency (W2, W3, and W4). Two interviewees thought lesson observation improved leadership through enhanced motivation (W5 and W10). There was one interview in which the interviewee concluded that lesson observation had no impact on leadership practices (W11).

Interviews in which teachers reported that leadership improved through enhanced monitoring and evaluation practices included comments like, for example, it determines how "the department will be monitored" and that lessons taught are subject to "checks that we have objectives" (W1) in line with National Curriculum levels. This theme is identified in the reports made by both middle managers as well as main scale teachers, and one middle leader made a typical comment in stressing the importance of "seeing whether there is consistency within the department and within the school, and I would say that is a very good way of keeping an eye on that" (W9).

Another dominant theme of perceptions (or potential mechanism) identified in the reports made by interviewees was that of 'sharing practice'. From lesson observation, uniformity of practice is maintained in that, as one main scale teacher commented, "we find out what each other is actually teaching, so there is some kind of unison across the board" (W3) and that this "helps you become more organised and a better teacher"(W3).

Lesson observation was also perceived to improve leadership through enhanced motivation. One interviewee reported, "you can set other goals and the staff can feel they also have something to work towards. It is also an opportunity to praise colleagues and say nice things" (W5). Another interviewee thought that lesson observation improved motivation through support. She said, "I think that it very much motivates staff" (W10) by supporting them. She reinforced this in saying "I think in terms of developing staff, it is good to be able to support staff with staff [as observers] who are doing it [teaching] right" (W10), according to National Curriculum requirements.

One interviewee commented that he thought lesson observation was not having enough of an impact on the management processes he was involved with. However, this was more attributable to the structural arrangements unique to this specific school (in that learning trails and lesson observations had been traditionally completed by senior leaders) and this is confirmed by the comment from the interviewee, a senior leader, who said, "I think that lesson observation of classroom practice needs to be more the domain of the head of department" (W11) as he would be able to ensure that teaching and learning were in line with National Curriculum levels and grades (W11).

At School W, the impact of lesson observation on leadership fell into three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms. Two of these, monitoring and evaluation and sharing practice, are substantially replicated with varying frequency in each of Schools X, Y and Z. In Schools X, Y and Z, motivation was not perceived as a mechanism for improvement by any of the interviewees. However, one interviewee expressed doubt about what he perceived to be the effects of lesson observation in supporting the leadership at his

school (W11) and another referred to the enhancement of the allocation of staff as a potential mechanism for improvement (X2).

The variation in theme or potential mechanism identified in all four schools appeared to be linked to the organisational role of the interviewee. In this respect it is important to consider the individual comments made by interviewees on the effect of using lesson observation. Those of middle and senior managers were noticeably more whole school oriented. To some extent they reflected a person management agenda and an underlying vision about independent learning (in Part 4 it is discussed across all schools)

The Impact of Target Setting on Teaching, Learning and Leadership processes

On Teaching (Note 15)

A key finding was that target setting was reported to have had a very positive and distinct impact on teaching practices. There were three themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms. Five interviewees reported teaching improved through making it more relevant to learning outcomes (W1, W3, W4, W6 and W9). A further four interviewees commented on how target setting supported teaching through improved motivation (W2, W5, W10, and W11). Finally, two other interviewees referred to better teaching arising from improved planning and review (W7 and W8).

Interviewees claimed that target setting "has a positive impact because" (W1) teaching is made more relevant to learning outcomes, as illustrated by the comments of this main scale teacher, who said "they get extra homework and they have to come to extra lessons" (W1). Similarly illustrative of this theme, one interviewee, a middle leader, explicitly made reference to improved standards and improved attainment. "Experience tells me that if you set a target and you get information about how to achieve that target, then it will improve the quality of work being produced" "Pupils know what level they're working at" (W6). Similarly, target setting was reported to improve teaching because "it makes sure that you have certain aims and you reach those" (W9), the aim being to ensure that learners work toward a particular National Curriculum level (W9). The suggestion is that it gives

Note 15: PM policy requires that all teachers set their students attainment targets as part of the objective setting process.

teaching more purpose and so it improves. A potential mechanism would be more purposeful teaching.

From another perspective, illustrative of how target setting can influence student motivation, a main scale teacher commented, "target setting helps you to focus on the pupils' specific needs…so in lots of ways it helps you to motivate …. Pupil [s]" (W2). A senior leader extended this type of theme on motivation a stage further. "We use target setting to motivate and also to inform parents and inform pupils of what level they are working on at that moment" (W10). Target setting was reported to influence students more than teachers and another senior leader said, "that pupils are motivated by setting their own target levels" (W11). To be clear, interviewees were asked, "what effect, if any, target setting had on teaching?" They first had to decide if it had any effect and then how that effect was generated. Only a very small minority perceived target setting to motivate teachers and only one interviewee, from the four schools, thought it not to have any formal effect on teaching (X8).

Target setting was also perceived to improve teaching through more effective planning, as can be seen from the comments made by one middle leader:

> If you have certain students who are working towards specific levels you can give them work which encourages them to gain the next level up. So it is partly about planning the lessons and planning what you are going to be doing in the lessons. But target setting for students can motivate them in the lesson as well. (W7)

On the whole, the themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms reported to improve teaching, generated by target setting, in School W, were common to all four schools in the Case Study. The themes centred around teaching practice, motivation and planning. Their distribution varied in frequency within each of the Schools. In School Z, the planning mechanism was a particular focus. However, the underlying theme was planning to teach and so teaching practice was ultimately affected.

On Learning

In the case of the impact that target setting has on learning, the research reports that all interviewees made very positive comments and in several instances there was a distinct indication that it led to a significant improvement. However, while there is strong support for an improvement in learning, the reported impact on standards is less clearly defined. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms. Seven interviewees identified the main effect of target setting was generated by enhanced motivation. They included W2, W4, W5, W7, W8, W10 and W11. Three interviewees claimed that the main improvement was generated through more effective engagement in learning. They were W3, W6 and W9. Finally, improved teaching was also perceived to improve learning by one teacher. This was W1.

A number of comments and quotes are illustrative of different aspects of the motivation theme or potential mechanism. Target setting was reported to have a more general impact by one middle leader in that students respond to it in a positive way because "it is a motivating factor for them" (W5). To one main scale teacher, it was partly linked to raised expectations: "it has a positive impact - children are going to work harder because of their expected grades" (W2). It was also reported that it is the sense of purpose and direction that motivates. "So long as they have the direction to go towards a particular target level, you find that it will work" (W2). "They will try to meet that target [level or grade]" (W2). There are cautionary comments about setting realistic targets: another middle leader said "it is obviously motivating to improve in a formal way [formally recognised improvement] but if you set a certain target [level] with a student, it should be achievable" (W8). Targets can always be negotiated to raise "confidence, and then that follows on to higher [levels of] achievement" (W8). One senior leader seemed to think that it empowers students. "I think it makes them strive for more, it makes them become really empowered, they like it as well, they like that information shared with them and I think they feel in control then and obviously much more motivated" (W10).

Target setting was also perceived to influence learning processes other than those directly linked to raised motivation. One middle leader held the view that "if they engage in the

target levels that are set … then that is going to make them think about their learning more and make them think about what they need to do [next]" (W6). There was a perception among teachers at School W that target setting engaged students more in their learning, similar to teachers from the other schools in the Case Study. This increased engagement and, as one main scale teacher suggests, it is not unrelated to the development of independent learning: "Instead of comparing themselves to other people, they can focus on what they need to do to achieve their target, so they are working more on themselves and it helps independent learning take place" (W3). Finally, as another middle leader pointed out, target setting also helps to clarify learning objectives for students: "it makes it clear for them also" (W9) and "they know what they are working toward" (W9).

Finally, one interviewee said that "improved teaching affected changes in learning" (W1). It was clear from what he said that changes to certain teaching practices were directly linked to changes in learning strategy.

For School W, at the time of the research, participants reported that the impact of target setting on learning fell into three themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms: one related solely to learning, one linked to both teaching and learning and the other to motivating learners. The themes or potential mechanisms reported, of varying frequency, were common to all four schools in the Case Study. However, while there is reference to the direction of learning at Schools W, X and Y, the reported comments from School Z perceived improvements in learning to be generated by a mechanism of planning to meet the needs of learners.

On Leading

In the case of the impact that target setting had on leadership, the research can confirm that nearly all interviewees made supportive comments and in several instances subjects reported increases in achievement. There was substantial evidence for the support of leadership practices through the use of target setting, while the perceived impact on standards was referred to by a minority. There were four related less than distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms. They included those that perceived target setting to have a positive impact on achievement through enhanced monitoring and evaluation

(W6, W8, and W10). Another theme of perceptions referred to improvement through organising/grouping or focusing on learners: an illustration of this would be differentiation (W1, W2, W3, and W11). A third theme related to improvement through enhanced purpose and motivation (W4, W5, and W9). A fourth included one middle leader who wanted to qualify the positive impact that target setting might have (W7).

A number of teachers interviewed were clearly convinced that target setting supported leadership in raising standards and the comments and quotes below suggest it enhances m/e in targeting support. For example, one middle leader asserted that, "when you target set you are extending people in whatever area it is, trying to aim higher". He said that this makes the job of management easier because it requires "support [for] teachers, in supporting themselves and taking responsibility and taking ownership for their own performance" (W6). The suggestion is that target setting provides for more rigorous monitoring of teachers' progress. As a development of this point, a senior leader asserted that target setting has the potential to raise achievement but with certain provisions. "I think in this school there needs to be a more methodical approach to producing targets" (W10). The point being made was to use the baseline data in a more rigorous and open way. Then an increase in achievement would impact on the majority of students, not the minority. (W10).

For four interviewees, target setting improved leadership by enabling groups of students' learning needs to be prioritised so that expectations could be set and resources prioritised. One main scale teacher made the point "quite simply this is because it helps to focus the teacher in terms of the different areas she will need to work on with different groups in order to make progress through the National Curriculum levels" (W2). In essence, she said she would vary her teaching according to the group. For another main scale teacher, target setting had improved leadership through enhanced organisation of teaching groups. She asserted "we have changed the way we have grouped each year group depending upon what they respond to best" (W3). A senior leader argued that target setting focuses teaching activity as well as raised expectations. In this respect, she said she evoked the spectre of

potential for improvement in a group of students performing at a particular level. She said:

> …the head of year has been able to talk to staff and let them know that there are actually lots of C/D borders and that we need to encourage them further. It has brought about quite a few professional conversations and encouraged staff to see potential in the year group. (W11)

Such conversations as these reported by W11 are important to raising levels of learning and teaching. Similarly, another of the main scale teachers asserted that it helps management processes by prioritising certain groups: "the department is organised to be able to target special types of groups" not only for teaching but "we also target our resources" (W1). In this way, learners are suitably supported in progressing through the different learning levels (W1).

Three interviewees indicated that target setting helped leadership by motivating staff and students. The comments and quotes of two illustrate such views. For one middle leader, one mechanism was through enhanced purpose and accountability. "It lets everyone know where you are at and what you are aiming to do. Rather than leave every teacher to do what they want to, you have a way of knowing where everyone is" (W9) and "what level they are teaching at and toward" (W9). However, for one main scale teacher, target setting improved leadership through more effective decision-making. "I think it matters for the head of department because it is something they are working very hard on. I cannot see how it can be a negative impact, because anything that is going to improve a child's learning cannot be negative" (W4). The implication was middle leaders need reliable information to prioritise support and that enhances everyone's performance.

Finally, a fifth middle leader reported that target setting had a positive impact provided there was not over-duplication in the use of data and too many targets set. "I think it does have an impact. I think it helps me in my job: sometimes we can streamline our target setting so that we are not doing the same thing eight times in eight different ways" (W7).

The suggested result is confusion for students, so that "students are getting three or four targets for different subjects and if it was streamlined it would be a bit more useful" (W7).

In conclusion, at School W there were four related, less than distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms generated by target setting reported to improve leadership. These were similar to Schools X, Y and Z at the time of the research. The themes reported were the same as for School W, but of varying frequency from each. However, in School X, concerns were expressed that target setting was not properly embedded in one department (X4 and X8).

The variation in the perceptions reported from within each of the four schools may not be unconnected to the organisational role of the interviewee. However, given the perceived motivational and student-focused nature of target setting, the link is considered no more than a possibility at this stage.

The Impact of Baseline Data on Teaching, Learning and Leadership processes

On Teaching (Note 16)

The use of data has been reported to have a very positive and distinct impact on teaching practices. The research can confirm that all interviewees without exception commented on how it improved these practices. There were two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms of improvement. One theme was the setting of priorities for teaching and learning (W2, W5, W6 and W8). Another theme or potential mechanism was that the use of data improved teaching through focusing, directing, adapting teaching strategies or varying strategies between groups, including differentiation. In essence teaching was made more appropriate to the levels at which students learned. Some seven teachers reported that the use of data improved teaching in this way (W1, W3, W4, W7, W9, W10 and W11).

The use of baseline data was perceived as being instrumental in setting priorities for teaching. This theme, according to one middle leader, "helps us to identify pupils that are capable of achieving A-C grades; it also helps us to add value and identify pupils that we have added value to" (W5). In other words, data analysis helped to identify and prioritise

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Note 16: PM policy requires that baseline data is used to measure student progress in order that student targets and teachers' objectives can be set.

students making less progress (W5). It also helped to identify how their needs are met. This theme underpins much of what was perceived by another middle leader in that data analysis "informs expectations and then the ability to push and stretch individuals if you know that they are capable", "You are making informed decisions about what you teach and how you extend [the levels of learning of] individual students and groups of students" (W6). The use of baseline data was considered to help distinguish "between weaker students and those who are 'gifted and talented'" (W8). In this way it makes teaching more appropriate (W8). By using data analysis in this way, according to a main scale teacher, you could prioritise points for improvement. So:

> …you are able to track [the levels of learning of] a lot of kids' progress throughout the year that you have them, and you are able to identify their strengths and weaknesses and the areas that they need to improve and work on. You can push kids who, based on their data, tell you that they should be moving much quicker in terms of progress throughout the year than they probably are at that point in time. And you are able to make [supplementary] targets that they can meet. (W2)

In a not dissimilar way, the use of baseline data was considered to improve the effectiveness of teaching by adapting it to individual or group needs. According to the perceptions of one senior leader, "it informs all of our teaching, we use progress trackers which track progress from KS2" (W10), so that "a student in the English department would be very aware as to what they needed to do to get to the next level [of learning]" (W10). A main scale classroom teacher perceived that baseline data is used "to set targets or increase attainment" (W1). Another main scale teacher perceived it to help monitor progress and by implication to adapt teaching accordingly. "One of the impacts it has is the fact that I can track the progress of most of the students, the reason being that I have got something to base progress on." (W4). A third main scale teacher made a very similar point in that he perceived the use of baseline data to enable teachers to adjust teaching according to need, and that could mean individual student or group need. "We can see where they may need more help on a topic once they have done a specific topic test. It allows us to set out revision classes, which we do specific to certain topics, and so students who need revision

on that particular topic will come on that day" (W3). This differentiation strategy, i.e. adapting teaching to individual or group need, underpins the theme and reported perceptions of a second senior leader. He commented that the student's "grade is then used when we set targets for them within the lesson and also so that I can decide what level they are on" (W11). (These are supplementary targets and not the objectives directly linked to PM. They are like a focus for next steps). "We have three different levels of task and they are given a different colour level depending on what their IT level was at the end of the previous year." (W11). One middle leader stated that this positive impact of data analysis has its limitations. However, the same perceptions and theme are sustained by the middle leader's comment:

> For KS3, baseline data does help but I find that for RE, what the kids had done in their primary school differs from school to school. For KS4 we have got more subject specific assessment, which helps to inform planning at KS4, so at KS3 it is a bit hit and miss. It helps refine your lesson and differentiate pieces of work [to meet the learning needs of individual students and different groups]. (W9)

Such comments made about changing teaching to meet the needs of individuals and/or distinct groups are suitably reinforced by the perceptions of one middle leader, who said that data analysis:

> …makes a difference to the lessons I teach and makes a difference to the extension work and the SEN work that I am providing. You get a basic thumbnail sketch of a class and quite often a class will fall within one quadrant, then it enables you to teach more specifically to their style [and level] of learning. (W7)

To sum up, the effect of the use of baseline data on teaching, perceived to be generated by a range of strategies, was reported to be positive in School W. All of the themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms identified in this school were replicated, with varying frequency, in Schools X, Y and Z. However, in School Z the link between the use of baseline data and teacher expectations was reported least frequently.

On Learning

The use of baseline data was also reported to have a very positive and distinct impact on learning processes. The research can confirm that all interviewees without exception commented on how it improved student learning. There were two themes or potential mechanisms of improvement. Six teachers commented that the use of baseline data improved learning through enhanced motivation (W2, W5, W6, W7, W8 and W11). The second theme generally covered the learning needs of students. The perceptions of the remaining five interviewees were more to do with how the use of data improved learning via other pathways, e.g. through the identification of learning needs or improved direction of, and more appropriate, learning (W1, W3, W4, W9, and W10).

The improvement in learning through the enhanced motivation generated by the use of data was illustrated in a number of interviews. The comments made by one middle leader suggested that the motivational impact of the use of baseline data could be widespread: "I think if they [the students] are aware of their level, their learning will be improved because there will be a desire to go on improving upon the data" (W6). Nevertheless, a second middle leader questioned the regularity and consistency with which the use of baseline data and data analysis impacted on student motivation. He said:

> I think if it is used by the teacher it can have an awful lot of impact on student learning. Certainly the students in my year group at the moment are interested in what their levels are and what their targets are. It gives them a signpost of what they are working towards, and I don't know if it is true of all the school or even of all the year groups but certainly the students in my year group do enjoy having targets to work toward and they enjoy knowing where they are and knowing they have made some progress. (W7)

This same middle leader was also mindful of the potential negative effects of the use of baseline data on learning generated through de-motivation when students do not progress, saying, "but if they haven't done that [progressed] they can become de-motivated, so it is about using levels and targets sensibly" (W7). A main scale teacher reinforced this

developing theme that the use of baseline data improves learning through enhanced motivation. She pointed out that:

> …if you say to a pupil, 'you need to be at a particular level based on the data' … then it tends to push them because when they are not …. They are going to be working towards that. But if the kids don't know, then it doesn't have any impact on them. (W2)

Finally, a senior leader asserted that, "the use of baseline data is a motivator" (W11). However, this needs to be placed in the context of a curriculum area in which data analysis is used extensively. "We do regular work checks throughout the course of the time they [the students] are working on the project and we do a lot of encouragement" (W11). The implication of this last comment is that while there is unanimity about the potential impact that the use of baseline data can have on learning, particularly the pitch of the lesson, there is an underlying doubt about the consistency with which the data was used across the school in motivating the students.

The remaining interviewees generally implied that the use of data improves learning through better identification of learners' needs. One main scale teacher made two points, one pertaining to literacy and another about challenge in the case of the more able students. "In science their reading ages should be 9 for them to be able to read the text books, and if they are below that they are going to struggle. Some children are very bright, so we need to stretch their ability" (W1). An experienced main scale teacher also perceived that the use of baseline data had a positive impact on learning, saying "it allows them to see the general standard of their learning at the moment" (W3). She also perceived the potential for inconsistency in impact (W3). In this latter respect, she commented "it all depends on how the school uses the data, if they use it with them [the students] individually and also how the parents work with it" (W3). A second senior leader was more emphatic in reporting "data analysis helps children in their learning. I think we have empowered our students, because they are informed about their baseline data and are therefore much more in control of their own learning" (W10). "We share assessment criteria with them, and they are

proficient at knowing what they need to do to get to the next level. I suppose in this sense I am talking about my department as opposed to across the whole school" (W10). Finally, there is little doubt that the unanimous perception is that using baseline data can improve learning, and this was strongly reinforced by a fifth middle leader. She reported "last year we had a focus on adding value and due to the RE's use of baseline data at KS4 in our lesson plans, it seems to have worked. We increased our value added by 67% by using assessment data [as baseline], so it must have raised standards" (W9).

The impact of the use of baseline data on learning at School W was reported to have a positive effect on learning. The themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms identified arising from an analysis of the reported perceptions fell into two broad categories. The impact of the use of baseline data on learning at Schools X, Y and Z was similarly reported to have a positive effect on learning. Themes identified in the reports from these Schools were also categorised in a way comparable to those of School W. However, in School Y, one teacher interviewed was less certain about the positive impact of the use of data analysis on learning (Y2).

On Leading

The use of baseline data was perceived by interviewees to have a positive and distinct impact on leadership processes. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which the use of baseline data was reported to improve leading and leadership. One theme was about organisation and planning. Six teachers commented that the improvement was generated through better organisation and planning (W1, W3, W6, W8, W10 and W11). A second theme referred to three teachers who thought improvement was generated through enhanced monitoring and evaluation (W9, W4 and W2). A third theme related to the two remaining interviewees who thought that improved leadership was generated by enhanced motivation (W7 and W5).

The use of data contributed in a variety of ways to organisation and planning practices. One main scale teacher referred to the use of data in "how they are going to set children in classes" (W1), essentially organising groups. Similarly, one middle leader also commented, "if we are doing group work we split the groups according to ability, we use

the data then" (W8). A second middle leader perceived an impact on planning provision in meeting learners' needs in raising levels of attainment:

> I think what it does is make management look at the provision when students first come to school, value added, what the school can actually add to students when they have them here, what are we providing for them, so if we are not giving them enough, we will look at why we are not and that will give a good picture in planning successful strategies [to raise levels of attainment]. (W6)

One senior leader asserted that it is a way of planning for improvement: "by using it, it will have an impact on raising achievement and improving learning" (W10) because learners will know what they have to do to reach the next level of learning (W10). A second main scale, experienced, teacher was convinced it helped plan appropriate teaching strategies for particular groups:

> You can use your baseline data to identify gifted and talented students and providing particular help and strategies for students' learning difficulties who find the work hard. So it helps identify specific groups and enables you to do something to push them harder. (W2)

Finally, a second senior leader corroborated most if not all of the above comments in saying "we have groups that reflect ethnicity, ability and gender. We are using the baseline data to ensure that Year 7 form groups will be more mixed ability". (W11)

So, to recap, the use of baseline data was perceived by all of the interviewees to improve on leadership practices mainly through planning and organisation. (Very occasionally it was perceived to be incorporated to raise achievement.) In addition, those in leadership roles are concerned with planning and allocation of resources more than those who are not.

Some interviewees perceived the main impact on leadership practices to be through monitoring and evaluation. The monitoring of student progress was particularly relevant in

this respect. One main scale teacher commented that "we can tell whether a student is making progress suited to her/his ability. In that way we can target individual students" (W4). One middle leader was quite emphatic about the impact that the use of data analysis had on monitoring. "I would say that it plays a big part in being head of a department, especially a large department with so many teachers, because you are able to monitor a lot easier" (W9). The management role of leaders therefore included staff/teachers as well as learners.

Two out of eleven teachers perceived the use of baseline data to impact on leadership practices through increased motivation, including teachers'. A middle leader perceived this effect in terms of raised expectations: "it gives more expectation, if they are using it to measure performance then the expectation is that much greater" (W5). A fifth middle leader used it to raise expectations of members of his department by relating teachers' results to the baseline data of individual students:

> I have just done some work recently on students in English, Maths and Science who were underachieving compared to their level. Of course, that does upset some teachers when you are thrusting levels in their faces, so you can put people's backs up unless it is used carefully. (W7)

At School W, the use of data improved leadership. The three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms were substantially replicated with varying frequency in each of the Schools X, Y and Z. In School Z, motivation was not perceived to be a way (potential mechanism) to improve leadership by any of the interviewees. However, one interviewee was positive about what he perceived the effects of the use of baseline data to be but was unclear about how the improvement occurred (Z3). This was not resolved at the time.

The variation in themes of perceptions identified in all four schools appeared to be linked to the organisational role of the interviewee. In this respect, it is important to consider the individual comments made by interviewees on the perceived effect of using baseline data. Those of middle and senior managers were noticeably more whole school. To some extent,

they reflect a person management agenda and an underlying vision about independent learning.

The Impact of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) on Teaching, Learning and Leadership processes

On Teaching (Note 17)

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) was perceived to improve teaching practices. The research can confirm that all interviewees with the exception of one commented on how it supported and improved their teaching. There were three themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which CPD was reported to affect teaching. In the first theme a significant number of teachers, nine, perceived that CPD improved teaching by developing new skills and by changing strategies (W1, W2, W3, W5, W6, W7, W8, W10 and W11). In a second theme one interviewee reported that CPD improved teaching by motivating teachers (W9). Finally, in a third theme one interviewee pointed out that CPD could have a negative influence (W4).

Nine teachers commented on improvements in teaching practices. The comments selected from three of these are representative of the full range of interviewee perceptions of the ways in which CPD impacted on their teaching. One relatively inexperienced main scale teacher commented on the new skills acquired through CPD. "I gained techniques and learned a framework for organising classes and managing students who were misbehaving. I get the children to behave so I will be able to teach" (W1). One middle leader also referred to techniques acquired through INSET or CPD: "Whatever you learn you generally bring it to the classroom in some sort of way; I went on a course recently …. on issues related to coursework assessment that are now used in the classroom" (W5). The teaching strategies learned through CPD were used to raise levels of attainment. A second middle leader used CPD as an opportunity to review and improve practice, taking "that space to look outside on your teaching styles and your teaching strategy and the methods you are using" (W6).

Note 17: National PM policy requires that appraisee and appraiser agree a CPD objective to support the objectives that the appraisee is set.

A middle leader implied that CPD enhanced motivation, saying that "it had given me a focus to achieve a target" (W9). This resulted from finding ways to enable students to progress more quickly through the levels of learning.

Finally, there was one main scale teacher who was concerned about the negative effects of sub-standard INSET (W4).

At School W, CPD had a positive effect on teaching. The two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms of improvement were replicated, with varying frequency, to a substantial extent in the interviews with teachers from Schools X, Y and Z.

On Learning

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) was perceived to have had a positive impact on student learning. There were two distinct themes or potential mechanisms by which CPD was reported to affect students' learning. The first theme generally covered reports about how teaching had improved by CPD. Eight teachers perceived that CPD improved learning through changed teaching strategy and skills (W1, W2, W3, W4, W7, W8, W10 and W11). A second theme included reports about developments in learning. Three teachers thought that CPD improved learning levels by developing new approaches to learning (W5, W6, and W9).

Improvements in teaching, according to interviewees, generally resulted in improved learning. Teachers variously referred to better learning resulting from better teaching by potential mechanisms like improving subject skill, better planning and improved schemes of work. The range of comments made were quite diverse: one middle leader's comments were symptomatic and therefore representative of the underlying mechanism "about professional development having an effect on student learning" (W7) in that "if you are developing staff…then they perform their jobs better and are happier when they are teaching, they feel more skilled and often are more skilled as a result of CPD" (W7). Interestingly, leader perceptions considered the effects of CPD on teachers as well as learners.

Three teachers thought that CPD had a more precise effect on student learning. Comments in this cluster of themes included reference to improved learning generated by student engagement/ enjoyment arising from specific skills, training in meeting particular exam criteria, improved learning from a new assessment strategy and improvements in coursework provision. One middle leader's comments are representative of the perceived impact of CPD on student learning. He said "most of the INSET courses that I got on would be something that I could use in the classroom" (W5). Recently, "I had a chance to look at some pieces of coursework with some other colleagues and that enlightened me on issues related to coursework assessment that are now used in the classroom" (W5).

At School W, there were two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which learning was considered to have improved by CPD. These distinct themes were replicated to a significant extent in the interviews of teachers from Schools X, Y and Z. However, the distribution in frequency of the themes, in these schools, was discernibly at variance both with School W and with each other.

On Leading

CPD was reported to improve leadership through a number of strategies (potential mechanisms): supporting management processes and skills (W1 and W4), motivating teachers and students (W2, W3, and W7), sharing practice (W5, W6, W8 and W9) and improving teaching skills, which includes raising awareness of what needs to be done (W10 and W11).

Interestingly, two main scale teachers commented on the generation of new management processes. However, their perceptions were about anticipated impact and their comments were more to do with common sense than a reflection of direct experience. One typical comment made was about the importance of involving the team leader: "he (the head of department) knows what we lack as a department - there has to be some coordination in the department" (W4), so therefore CPD can lead to an increased awareness of what needs to be done (W4).

Motivating teachers and students would arguably impact very positively on raising standards. One middle leader and two main scale teachers were in agreement on this. In the case of teachers, increased motivation derived mainly from engaging them more in the process through their own personal and professional development. For example, one middle leader commented, "it can have a very positive effect on your management practices if you are speaking to people and finding out more about your staff and how they want to be developed: that can be very useful" (W7). In the case of students, CPD was considered to facilitate increased enjoyment of student learning or engagement in the learning process through changed/shared professional practice. One main scale teacher said that learning a particular subject skill (trampoline) or teaching strategy can "give increased enjoyment to the kids who are taking part, and also other courses that I have been on to do with GCSE PE, specific ones to help build participation within KS3, also to help group participation within sports" (W3).

Three middle leaders were in clear unison on how CPD improved leadership processes. They reported that it facilitated the sharing of best practice so that teaching addressed the needs of learners in raising their level of attainment. One middle leader illustrated this view in saying:

> …it gives management in a school a clear idea of what each individual is doing and what they are aiming for. What I think of is going to other schools and looking at other departments and sharing best practice and then coming back and cascading that to management. (W9)

Two senior leaders agreed that the most significant feature of CPD in improving leadership was through better management and teaching skills to promote progress in students' learning. One senior leader took a broad view in that it developed staff, making them more effective and at the same time improved their awareness of developments in the school as a whole and therefore made them more supportive of change, i.e. improvement. She conceptualised this in terms of learning and understanding one's role in the school.

I think in terms of professional development, for people to really understand their role and have their role defined and understand exactly what they should be doing, I think, certainly from being a middle manager and part of a senior leadership team, a lot of time is taken up trying to explain to people what their role is and what needs to be done. I think as well as CPD encouraging people to have that holistic view of the school, see the school as a whole school, … everybody is sharing the same vision. (W10)

CPD was perceived to have a positive impact on leadership processes at School W. There were four quite distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which CPD was reported to have improve leading and leadership. Each of these of themes were substantially replicated (significantly so for the purpose of conceptual abstraction), with varying frequency, in Schools X, Y and Z. However, it is worth noting that in School X, two main scale teachers, for different reasons, were reserved about the impact of CPD on leadership, one saying it 'was not enough' (X2) and the other saying it 'was not properly planned' (X4). In addition, the motivating effects of CPD were not reported in any of the interviews completed at School Y.

In conclusion, CPD was reported to have a positive effect on teaching, learning and leadership practices at School W. The full range of perceptions of the processes reported through which CPD improved teaching, learning and leadership were incorporated by the themes discussed above. Teacher perceptions of the processes generating improvement could be linked to their organisational role. The perception of leaders, including middle leaders, would appear to reflect their more strategic and whole-school role. This would seem to be characteristic of the perceptions reported across all four of the schools in the Case Study.

The Impact of Objective Setting (Appraisal) on Teaching, Learning and Leadership processes

On Teaching (Note 18)

Objective setting was perceived to have had a positive impact on teaching. There were two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which objective setting was reported to affect teaching. One theme was about the direct effects of objective setting on teaching. At least seven teachers interviewed were reported to have essentially said that objective setting improved teaching (W1, W2, W3, W4, W6, W8, and W9). The improvement was reported to be generated by the direct impact on teaching skills, a focus on teaching, and self review of practices and skills to bring about improvements in learning. A second theme included reports that were linked to continuous professional and career development decisions (W7 and W10). A third theme referred to one teacher who thought, for role related reasons, that objective setting had little effect on her teaching (W11). However, this was considered to be anomalous and ultimately specific to School W. This is because she was referring to her teaching when in fact she didn't actually teach. A middle leader thought that objective setting had little effect generally (W5).

The relevance of the position of the interviewee within the organisational structure of the School to the perception they had of the impact of objective setting seemed to have some significance, so that among the main scale teachers there was a conviction that their teaching improved or they become better teachers. In this respect, comments like "if we follow our objectives it will make us better teachers because it will improve us as normally we have to address our weaknesses" (W1) were typical. "Better teachers" here refers to improvements in the level of learning and raising attainment (W1). References to improving focus by "planning ahead helps you to cover, not all but most of the possibilities" (W2) and "you are able to focus your attention on certain areas that you need to improve or continue to work at" (W2) were unusual. In the case of middle leaders, improvement was mainly perceived to arise through self-reflection and review rather than through a direct focus on skill development. Comments like "if you have some way of evaluating what you do it will help in the long term" (W9) are illustrative of this. Senior

Note 18: National PM policy requires that teachers are set a minimum of three objectives. One relates to pupil progress and target setting. A second is about improving teaching, student learning or leadership. A third requires that the appraisee attends CPD related to the objective they are set.

leaders were not reported to have commented directly on the effects of objective setting on teaching.

Objective setting was reported to have improved teaching by focusing on professional or career development. A perception held by one middle leader was that objective setting was "important as part of anybody's career development [and that they were for you and your career]" (W7). Similarly a senior leader commented that "it encourages teachers to be reflective about their practice and their whole career" (W10).

A middle leader thought that objective setting had little impact on teaching because it (objective setting) didn't happen often enough. He said, in commenting on impact, that it had "very little at the moment, because it only happens annually. If it happened on a much more regular basis then I think it would have more impact" (W5). In addition, one senior leader commented that objective setting and teaching did not relate directly to her role in the organisation:

> One of my objectives is about my professional development, one is linked to developing the school as a self-evaluating organisation and the other is about independent learning. I think it is more about management and leadership of these areas than anything else [rather than to specifically affect some aspect of teaching practice]. (W11)

In School W, objective setting was perceived to improve teaching. The perceptions of the processes through which teaching improved fell into two distinct themes or potential mechanisms as explained above. These themes or potential mechanisms were common to all of the schools in the Case Study. However, in Schools X, Y and Z, no mention was made of career development. In addition, at Schools X and Z, comments from one interviewee from each of the schools referred to the focussing of support of key groups with a view to raising achievement (X8 and Z11).

On Learning

Objective setting was generally perceived to improve learning at School W in a number of ways. There were three themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which objective setting was reported to affect learning. One theme was about improved learning that resulted from better teaching. According to subject teachers and middle leaders, objective setting generated improvements in learning through better teaching skills and strategies (W1, W2, W6 and W7). A second theme included reference to better prepared learning contexts or better planning that resulted in higher levels of learning (W3, W4 and W8). The perceptions of two senior leaders were similar but less emphatic in this respect (W10 and W 11). However, two teachers reported that the effect of objective setting was limited (W5 and W9).

Two main scale teachers and two middle leaders, thought that as their teaching improved, so did student learning. In this respect, comments from a main scale teacher like "when there is a review, it is time to do your best" (W1), the implication being best or better teaching produced better learning, are illustrative. Similarly, this would arise from improved behaviour management by the teacher "if the behaviour in the classroom is managed properly then more learning will take place" (W2). A middle leader expressed this in saying "reaching objectives, and improving your self and developing yourself as a teacher ….. has got to have a knock-on effect on learning, I would have thought" (W7). The implication is that levels of learning improved.

Others, two main scale teachers and one middle leader, perceived a direct link between objective setting and learning. This would be particularly true when the objective aimed to plan for better learning by, for example, producing more effective learning materials. This was illustrated by the comment "one of my objectives was to produce work sheets to help kids present their data" (W4). One middle leader expressed this through the effect of planning on learning. "If you plan well … they [the students] will learn well" (W8). The objective she was referring to was about making a general plan for teaching a particular topic at a particular level.

Two senior leaders perceived objective setting to have a more limited effect, partly because objective setting was restricted to a small section of the school community, i.e. one or two classes at the most per teacher. One senior leader made the comment "I would like to think that the teacher is developing their practice through setting their objectives and that would have an impact on the classroom, certainly with a classroom based objective, so learning should be better" (W10). However, "it could be one class that you focus on" (W10). This could, by implication, not include all of the other classes the teacher would be responsible for but the effect on teacher expectations could and probably would be more pervasive. Interestingly, two middle leaders thought that the impact of objective setting on learning was negligible or limited. One middle leader thought that the impact was "very little at the moment, because it only happens once annually" (W5). Such a comment is significant because this is all that is required by the national policy (see Chapter 2).

At School W, the objective setting was perceived to improve learning. While many perceptions were positive, some were more reserved about the impact of objective setting. Teachers from School Y expressed a similarly positive response and level of reservation. At Schools X and Z, the positive perceptions reported were more extensive, if not emphatic, with one teacher commenting that objective setting improved learning through a mechanism of enhanced motivation of teachers (Z1). Teachers at these two schools generally perceived, with the exception of one interviewee who felt too inexperienced to comment (X2), that objective setting had a positive impact on student learning.

On Leading

Objective setting was perceived to improve leadership. There were two themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which objective setting was reported to affect leading and leadership processes. One theme was through enhanced identification of strengths and weaknesses and monitoring and evaluation (W1, W2, W4, W6, W9, and W10). A second theme referred to the development of teaching skills, classroom practice and better learning in the sense that improved teaching resulted in improved learning (W3, W7, W8 and W11). However, a middle leader reported that the impact of objective setting on leadership was limited (W5).

Objective setting supported the leadership process by, for example, helping to identify strengths and weaknesses: thus, one main scale teacher commented that the manager "observing you is able to identify things that you need to improve…he is able to follow the progress of the teacher that he is in control of" (W2). One middle leader commented, "it is a lot easier for SLT to have a clear focus of what everyone is doing and that everyone has a focus and an objective to meet" (W9). For a senior leader, the support of leadership derived from self review: "it encourages me to look at my role and be self reflective about what I am doing" (W10). It is difficult not to link such comments to the organisational structure of the school.

Interviewees who suggested that the impact on leadership derived from a direct link to teaching and learning tended to refer to objectives set that directly improved some aspect of teaching linked to improved levels of learning. One main scale teacher referred to the development of teaching skills: "one of my objectives was to get certified for the CAD/CAM initiative … So the impact is I can teach CAD/CAM … and the kids get a greater learning experience" (W3). Middle leaders perceived this as a direct development of teaching skills: "it can have a very positive effect … if you develop your staff well then you have a better teaching staff" (W7). A senior leader reinforced this perception by referring to the importance of the curriculum leader to objective setting in saying "as part of the PM of staff, I think it would be more useful for the head of department" (W11) to be responsible for setting "learning objectives in classroom practice" (W11). The suggestion is that leadership brings about improvements in teaching linked to increased levels of learning.

Finally, one middle leader commented that "I don't think that it [objective setting] does have any impact at this point in time … because it only happens annually" (W5). Such a perception of the impact of objective setting on leadership appears not to be related to seniority.

At School W, objective setting was perceived to improve leadership through two themes or potential mechanisms. Further, a very substantial majority of the perceptions reported were

positive. Objective setting was considered to improve leadership and teaching in School X in similar ways. In Schools Y and Z, the perceived effects were again substantially positive and leadership processes were reported to be more directly affected by objective setting in both of these schools.

Conclusion and Summary

Teachers' reported perceptions of the effects of the five dimensions of PM policy on standards have been considered (Note 19). A thematic analysis has enabled the identification of many of the potential mechanisms by which these PM dimensions could have generated improvements in standards. All of these themes or potential mechanisms were identified with variable frequency in each of the schools in the study.

The implication is that the full range of mechanism and outcome configurations was variably represented in each of the schools W, X, Y and Z. However, the four contexts in which these configurations were generated were not shown to have a substantial influence. Nevertheless there were some intra-organisational outcomes identified, for example school role, and these are addressed in the discussions of Chapter 10.

It remains to summarise the answers to the interview questions and to illustrate the coding which underpins the themes clustering the answers to these questions. This is one of the aims of the narrative in the next chapter.

Note 19: These are the five essential processes that have to be engaged with in order that the national policy for PM is properly implemented.

Chapter 8

Preparing the Data for the Conceptual Abstraction

Introduction

The main purpose of this chapter is to prepare or manage the data, beginning with the themes identified from the analysis in Chapter 7, in anticipation of the conceptual abstraction of the national PM policy. There are several stages to this process. The intuitive aim of the process was to produce a taxonomy that could be compared with the main features of the PM national policy.

In the first place the themes themselves needed to be summarised in order to gain at least some overview of the diverse range of information that would be incorporated into a conceptual abstraction. A tabulated summary of data was prepared.

Next, the most frequent themes common to the perceptions of the participants in each of the schools in the Case Study were identified. This was for two reasons. The first was to address the more significant perceptions and to further reduce the data. The impact of these common perceptions on the five dimensions of the national policy is carefully considered and discussed within the chapter. The purpose of this was to aid the classification of the themes into a form of primary code or primary taxonomy. The second reason was to attempt to highlight any cmos that were unique to the school context, i.e. to VA or Policy category or a combination of both.

Finally, the Primary Code is analysed to identify common features for further simplification or reduction. In the research literature this has been referred to as a second level code or Secondary Code (Bryman 2004). The term used in the study, and presently in the text, is the Parallel Code. This was used to avoid any ambiguity over the treatment of the data. The Parallel Code is not a second level taxonomy. This treatment of the data is not like Pawson and Tilley's (2003), in which they appear to work up through successive levels of generality to arrive at the "theory". Perceptions, reported findings, themes, codes,

taxonomies, classifications etc. are all within the Empirical Domain. The migration into the Real Domain, the deep real, is afforded by conceptual abstraction of the object of study, namely PM policy. Interestingly, this issue relates to one aspect of the contrast between Putnam's and Bhaskar's realism as described by Groff (2004).

Briefly, the contrast between Bhaskar and Putnam centres around the existence of natural kinds (Groff, 2004). Putnam (1990) rejected the view that nature is determinately and inherently structured, whereas Bhaskar (2008) made the distinction between nominal and real essences that fall into natural kinds. Bhaskar (2008) made the distinction between nominal essences, which relate to taxonomic criteria, and real essences, which have to do with necessary connections. This thesis has projected the distinction into the Empirical and Real Domains, a point of reference, and used it in search of a potential coherence between the conceptually abstracted object of study - PM - and the classified and coded perceptions of those in the Case Study who participated in the policy's implementation. The reason for making this distinction is to introduce structure into the conceptual process; otherwise, concepts remain within the empirical realm and theory remains middle range, as they do for Pawson and Tilley (2003). Coherence would explain the perceptions reported in the Case Study in internally related structural terms, which would be qualitatively different to explanation or theory as developed by Pawson and Tilley (2003). Explanation for the Transcendental Realist is different to the Empiricism of Pawson and Tilley (2003), which is considered to be looking at the idea of cumulative synthesis and enhanced generalisation.

The Empirical and Real Domains are consistent with a Critical Realist framework and in particular with the Transcendental Realism of Bhaskar (2008). Referring to the Empirical Domain, the themes aggregating participants' perceptions from the Case Study are the building blocks of the study. A tabular summary of these themes, 8.1 – 8.4, is considered below. However, first I need to explain the layout of the tables.

The Layout of Tables 8.1-8.4

The results of all of the interviews held at each of the four schools, following the thematic analysis in Chapter 7, are summarised in Tables 8.1- 8.4. There are five dimensions to the

national PM policy (lesson observation, data analysis, target setting, CPD and objective setting) and each could have an effect on standards. The effects reported and explained (mechanisms) are as they were perceived by the policy subjects. The effects, linked to themes as mechanisms (m), of each of these dimensions on each of three key processes (teaching, learning and leading) that affect standards are identified in summary in Tables 8.1- 8.4. So for each interviewee in each of the four schools, there were potentially fifteen perceived effects or outcomes arising from the implementation of PM policy. In total there were potentially 15 x 11(interviewees) x 4(schools) reported perceptions = 660. The tables, including their categories, are used as a sorting device with perceptions from the transcript being used to fill this out. The tables include a summary of all of the perceived effects and (themes of) mechanisms generating them. The summary of each answer reported by each subject interviewed from all four schools in the Case Study is included in the four tables. The aim in the preceding chapter was to identify the themes or the commonly perceived strategies (mechanisms [m]) generating the perceived effects, across subjects' answers to a given question, that would reduce the amount of data. The thematic analysis, conversely the primary coding, presented a substantial reduction in the volume of data, of the order of 660 (reported perceptions) to 42 (themes). Such a reduction would make it easier to check the coherence of the data with the conceptual abstraction of the PM policy proposed in Chapter 10 in Part 4, the "Discussion".

In each of the tables to follow there are two sets of headings. Along the top, on the x-axis, the codes refer to teachers, including senior management, interviewed. As a result there are eleven columns of variables because there were eleven teachers interviewed from each school in the Case Study. Along the side, the y-axis, there are five bands with three categories in each band. The five bands refer to the five levels of the PM policy and within each band are identified three principal processes that the policy could impact upon in raising standards. They are teaching, learning and leading. As a result there are fifteen rows of variables arising from the interaction of the five bands of policy levels with three main types of process, so there will be 165 discrete sets of variables within the 11 by 15 matrix, i.e. a complex array of information.

Such reference to variables has nothing to do with any Inductive or Experimentalist strategy to identify dependent variables and therefore construct a middle range theory. The use of this terminology is descriptive rather than conceptual, as it is within the Empirical Domain.

In this first series of tables, i.e. Tables 8.1-8.4, there are three types of vertical column, denoting three knowledge centres or levels of expertise. They include two categories of senior leader, five categories of middle leader and four categories of main scale teacher. The first series of tables, Tables 8.1 to 8.4, is a detailed spreadsheet. These have been reduced in a second type of table, 8.5, to assist in the profiling of responses and identification of causal patterns.

In **Tables 8.1 – 8.4** that will follow on page 175. **Please Note:**

The abbreviations used in the tables
m/e: monitoring and evaluation
> = greater than,   < = less than.
SL: senior leader, ML: middle leader, T: teacher

The most common answers are italicised, emboldened and underlined in the first column of all of the tables. Their relative frequency is also included.

A Summary of the Thematic Analysis of Interviews from Each of the Four Schools

Table 8.1 School W with Low Value Added at KS4 and with High PM Classification: Summary of Interviewee Responses

Interviewee Questions (15)	W1 T	W2 T	W3 T	W4 T	W5 ML	W6 ML	W7 ML	W8 ML	W9 ML	W10 SL	W11 SL
Lesson observation On teaching Teaching/ Review	*Improved, as LO helps review strengths & weakness*	*Improved, as LO helped review teacher planning to meet different learning levels*	*Improved, as LO helped review strengths & weaknesses for improvement*	*Improved, as LO helped review teaching strategy, e.g. classroom management*	*Improved, as LO helped share good practice*	*Improved, as LO helped make teachers more accountable & develop planning*	*Improved ,as LO helped with feedback & informed review*	*Improved, as LO helped review teaching strategy to meet student needs & levels*	*Improved, as LO helped self reflection & review*	*Improved, as LO helped share practice & review new strategies*	*Improved, as LO helped review & reflection*
On learning *Teaching thus Learning*	Uncertain but LO encourages review of strengths & weakness to promote progress	Not much impact	Improved teaching and thus learning	Improved learning through planning of lessons	Improved through better planned lessons	Improved, as LO helped review & self appraisal to enhance progress in learning.	Improved learning if feedback on teaching is informed	Improved learning through improved teaching	Improved, as LO helped change teaching so learning e.g. manage behaviour	Improved, as LO helped professional development to develop teaching thus learning	Improved teaching thus learning by improved engagement
On leadership *M/e>* **Sharing practice**	Improved, as LO helped m/e	Improved, as LO helped support uniform practice by sharing	Improved, as LO helped share practice & develop consistency	Improved, as LO facilitated sharing practices	Improved, as LO helped motivate teachers by giving more focus on learning	Improved, as LO helped m/e & review of strengths & weaknesses in teaching & learning	Improved, as LO enhanced m/e to identify areas to improve	Improved, as LO helped m/e review strengths & weaknesses	Improved, as LO helped support m/e	Improved, as LO helped motivate teachers	No impact but is a special case
Target setting On teaching Motivated Ts and Ls	*Improved teaching by e.g. targeting more homework*	*Motivated Teachers to ensure learners aspire to new levels*	*Gave teaching more purpose & differentiation in working at multiple levels of learning*	*Improved teaching by differentiat-ing between multiple learning levels*	*Focused & motivated teachers so that they were aware of what level of learning to target*	*Very positive impact on teaching & learning.*	*Improved planning of teaching*	*Supported & improved teaching through review of practice*	*Improved teaching through more purpose & higher expectations*	*Help raised expectations so pupils were motivated to achieve higher levels of learning*	*Motivated pupils*
On learning **Motivated Ls**	Improved teaching and thus learning	Improved learning with more direction, from levels & grades, motivates	Helped develop independent learning, so improving practices	Motivated more than half	Setting National Curriculum Levels gave more focus & motivated pupils	Improved learning by engaging pupils more	Motivated learners when used carefully	Motivated	Improved learning by clarifying what levels to work toward	Motivated pupils	Motivated pupils

Table 8.1 School W with Low Value Added at KS4 and with High PM Classification: Summary of Interviewee Responses

Interviewee Questions (15)	W1 T	W2 T	W3 T	W4 T	W5 ML	W6 ML	W7 ML	W8 ML	W9 ML	W10 SL	W11 SL
On leadership *Manage & Lead learning*	Helped prioritise groups according to levels of learning	Helped prioritise groups by differentiation according to levels of learning	Helped organise teaching groups to meet learners' needs to sustain levels of learning	Helped lead/manage departments through improved information is thus motivating	Motivated staff & students through a clearer sense of purpose from knowledge of levels pupils are working to	Supported mgt through m/e in motivating & extending teachers and learners	Improved but too many targets confuse learners	Raised achievement through a clearer sense of direction from enhanced m/e	Increased purpose and motivation	Improved m/e helps raise achievement by directing learning through more rigorous teaching	Improved focus & teaching strategies to meet learning needs
Baseline data **On teaching** *Teaching>>Motivating*	*Improved, as DA focused on learning needs so better pitched teaching matches levels of learning*	*Identified learner priorities & motivates so pupils make better progress in their learning*	*Improved teaching to meet pupil learning level*	*Helped monitor progress and adapt teaching to levels of learning*	Identified and set priorities for teaching of those making least progress in their learning	*Informed teaching strategy & raises expectations in setting priorities*	*Impacted on teaching through differentiation of learning levels*	*Made teaching strategy more appropriate to levels of learning*	*Met learners' needs via improved differentiation*	*Supported teaching to meet leaner needs*	*Improved, as DA helped target levels of learning*
On learning *M>Lg*	Identified learning needs e.g. literacy	DA helped motivate learners	Informed learners of levels they were working at & motivated them	Helped m/e to ensure learning was at the correct level	DA helped motivate learners	Motivated learners	Can motivate learners when used carefully	Motivated learners	Improved, as DA helped to make learning tasks more appropriate	DA helped identify levels of learning so pupils knew how to improve	Motivated pupils
On leadership *Managing>>>motivating*	Helped to plan student grouping to meet learning needs	Supported m/e	Helped prioritise groups & strategies to meet learning needs	Helped m/e with information on the pace of progress	Motivated by making expectations about levels of learning more aspirational	Improved planning in meeting learners' needs	Motivated Teachers, when used properly	Helped to organise groups to meet learning needs	Improved m/e	Gave a focus for improvement in learning meet needs of learners	Organised groups to meet learning needs
CPD **On teaching** **Teaching>> Motivating**	Improved, as CPD helped to develop teaching techniques to manage the learning better	Supported review of teaching, and thus improved practice was aimed at raising learning levels	Improved teaching practices to address learning needs	Could have a negative impact if quality is poor	Trained to improve teaching to raise levels of attainment	CPD helped review and improve teaching practices	CPD Improved teaching when there was time to consolidate Training	CPD improved knowledge & skills so improved teaching practices	CPD gave a focus to speed up progress in learning & motivated teachers	Improved confidence & teaching practices	Improved teaching practices
On learning **Teaching>> Learning**	CPD taught new teaching skills to engage learners	CPD improved teaching and thus learning so pupils made better progress	Increased engagement of learners with new teaching skills	Teaching directly raised attainment, e.g. exam board inset	CPD supported learning so that pupils made better progress through levels	CPD supported a better learning experience	CPD improved teaching & so learning	CPD improved teaching so more learning needs were met	CPD changed learning, e.g. use of self assessment	CPD raised achievement through appropriate teaching practices	Improved planning in teaching & so raised learning levels

Table 8.1 School W with Low Value Added at KS4 and with High PM Classification: Summary of Interviewee Responses

Interviewee Questions (15)	W1 T	W2 T	W3 T	W4 T	W5 ML	W6 ML	W7 ML	W8 ML	W9 ML	W10 SL	W11 SL
CPD on leadership _Teaching_ _>>_ _Motivating_	Helped develop management skills	Supported career & professional development in motivating teachers	More purpose, as teachers are motivated by linking professional with learner needs	Improved, as CPD helped prioritise teaching and learning needs	CPD helped sharing of practice	Helped share good practice on how to raise levels of learning	Motivated teachers to develop their teaching practices	Helped share good practice to improve leadership skills	Improved m/e & sharing practice	CPD produced better teachers & more improvement in teaching.	Improved focus on professional needs, e.g. teaching
Objective setting **_On teaching_** _Teaching_ _>>>_ _Motivating_	_OS helped to improve on our teaching weaknesses_	_OS helped focus on teaching practices_	_OS improved teaching by, varying strategies_	_OS improved teaching of particular topics_	_OS had little impact: not frequent Enough_	_OS improved teaching skills_	_OS promoted professional development_	_OS helped review & improve teaching practices_	_OS improved teaching practice by review & reflection_	_OS helped review of teaching & career in promoting CPD_	_OS had no impact on teaching because it has not been a focus in my job description_
On learning _Learning_ _>_ _Teaching_	When objectives were monitored they raised expectations about teaching practice & affected levels of learning	Improved teaching practice and thus learning	Improved, as OS helped increase engagement & levels of learning	Improved by producing specialised materials, so raising levels of learning	Not with teachers, as review is too infrequent	Improved teaching practice improves learning	Improved teaching practice improves learning	Helped plan to improve student learning	Had little or no effect as meetings were too infrequent	Improved levels of learning on the one class that was the focus of PMR	OS has had a direct effect on raising learning levels
On leadership _Leading_ _>_ _Teaching_	Improved, as OS helped management & leadership	OS supported m/e & leading teaching to raise levels of learning	The role (in PMR) has been more a focus for improved teaching and therefore higher levels of learning	Supported developments of special skills e.g. leading	Has had little impact as it is not frequent enough	Enhanced leadership because everyone is more accountable & more focused	Helped improve teaching and raises levels of learning	Helped develop teaching & learning	Improved leadership through m/e	Helped enhance leader role through review & reflection	Helped influence teaching practice

Table 8.2 School X with Low Value Added at KS4 and with Low PM Classification: Summary of Interviewee Responses

Interviewee Questions (15)	X1 T	X2 T	X3 T	X 4 T	X5 ML	X6 ML	X7 ML	X8 ML	X9 ML	X10 SL	X11 SL
Lesson observation *On teaching* *Teaching & Sharing Practice*	*Improved review & reflection to improve teaching & sharing of practice*	*Helped review to improve teaching practices & raise levels of learning*	*Motivated teachers to improve teaching practices to raise attainment*	*By review but not formal enough, so difficult*	*Improved teaching through sharing practices & identifying strengths & weakness' in review*	*Improved teaching practices by identifying Strengths & Weakness'*	*Improved teaching by sharing practices*	*Improved teaching by review & reflection so raise attainment*	*LO helped share practice improve teaching and raise levels of learning*	*LO helped share teaching skills & improve practice so improve learning*	*Provided a focus for the review of teaching to help improve learning*
On learning *Affects teaching thus learning*	LO affected better teaching, & better progress in learning	LO changed teaching to meet learning needs & raise levels of attainment	LO improved teaching strategies & helped raise learning levels	Not formal enough, so difficult	Helped share teaching practice & raise levels of learning	Helped prioritise areas/levels of learning to improve on	Helped identify & evaluate learner needs & raise levels	Improved teaching & so raised levels of learning	Improved teaching & quality of learning	Helped share teaching practice & improve learning	LO helped raise levels of learning
On leadership **M/e:** **(leadership)>** **Sharing teaching practice**	Improved leadership by enhancing m/e & sharing practice	Improved allocation of teachers, the development of teaching & improved learning	Improved through enhanced m/e to prioritise teaching to raise standards	Not formal enough so difficult	Improved through m/e which raises standards through sharing practice	Enhanced leadership, as it helps share practice but systematic enough	Enhanced leadership in planning & m/e.	Improved by m/e. Sets levels of teaching & learning expected	Improved through sharing practice	Improved by sharing practice with respect to knowledge & skills	Helped through m/e
Target setting *On teaching* *Teaching >> Motivation*	*Improved teaching raises expectations about standards*	*Improved, as TS determined the level of teaching (including how & what)*	*Improved, as TS influenced teaching strategy meet levels of learning*	*Improved as it helped adjust teaching strategy to the set or the level of learning*	*Improved, as it helped identify appropriate teaching strategies to the level of learning*	*Improved, as TS helped plan learning better & gives more focus on expectations*	*Improved, as TS focused teaching and, set expectations about levels of learning*	*Improved but TS not formal enough also helps by sharing data*	*Directed and targeted teaching to raise achievement*	*Motivated teachers to improve teaching. It set expectations about targets*	*Focused teaching. So stronger link to SsoW & planning*
On learning *Motivates ≥ Learning*	It motivated more than it de–motivated	Motivated & de-motivated but placed a focus on progress in learning	Motivated pupils to make more progress in their learning	TS helped identify what to do to improve learning	Improved when linked to learning outcomes & levels	Improved, as it helped set expectations about levels of learning & motivated	Improved, as it motivated & engaged learners	Improved, identified what to do to raise levels of learning	Improved, as it motivated pupils	Improved learning by making learners independent	More pupils learned at correct levels
On leadership **M/e:** **(leadership)** **≥** **Motivates** **≥** **Planning:** **(Teaching)**	Improved through m/e, as it sets expectations & helps to support teachers & motivate them	Improved, as it helps m/e to prioritise support in the organisation of teaching	Improved through m/e, which helps to develop progress in learning	TS was not embedded properly in the Dept	Improved through m/e, which helps develop progress in learning	Improved through m/e, which helps to manage progress in learning	Improved through m/e, which helps to manage progress in learning especially when targets are shared	TS was not embedded properly in Dept	Improved because TS supported achievement & encouraged action planning	Improved, as TS helped set expectations about levels of learning	TS helped m/e focus & plan levels of learning to teach at

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Table 8.2 School X with Low Value Added at KS4 and with Low PM Classification: Summary of Interviewee Responses

Interviewee Questions (15)	X1 T	X2 T	X3 T	X 4 T	X5 ML	X6 ML	X7 ML	X8 ML	X9 ML	X10 SL	X11 SL
Baseline data *On teaching* **Teaching** *>>* *Motivating*	*Improved by selecting strategy appropriate to level of learning, differentiation, & prioritising support*	*Improved by selecting teaching strategy appropriate to level of learning*	*Improved through better planning for teaching & learning*	*Improved by identifying groups of learners with same levels & sets expectations about levels*	*Improved by guiding or influencing Strategy*	*Improved teaching & is 'essential to teaching in this school'*	*Improved by better planning of teaching to address learning needs & levels*	*Improved by grouping learners to plan & pitch levels of teaching*	*Improved by identifying student needs & levels of learning to target resources*	*Improved by helping match teaching strategy to learning need & level*	*Improved by setting expectations about levels of teaching & learning*
On learning *Teaching thus learning & directly > Motivating*	Improved, as DA determines learning experience, & sets expectations about levels of learning	Improved, as DA determines learning experience & levels	Improved, as DA helped planning eg for learning styles as well as levels	Improves, as DA helped identify group & individual learning needs & levels	Improved, as DA motivated learners to aspire to higher levels of learning	Improved, as DA enabled learners to realise potential for higher levels of learning	Improved, as DA helped identify learning needs & level at which to pitch teaching	Improved, as DA helped plan resources to support levels of learning	Improved, as DA helped focus on learning at students' expected level of attainment	Improved, as teaching strategy became informed by data on levels of learning	Improved, as DA motivated pupils to aspire to higher levels of learning
On leadership *Planning (teaching) >> m/e (leading)*	Improved, as DA helped m/e, inform leadership role	Improved, as DA helped allocate teachers & organise groups of learners to appropriate levels	Improved because DA helped planning of the teaching & learning	Improved, as DA helped plan, manage teaching groups & identify learner needs	Improved, as DA helped m/e bring more focus on teaching & learning levels	Improved, as DA helped plan & prioritise level of support for teaching & learning	Improved, as DA helped plan, through m/e & so raise levels of teaching & learning	Improved, as DA helped identify teaching strategy & allocate staff	Improved, as DA helped set expectations e.g. challenge behaviour appropriate to level of learning	Improved, as DA helped m/e enable interventions at expected levels of teaching & learning as well as improve motivation	Improved, as DA helped plan & organise learning
CPD *On teaching* *teaching above all*	*Improved, as CPD helped update skills through training*	*Not much*	*Improved, as CPD offered more strategies*	*Improved, as CPD provided strategies to meet learning need & levels*	*Improved, as it up dates knowledge & skill (on how to raise levels of learning)*	*Improved, as CPD offered training in strategies to meet learning needs*	*Improved, as CPD helped develop practices and skills*	*Improved by CPD developing teaching and learning*	*Improved, as CPD gave training & experience in general professional practice*	*Improved, as CPD provided for reflection & sharing of practices*	*Improved by CPD when it was school focused*
On learning *Teaching >> Learning i.e. Teaching so learning*	Improved, as CPD made teaching more appropriate to level & need so learning improves	Not much	Improved teaching and therefore improved learning	Improved through better management of student learning	Improved, as CPD helps develop new & more appropriate learning experiences	Improved, as CPD helped better understand learning needs & levels	Improved, as CPD helped teaching thus learning	Improved teaching & therefore learning	Improved, as CPD helped develop skills & knowledge about learning	Improved teaching and therefore learning	Improved, as CPD helped improve teaching skills & therefore learning

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Table 8.2 School X with Low Value Added at KS4 and with Low PM Classification: Summary of Interviewee Responses

Interviewee Questions (15)	X1 T	X2 T	X3 T	X 4 T	X5 ML	X6 ML	X7 ML	X8 ML	X9 ML	X10 SL	X11 SL
On leadership *Skills>>M*	Improved, as CPD supported training developments	Not much	Improved, as CPD supported training developments	Not planned or structured	Improved, as CPD helped skills: teaching, learning and leading targeted.	Improved, as it supported critical self review of skills & better understanding of learner need	Improved, as it helped plan school & individual development	Improved, as CPD supported teaching to address curriculum need & level	Improved, as CPD helped dialogue for clarifying focus & purpose in teaching & learning	Improved, as it synchronises career development with improved Professional purpose	Improved, as CPD helped meet professional needs including skills
Objective setting On teaching Teaching >>> Motivating	*Improved, as OS provided a focus for development in practices*	*Not set for interviewee's teaching*	*Improved, as OS raises levels of motivation to raise attainment*	*Improved, as OS helped prioritise practices for development, e.g. planning, & skills levelling*	*Improved when skills training is directly linked to pupil progress objectives*	*Improved teaching practices*	*Improved teaching through development training*	*Improved, as OS helped prioritise targeted groups*	*Improved, as OS helped develop teaching strategies linked to levels of learning & sense of purpose*	*Improved, as OS helped review & reflect on practices*	*Improved more when OS was made specific to individuals rather than set as a whole school target*
On learning *Teaching >> learning, Mainly teaching thus learning*	Improved teaching practices & so improved levels of learning	Little experience	Improved teaching practices & so improved levels of learning	Student learning & progress was not a focus of interviewee's OS	Improved teaching and so raised levels of learning	Improved, as OS motivated groups of pupils to aspire to higher levels of learning	Improved, as OS helped develop teachers to engage learners more effectively & so raise levels of learning	Improved, as OS helped identify areas or groups in which to raise levels of learning	Improved teaching & thus raised levels of learning	OS Improved teaching & so learning; also gave more of a sense of purpose	Improved, as OS impacted through the setting of common objectives, which raised levels of learning
On leadership *Leading > Teaching*	Improved, as OS helped m/e & development of the School	No personal objectives set	Improved, as OS supported teaching & motivated teachers	Doesn't affect Department	Improved, as OS helped team building & department management	Improved, as OS gave a focus for the whole faculty to develop	Improved, as OS helped support the development of everyone	Improved, as OS helped dept work in dialogue as a team	Improved, as OS gave a sense of purpose to everyone	Improved, as OS helped coordinate the work of the school in raising levels of learning	Improved, as OS helped support career development & so motivated teachers to raise levels of learning

Table 8.3 School Y with High Value Added at KS4 and with Low PM Classification: Summary of Interviewee Responses

Interviewee Questions (15)	Y1　　T	Y2　　T	Y3　　T	Y4　　T	Y5　　ML	Y6　　ML	Y7　　ML	Y8　　ML	Y9　　ML	Y10　　SL	Y11　　SL
Lesson observation On teaching Teaching > Learning	*Improved teaching & motivated learners*	*Improved, as LO encouraged sharing practice but not only for PM*	*Improved, as LO helped review & share teaching practices*	*Improved, as LO helped review review areas to develop*	*Improved, as LO helped review strengths & weakness & so identify inset*	*Improved, as LO helped share good practices*	*Improved by reviewing teaching content & method to engage with learning levels*	*Improved through self evaluation & review of teaching & learning*	*Improved by enhancing m/e & review of strengths & weaknesses*	*Improved teaching through sharing practice*	*Improved by review of strengths & weaknesses so helped m/e*
On learning Teaching+ Learning equally	Improved, as LO helped share teaching practices and learning experiences	Improved, as LO helped review of strengths & weaknesses	Improved as LO helped review of learning, e.g. planning to meet personal levels of learning	Improved, as LO helped prioritise resources & learning needs	Improved teaching and thus learning by pitching at correct levels of learning	Improved teaching and thus learning	Improved, but the effect is slow to manifest on learning	Improved, as LO helped m/e of learning so prioritise changes	Improved by review of learning & the levels at which pupils work	Improved teaching planning & so learning	Improved by review of areas for development of teaching
On leadership M/e (Leading) >> Teaching	Improved, as LO helped m/e coordination & teaching development	Improved, as LO helped m/e review strengths & weaknesses & share practices	Improved, as LO helped m/e review strengths & weaknesses & raise morale	Improved, as LO encouraged self review	Improved, as LO helped prioritise teaching & learning developments	Improved, as LO helped m/e	Improved, as LO helped share teaching practices	Improved, as LO supported m/e develop teaching practices	Improved, as LO supported m/e in review of teacher practices & how they develop	Improved, as LO helped m/e	Improved, as LO helped m/e to review areas for development
Target setting On teaching Teaching >> Motivating	*Improved, as TS helped identify groups of learning levels to set for teaching*	*Improved, as TS motivated pupils & helps adjust teaching to learner's need & level*	*Improved, as TS can be adapted to the levels of groups of learners*	*Improved, as TS helped set expectations about levels of learning. It influences pitch of lessons*	*Improved, as TS helped set expectations about levels of learning*	*Improved, as TS became more focused on the levels of learning. Teaching became more engaging*	*Improved by grouping levels of pupils so resources & teaching could be more personalised*	*Improved, as TS better informed teaching level & pitch of lesson*	*Improved, as TS gave more direction to pitch or level of the teaching*	*Improved, as TS helped set expectations and gave more focus & pitch to the level of teaching*	*Improved, as TS helped review of strengths & weaknesses & identify development areas*
On learning Motivating & Learning	Improved, as TS motivated able, but also de-motivated the less able	Improved, as TS motivated, but also de-motivated the less able	Improved, as TS gave clearer sense of purpose on what levels pupils should work toward	Improved, as TS helped set expectations about the level pupils learn at	Improved, as TS motivated pupils & better informed their teaching	Improved, as TS helped pupils focus on the level of learning they work at	Improved, as TS helped pupils aspire to next levels of learning (targets)	Improved, as TS helped pupils learn at correct level	Improved, as TS gave purpose from level of learning & motivated learners	Improved, as TS gave purpose from level of learning & motivated learners	Improved, as TS helped develop learning by giving level to work toward
On leadership M/e (Leading) > Motivating	Improved, as TS gave a route to independent learning. Pupils knew level to work to & how	Improved, as TS helped m/e manage staff/ student performance	Improved, as TS supported assessment processes, i.e. level of working at & toward	Improved, as TS helped set expectations of learning levels & raise achievement	Improved, as TS helped m/e to raise achievement	Improved, as TS helped m/e	Improved, as it coordinated teachers efforts via levels of learning	Improved, as TS helped m/e raise levels of learning	Improved, as TS helped prioritise support according to need & level	Improved, as it helped with information on learners & levels of learning	Improved, as TS helped focus on priorities to plan & direct resources

Table 8.3 School Y with High Value Added at KS4 and with Low PM Classification: Summary of Interviewee Responses

Interviewee Questions (15)	Y1 T	Y2 T	Y3 T	Y4 T	Y5 ML	Y6 ML	Y7 ML	Y8 ML	Y9 ML	Y10 SL	Y11 SL
Baseline data **On teaching** _Teaching_ ≥ _Motivating_	_Improved, as DA helped planning of lessons_	_Improved, as DA helped review levels of teaching with levels of learning for pupil groups_	_Improved, as DA helped differentiate teaching levels & set expectations_	_Improved, as DA helped plan teaching appropriate to the level & direct support_	_Improved, as DA helped set target levels & expectations. Motivates pupils_	_Improved, as DA helped set expectations & plan teaching at appropriate Levels_	_Improved, as DA helped identify next levels in learning, but not always effective_	_Improved, as DA helped set targets at correct level of learning_	_Improved, as DA helped set expectations at correct level_	Improved, as DA helped planning for correct level of pitch & relevance for the lesson	_Improved, as DA helped set expectations & differentiate the lesson_
On learning _Learning_ ≥ _Motivating_	Improved, but is difficult to quantify.	Improved, not always, as DA helped set expectations about levels of teaching & learning	Improved, as DA helped target support for learners in need, not making suitable progress	Improved, as DA helped set expectations & helped prioritise support for learners	Improved, as DA helped plan lessons at correct level to support learning	Improved, as DA motivated learners to aspire to higher levels of learning	Improved, as it motivated learners	Improved, as DA set levels of learning & identified areas to improve	Improved, as DA helped pupil self evaluation & motivate learners	Improved, as DA helped plan lessons for more effective learning	Improved, as DA helped adapt teaching to learning styles & need
On leadership _M/e_ _(Leading)_ >> _Motivating/_ _Planning_	Improved, as DA helped manage learning better	Improved, as DA informed the planning & allocation of resources to raise standards	Improved, as DA helped review & plan the level of support required by teachers & leaders	Improved, as DA helped set expectations & manage progress in learning	Improved, as DA helped set school targets & therefore help m/e	Improved, as DA helped m/e as well as plan & prioritise areas to develop	Improved, as DA helped m/e as well as set expectations about correct learning levels	Improved, as DA helped m/e & planning to differentiate learners	Improved, as DA helped planning to differentiate learners	Improved, as DA gives more data on learners & helped set levels of learning	Improved, as DA helped prioritise & plan to resource a range of needs
CPD **On teaching** _Teaching_	_Improved teaching practices_	_Improved teaching_	_Improved, as CPD encouraged self review_	_Improved, as CPD helped develop good practices_	CPD improved teaching knowledge & skills	_Improved, as CPD encouraged self review; also it motivated teachers_	_Improved, as CPD helped share priorities for development_	_Improved, as CPD helped train teaching skills_	_Improved teaching through training_	_Improved, as CPD helped train teaching skills_	_Improved, as CPD helped share practice_
On learning _Teaching_	CPD improved teaching and so improved learning	Improved teaching skills & so learning	Little impact	Improved, as CPD helped share teaching practices that improved learning	Improved, teaching & so learning	Improved, teaching & so learning	Improved teaching & so learning	Improved where appropriate inset was given	Improved teaching & therefore learning	Improved, as CPD enabled planning, e.g. SsoW	Improved, as CPD supported a focus on learning development

Table 8.3 School Y with High Value Added at KS4 and with Low PM Classification: Summary of Interviewee Responses

Interviewee Questions (15)	Y1 T	Y2 T	Y3 T	Y4 T	Y5 ML	Y6 ML	Y7 ML	Y8 ML	Y9 ML	Y10 SL	Y11 SL
On leadership *Teaching >> Leading*	Improved, as CPD supports management processes	Improved, as CPD helped develop management practices	Improved, as CPD helped support teachers' development	Improved, as CPD helped the review of strengths & weaknesses	Improved, as CPD helped the review of INSET needs	Improved, as CPD helped to target needs, improve & share practice	Improved, as CPD helped keep departmental processes under review	Improved management processes	Improved, as CPD helped to review strengths & weaknesses for inset	Improved, as CPD helped the management of PM processes	Improved, as CPD helped the review of all training needs.
Objective setting On teaching *Teaching… Motivating*	*Improved, as OS helped to give developments more focus.*	*Improved, as OS provide a focus for discussion & development of skills*	*Improved, as OS helped review strengths & weakness' & give a focus for discussions about skills development*	*Improved, as OS provided a forum for the review of class practice & assessment practice*	*Improved, as OS incorporated DA & TS in a forum for the review of performance*	*Improved*	*Improved, as OS helped review strengths & weaknesses of teaching*	*Improved, as OS helped target support to develop teacher practices*	*Improved*	*Improved*	*Improved, as OS helped focus on school areas for development more than individual*
On learning *Teaching & Learning*	Improved, as OS helped focus on learning development	Not used before so unknown	Improved, as OS affected class management by prioritising areas for development	Improved, as OS provided a focus for discussion of priorities	Some uncertainty: OS has the potential to improve learning. 'It seemed to have that effect'	OS improved teaching & so improved learning	Improved, as OS impacted on attainment & the level of learning	Improved as teaching did	Improved, as OS helped target groups of learners working at different levels	Uncertain, as too soon to say in this case	Improved, as OS helped prioritise particular learning skills for development
On leadership *Leading > Motivating> Teaching*	Improved, as OS helped inform management	Improved, as OS provided a focus for review & sharing information	Little just yet	Improved, as OS helped career development	Improved, as OS helped dialogue, to communicate priorities to the teachers	Improved, as OS helped management	Improved, as OS helped develop the role of dept members	Improved, as OS helped dialogue & gives a focus for support	Improved, as OS provided a focus for the review of school practices	Improved, as OS has helped review performance of staff generally	Improved, as OS helped m/e, set targets & share priorities for developing staff practices

Table 8.4 School Z with High Value Added at KS4 and with High PM Classification: Summary of Interviewee Responses

Interviewee Questions (15)	Z1 T	Z2 T	Z3 T	Z4 T	Z5 ML	Z6 ML	Z7 ML	Z8 ML	Z9 ML	Z10 SL	Z11 SL
Lesson observation *On teaching* *Review & Teaching* *>* *Motivating*	*Improved, as LO motivated the teachers*	*Improved, as LO helped to review Practice*	*Improved, as LO helped reflect on & review practice*	*Improved, as LO helped review practice*	*Improved, as LO helped to reflect & review teachers' practice*	*Improved, as LO helped reflect & review practice*	*No effect*	*LO improved teaching. The effect can be misleading*	*LO improved teaching practices*	*LO improved teaching & raises attainment*	*LO improved teaching in line with the needs of the school*
On learning *Learning*	Improved, as LO helped planning	Unclear, but LO improved teaching thus learning	Improved, as LO helped review learning strategies	Unclear, but LO improved teaching thus learning	Improved, as LO helped review learning needs	Improved, as LO helped pupils develop strategies for learning	Improved teaching and students' learning	No Effect	Improved, as LO helped review strategies for learning	Improved, as LO helped teachers focus more on learning & planning	Improved, as LO helped teachers focus more on learning
On leadership *M/e (Leading) >>> Teaching*	Improved, as LO enhanced m/e, which in turn helps raise standards	Improved, as LO enhanced m/e	Improved, as LO helped m/e review strengths & weaknesses	Improved, as LO enhanced m/e	Improved, as LO helped m/e identify target groups	Improved, as LO helped share Practice	Improved, as LO enhanced m/e	Improved, as LO enhanced m/e to change practices	Improved, as LO enhanced m/e	Improved, as LO helped m/e to identify teaching deficiencies	Improved, as LO helped m/e to identify teaching Deficiencies
Target setting *On teaching* *Teaching >> Motivating*	*Improved, as TS gave a clearer purpose to lesson planning*	*Improved, as TS enhanced lesson planning*	*Improved, as TS gave more focus to planning lessons*	*Improved, as TS gave more focus in planning*	*Improved, as TS gave more potential to plan lessons*	*Improved, as TS helped planning lessons and motivating pupils so raise expectations*	*Improved, as TS set more realistic expectations*	*Improved, as TS set more realistic expectations*	*Improved, as TS helped raise expectations*	*Improved, as TS gave teachers a clearer guide in the levels of learning required & this helps their planning*	*Improved, as TS gave more focus to lesson preparation & planning*
On learning *Learning >> Motivating*	Improved, as TS helped to develop teaching and thus learning	Improved, as TS motivated learners, who became more achievement oriented	Improved, as TS engaged learners because what they were supposed to learn had more focus and this was also motivating	Improved, as TS developed teaching and thus learning	Improved by TS motivating learners	Improved, as TS motivated learners by making clear what was expected of them	Improved, as TS made clearer what levels of learning were expected of pupils	Improved, as TS made levels of learning more clearly defined & planning was more rigorous	Improved, as TS supported more detailed planning to cater for a wider variety of learning needs and levels	Improved, as TS helped planning so that learners' needs & levels were better identified which helped development	Improved, as TS helped motivate pupils & helped planning in identifying learners' needs & levels

Table 8.4 School Z with High Value Added at KS4 and with High PM Classification: Summary of Interviewee Responses

Interviewee Questions (15)	Z1 T	Z2 T	Z3 T	Z4 T	Z5 ML	Z6 ML	Z7 ML	Z8 ML	Z9 ML	Z10 SL	Z11 SL
On leadership *M/e (Leading)*	Improved, as TS helped m/e	Improved, as TS helped m/e	Leadership improved, as TS helped coordinate learning & line management	Improved, as TS helped m/e	Improved, as TS enabled better coordination of planning	Improved, as TS helped m/e, raised levels of motivation and clarified expectations	Improved, as TS helped m/e	Improved, as TS helped m/e	Improved, as TS helped m/e	Improved, as TS helped m/e	Potentially improved m/e but PM checks were not frequent enough for a significant impact
Baseline data On teaching Learning ≥ Teaching	*Improved, as DA gave more focus to lessons*	*Improved, as DA helped identify learning needs & levels*	*Improved, as DA helped identify learning needs & levels as well as review expectations*	*Improved, as DA enabled learning needs & levels to be identified*	*Improved, as DA identified learning needs & helped set expectations*	*Improved, as DA gave teaching more focus & helped set expectations about levels of learning*	*Improved, as DA helped identify learning needs & set expectations*	*Improved, as DA helped identify learning needs & set standards of learning*	*Improved, as DA helped identify learning needs & levels*	*Improved, as DA helped to improve planning and delivery of lessons (teaching)*	*Improved, as DA helped to identify learning need from under-performance*
On learning *Learning >>> Motivating*	Improved, as DA helped lesson planning	Improved, as DA helped lesson planning	Improved, as DA helped lesson planning	Improved, as DA helped lesson planning	Improved, as it helped in planning to respond to individual learning needs	Improved, as it helped planning and challenging students, so extending their learning	Improved, as DA informed students' learning & made them better at learning	Improved, as DA helped planning & helped teachers to motivate learners	Improved, as DA helped planning	Improved, as DA helped focus on learning and motivate students	Improved, as DA helped planning to better meet learners' needs through better teaching & learning strategies
On leadership *M/e (Leading) >>> Teaching (Planning)*	Improved, as DA impacted on m/e with support from LO, DA & TS	Improved, as DA helped m/e & so therefore the management process	Improved by DA but not clear why. 'More realistic expectations' were referred to	Improved, as DA helped m/e therefore leadership	Improved, as DA helped m/e & target support	Improved, as DA helped m/e & particularly what is expected of teacher practices	Improved, as DA helped identify priorities & planning to address issues raised	Improved, as DA supported planning teaching practice and prioritising resources	Improved, as DA helped m/e & therefore leadership	Improved, as DA enhanced m/e, especially in identifying under-achievers	Improved, as DA enhanced m/e & so helped identify under achievers
CPD On teaching Teaching	*Improved, as CPD helped motivate teachers*	*Improved, as DA helped develop teaching skills*	*Improved, as DA helped develop teaching skills*	*Improved, as DA helped develop teaching skills*	*Improved, as DA helped to develop teaching skills*	*Improved, as DA helped to develop teaching skills & career and so is motivating*	*Improved, as DA helped to develop teaching skills*	*Improved, as DA helped to develop teaching skills*	*Improved, as DA helped to develop teaching skills*	*Improved, as DA helped teachers*	*Improved, as DA helped teachers to develop*

Table 8.4 Z School with High Value Added at KS4 and with High PM Classification: Summary of Interviewee Responses

Interviewee Questions (15)	Z1 T	Z2 T	Z3 T	Z4 T	Z5 ML	Z6 ML	Z7 ML	Z8 ML	Z9 ML	Z10 SL	Z11 SL
On learning *Teaching >> Learning*	CPD helped improve teaching & so learning	CPD helped improve teaching & so learning e.g. behaviour management	CPD helped improve teaching & so learning	Improved, as CPD helped teaching & so learning	CPD helped, motivate learners to improve, i.e. teaching & so learning	Improved, as CPD helped improve teaching & so learning	Improved, as CPD helped teaching & so learning	Improved, as CPD helped teaching & so learning	Improved, as CPD helped teaching & so learning	Improved, because CPD placed the focus on learning development	Improved, as CPD helped teaching & so learning
On leadership *Leading >> Teaching*	Improved, as CPD helped to share practice	Improved practices	CPD helped improve leadership skills	CPD helped develop management skills eg planning motivating	CPD helped develop management skills	Improved, as CPD helped develop management skills, e.g. m/e	Improved, as CPD helped develop management skills, e.g. planning motivating	Improved practice, as CPD supported career so helped motivate teachers	Improved practice	Improved, as CPD helped focus support for teachers & helped share practice	Improved, as CPD helped focus support & improve practice
Objective setting On teaching Teaching >>> Motivating	*Improved, as OS motivated teachers and helped planning pupil progress*	*Improved practice*	*Improved, as OS helped self reflection, review of pupil progress in planning*	*Improved, as OS motivated teachers & helped planning*	*Improved, as OS helped motivate teachers and plan pupil progress*	*Improved practice*	*Improved, as OS helped focus on learners' needs in planning learning*	*Improved practice, but is not frequent enough for significant impact*	*Improved practice*	*Improved, as OS provided for a more focused support & preparation of teaching*	*Improved, as OS provided a more focused support of key groups, i.e. those not making good progress*
On learning *Teaching > Learning*	Improved teaching, so made progress in learning	Improved teaching, so progress in learning improved	Improved (but not much), as OS helped review pupil progress in learning	Improved, as OS helped motivate learners	Improved, as OS helped motivate learners	Improved teaching, so pupils made more progress in learning	Improved teaching, so learning improved	Improved teaching, and thus learning, but not frequent enough	Improved teaching, so progress in learning improved	Improved teaching, as OS helped give more emphasis on learning	Improved teaching, as OS helped give more focus on progress in learning
On leadership *Leading > Teaching*	Improved, as OS helped motivate teachers	Improved, as OS helped m/e to raise standards	Improved, as OS helped leaders to encourage a focus on learning & pupil progress	Improved, as OS helped motivate teachers	Improved, as OS helped school planning	Improved, as OS helped with planning generally	Improved, as OS helped m/e to prioritise learners' needs to raise standards	Improved, as OS helped m/e and career review that also raised levels of motivation	Improved, as OS helped m/e to raise standards	Improved, as OS helped review teaching and learning to develop pupil progress	Improved, as OS helped plan teaching and learning of identified groups to enhance their progress

Please note that most common perceptions, for comparison with the conceptual abstraction in Chapter 10, are underlined in Column 1 of tables 8.1 to 8.4 inclusive.

Synthesis of mechanisms and effects of PM Dimensions from each school in the Case Study

The next table, Table 8.5, is a reduction to the most common answers to the interview questions that were reported by the interviewees in each of the schools in the Case Study. Each column represents respectively Tables 8.1, 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4 above. Reduction here refers to the attempt to extract the most frequent theme common to the perceptions of those interviewed. The main aim of this section was to identify the dominant patterns or themes across the four schools of the Case Study. The reason for doing this was first to examine the possibility of generating a different set of results by adopting a more inductive strategy to collating the data (mindful that this would operate in the Empirical Domain), and second that such an approach could further reduce the data and provide an alternative check of the PM concept. That it did not was also significant for the Critical Realist because it could potentially complicate the conceptual abstraction.

It is necessary to explain Table 8.5. In the Low VA, High PM (School W), the first column of the table, first shaded box, teaching was reported to be affected in school W through review of strengths and weaknesses, a mechanism facilitated by lesson observation afforded by PM policy. However, this was a theme representing the most common response to the question about the impact that teaching might have on standards not only in school W but also in Schools X, Y and Z.

So Table 8.5 extracts the commonality between interview responses for each interviewee in each of the four schools in the Case Study by highlighting the most frequent response from each school. In Tables 8.1-8.4, the most frequent responses in each school are indicated (underlined) in the first column. This implies that for each school, the number of themes could be potentially reduced to fifteen. Another advantage of reducing the data in this way is to focus on the more 'observable' effects of PM, including all of its five dimensions, and make the data more manageable. Within the Critical Realist frame of reference, the reduction of the data would be an inevitable consequence of the conceptual abstraction anyway. However, there is at least one loss in this reduction, and that is the effect of the organisational structure of each school on the impact of PM. The reason for this is that in

each school among the eleven interviewees, there were four main scale teachers, five middle leaders and two senior leaders. Closer scrutiny of the data shows that the perceived impact, reported, of the different elements of PM on standards suggest that it is linked to the organisational structure of the school. For example, Senior Leaders' perceptions were inclined to focus on whole school matters, whereas Subject Teachers' perceptions tended to be classroom practice related. To be clear, while the effect is an interesting caveat, it did not undermine the conceptual abstraction, or the overall conclusion of the project. As will be explained in more detail in Part 4, this is because it (the 'caveat') did not challenge the theory under test in this retro-ductive method. It appeared not to impede the way that PM might operate, or at least was not reported to, in raising standards. The organisational structure of the schools in the Case Study was therefore not an issue for the study. In fact it is incorporated into the Conceptual Abstraction below (Chapter 10, Fig 10.2).

Table 8.5 Summary of the Most Frequent Themes from Interviews in Each of the Four Schools

School W Low VA, High PM	School X Low VA, Low PM	School Y High VA, Low PM	School Z High VA, High PM
Interviewee **Questions (15)**	*Interviewee* **Questions (15)**	*Interviewee* **Questions (15)**	*Interviewee* **Questions (15)**
Lesson observation *On teaching* Improved through review of strengths and weaknesses	*Lesson observation* *On teaching* Improved through sharing practice most reported	*Lesson observation* *On teaching* Improved through new skills & strategies most reported	*Lesson observation* *On teaching* Improved through review of skills & strategies most reported
On learning Improved through new teaching skills & strategies.	**On learning** Improved through new teaching skills & strategies.	**On learning** Improved through new teaching skills & strategies.	**On Learning** Improved through development of learning skills & strategies.
On leadership Improved through monitoring and evaluation and the sharing of practice	**On leadership** Improved through monitoring and evaluation and the sharing of practice	**On leadership** Improved through monitoring and evaluation more than sharing of teaching practice	**On leadership** Improved through monitoring and evaluation more than the sharing of teaching practice
Target setting *On teaching* Improved through the motivation of teachers & learners	*Target setting* *On teaching* Improved through changed skills and strategies more than motivation	*Target setting* *On teaching* Improved through changed skills and strategies more than motivation	*Target setting* *On teaching* Improved through changed skills and strategies more than motivation.

Table 8.5 Summary of the Most Frequent Themes from Interviews in Each of the 4 Schools   Target Setting Continued

School W Low VA, High PM	School X Low VA, Low PM	School Y High VA, Low PM	School Z High VA, High PM
Target setting **On learning** Improved through motivation more than introduction of new learning strategies	***Target setting*** **On learning** Improved through motivation more than introduction of new learning strategies	***Target setting*** **On learning** Improved through motivation as much as the introduction of new learning strategies	***Target setting*** **On learning** Improved through the introduction of new learning strategies much more than motivation
On leadership Improved through increased motivation & support for and improvement in learning	**On leadership** Improved through monitoring and evaluation more than motivation or planning changes to teaching practices	**On leadership** Improved through monitoring and evaluation more than motivation	**On leadership** Improved through monitoring and evaluation
Baseline data ***On teaching*** Improved through teaching skills & strategies more than motivation	***Baseline data*** ***On teaching*** Improved through teaching skills & strategies more than motivation	***Baseline data*** ***On teaching*** Improved through teaching skills & strategies more than motivation	***Baseline data*** ***On Teaching*** Improved through learning skills & strategies more than teaching
On learning Improved through motivation more than learning skills	**On learning** Improved through teaching and thus learning more than motivation	**On learning** Improved through new learning skills & strategies more than motivation	**On Learning** Improved through new learning skills & strategies more than motivation
On leadership Improved through planning more than monitoring & evaluation & motivation	**On leadership** Improved through planning more than monitoring & evaluation	**On leadership** Improved through monitoring & evaluation more than planning & motivation	**On leadership** Improved through monitoring & evaluation much more than planning
CPD ***On teaching*** Improved through teaching skills & strategies much more than motivation	***CPD*** ***On teaching*** Improved through teaching skills & strategies	***CPD*** ***On teaching*** Improved through teaching skills & strategies	***CPD*** ***On Teaching*** Improved through teaching skills & strategies

Table 8.5 Summary of the Most Frequent Themes from Interviews in Each of the 4 Schools   CPD Continued

School W Low VA, High PM	School X Low VA, Low PM	School Y High VA, Low PM	School Z High VA, High PM
CPD **On learning** Improved through teaching skills much more than through learning skills directly	**CPD** **On learning** Improved through teaching skills more than through learning skills directly	**CPD** **On learning** Improved through teaching skills	**CPD** **On Learning** Improved through teaching skills more than through learning skills directly
On leadership Improved through sharing good practice much more than motivation	**On leadership** Improved through training & shared practice much more than motivation	**On leadership** Improved through training, review & shared practice	**On leadership** Improved through training in skills much more than others eg motivation
Objective setting ***On teaching*** Improved through new skills & strategies much more than motivation	***Objective setting*** ***On teaching*** Improved through new skills & strategies much more than motivation	***Objective setting*** ***On teaching*** Improved through new skills & strategies more than motivation	***Objective setting*** ***On teaching*** Improved through new skills & strategies much more than motivation
On learning Improved through new teaching skills & strategies much more than learning	**On learning** Improved through new teaching skills & strategies much more than learning	**On learning** Improved through new teaching skills & strategies as well as learning	**On Learning** Improved through both teaching and learning skills & strategies
On leadership Improved through skills & enhanced processes e.g. m/e	**On leadership** Improved mainly through skills enhancement	**On leadership** Improved through skills & enhanced processes e.g. motivating teachers	**On leadership** Improved through skills & enhanced processes e.g. m/e of teaching

The cmos of the more frequent themes

The most important and overwhelming finding to emerge from the series of interviews carried out in the four schools in the Case Study was the positive attitude that all interviewees had towards PM policy as a whole and in particular its perceived effects reported on standards. Such consistently held views raised questions about the usefulness of the research because in four schools that produced a range of performance data, it did not seem to make any difference whether the PM (appraisal) policy was whole school or CPD focused in terms of how the policy was implemented, in spite of the tensions associated with appraisal in the 1980s and early 1990s and the reported literature outlined in Chapter 2. Although at least one-third of those interviewed would have experienced these 'associated tensions' first hand, few vestiges of past controversies remained (Note 20). I endeavoured to continue with the study, and the follow-up second series of interviews, because there was always the possibility that while interviewees were committed to PM, it might be that there was some fundamental variation in the policy as it was reported and found to have been implemented by each of the schools in the Case Study. In the event there was not. However, there were other variations worthy of further consideration, as explained in the thematic analysis of the most frequently reported perceptions, considered next.

There now follows a thematic analysis of the most frequently reported perceived processes and effects identified in the following as respectively mechanisms and outcomes. The aim of the discussion is to attempt to highlight some significant connections between the context (school type), the mechanism (or potential mechanism) (m) perceived to be generating improvement and the area of improvement or perceived effect, i.e. teaching, learning or leading or outcome. The aim is to identify some significant cmos. The most frequently perceived mechanisms and effects that each dimension of PM was reported to have are summarised in Table 8.5. The focus of the discussion, in Chapter 8 in the first instance, is therefore centred round Table 8.5.

Note 20: However, this may be because of the type of questions that were asked in the structured interview. Subjects were not directly questioned about the negative effects of PM policy. They were only asked "what effect, if any, PM had on standards?"

The first principal PM dimension in the table is that of lesson observation. The first question is therefore what were the reported perceived effects of this on standards/practices of teaching? The perceptions include effects like improvements in teaching and learning and the processes or perceived mechanisms like sharing practice and review, generating these. In the School X, where VA and PM were both low, the main effects were perceived to be generated through better teaching skills and more self review and this perception is illustrated by comments like "it makes me stop and think about what I am doing, look at my lessons again and develop them further" (W11). Similar perceptions were held by those interviewed in School Z, where VA and PM were both high. This is not to deny the positive effects of PM on standards perceived by interviewees or to suggest that effects are linear. However, it is to suggest the possible existence of reinforcing mechanisms beside those linked to PM. In School Z, interviewees also referred to the enhanced motivation generated by lesson observation in commenting: for example, one main scale teacher reported "when someone feels that they are doing a really good job it does make a difference" (Z1). The consistency of this perceived mechanism (teacher explanations) across the four schools might prompt the Experimentalist to look at the effects that this particular dimension of PM might have on value added or to link high value added with levels of motivation. However, the focus of the thesis and this section is to draw attention to perceived mechanisms that would either reinforce or undermine a theory about how PM raised standards.

In the case of the effects that lesson observation might have on learning, the two low value added schools (W and X) perceived that because lesson observation improved teaching, it therefore improved learning. Comments like "it establishes where good practice is going on, what things are going well, so I can say that to the teacher and have an exchange of ideas about what the teacher was doing [teaching] to engage students on the task [learning]" (X8) are illustrative of perceived mechanisms in this respect. The school with high VA but low PM (School Y) recognised the impact that lesson observation had on both teaching and learning. One middle leader made the approving comment about "informal lesson observation in terms of shared practice and identification of best practice" (Y6). One main scale teacher said, "it makes you plan your lesson and ensure differentiation between learning tasks" (Y3). School Z, with both high VA and PM, perceived the main mechanism

to be through developing learning strategies. While this could be linked to school culture, the commonly perceived positive effect on learning reported is taken as a given. In other words, PM is perceived by the interviewees to impact positively on learning. To be clear, all that is suggested here is that a link between PM and better learning was reported, or perceived to exist, by most if not all of the teachers from the schools in the Case Study. This link will be discussed further in Part 4 once the conceptual abstraction of PM policy has been outlined.

The effects that lesson observation are perceived to have on leading and leadership processes follow some progression between the schools. Leading was generally seen to have improved by lesson observation through the enhancement of the monitoring and evaluation process. In School X, the low VA - low PM school, monitoring and evaluation was the main (potential) mechanism, rather than sharing practice. Sharing practice included mainly teaching practices. Interviews demonstrated more emphasis on leading through enhanced monitoring and evaluation, where monitoring and evaluation is considered to be of both teaching and learning, than on improving teaching directly or indirectly through shared practice. Comments like "senior management can check the strengths and weaknesses of teachers" and "think about what training courses they might need to go on" (X3 and X1) are illustrative of this point. This is similarly true of School W, the low VA - high PM school. The emphasis on leading constituted as m/e is substantially more marked, being identified by more interviewees, in the case of the high VA schools, Y and Z. They made comments like:

> …when we do a set of lesson observations we can generalise from them if there are particular strengths or weaknesses or something missing: that helps us as a senior management team, think about how we want to move on from that. So I know, for instance, that from a recent set of lesson observations there wasn't much differentiation, so that would be something for us to put on the agenda and try to develop further. (Z11)

There may be effects from other factors, for example monitoring and evaluation focuses on teaching as well as learning. However, the suggestion is that learning was perceived to have a greater priority in the two high VA schools. Such matters are considered at greater length in Part 4 following the conceptual abstraction of PM policy.

Target setting was perceived by most teachers to be an intrinsic motivating mechanism for both teachers and learners: intrinsic in the sense that both learners and teachers are motivated to achieve more. They, as a result, aspire to higher levels of performance. Comments like "it gives them [teachers] an awareness of the potential of a student and can bring grades up because teachers are aware of what the child should achieve" (X1) and "if you know what you are aiming for and what your goal is, then you will try by whatever means you can in varying teaching skills to try and reach that goal" (X6) are illustrative in this respect. However, whereas in the case of the low VA - low PM school, the perceived mechanism was mainly motivational, in the other schools in the Case Study it was perceived to be less so. To be more precise, in the three remaining schools, interviewees were specific about how teaching practices changed in order that students were able to realise their targets. One practitioner commented, "target setting helps you to focus on the pupils' specific needs…so in lots of ways it helps you to motivate … pupil(s)" (W11), the inference being that any intrinsic motivational mechanism that target setting might generate was perceived to be far less significant than the pragmatic changes teachers made to their professional practice in order that students were enabled to realise their learning goals. However, target setting was perceived to generate a motivating mechanism which helped to raise standards when appropriate changes to teachers' practice were made.

Target setting was perceived by most teachers to generate enhanced motivation, a (potential) mechanism to improve learning. This was found to be particularly true in the case of the low VA - low PM school (School X). In the low VA - high PM school, motivational mechanisms were perceived to have greater significance than introducing new learning strategies (School W). In the high VA - low PM school, both motivational and changed learning strategies were similarly significant mechanisms (School Y). Comments from a middle leader like "[target setting] gives the child a motivational focus and that is

why it impacts on learning " (Y7) and "it gives students a clear idea of where they are and most subject areas are fairly good at communicating the current level [of their work] and the steps towards the next level" (Y5) are illustrative of this point.

In the high VA-high PM school (Z), changes to ways of learning were perceived to be most frequently generated (School Z). For example, one senior manager said teachers were precise "in terms of what specific things they [learners] need to improve, whether it is essay construction, more detail in their answers, and that I think .... has given students a shot at targets that are more relevant and specific " (Z10). "It is no good say, writing on students' work 'work harder', or make more effort'"(Z10). Motivating learners was considered of primary importance, but identifying learners' needs was seen to be the crucial next step in raising standards. While there is a temptation here to focus on the differences in perceptions, it is "the independent reality" that would become the priority in moving into the "Real Domain". In Part 4, empirical details like these are considered but in the context of this "Real Domain".

Target setting was perceived to enhance leadership processes in three schools through both improved levels of motivation and the development of other processes such as monitoring and evaluation. Comments like "I think it concentrates the mind, and encourages you to work as a department, to pool your talents and work in harness not just as an individual teacher, so that you are all working in the same direction" (Y7) are illustrative of both the motivational mechanisms and subsequent leadership effects, whereas comments like "[target setting] helps to focus the teacher on the different areas she will need to work on" derive from the monitoring and evaluation aspect of leadership (W2). In the high VA-high PM school, leadership processes and leading were enhanced predominantly through enhanced monitoring and evaluation (School Z). Thus, one interviewee made comments like "[they] checked books every day, frequently they look at the targets and they can match those targets with the results of unit attainment tests" (Z2), which are essentially about leadership, monitoring performance and evaluation. Interviewees placed very little, if any, emphasis on the intrinsic effects of motivation. However, the majority reported that

target setting did improve leadership through a (potential) mechanism of enhanced motivation of learners.

The use of baseline data was perceived to substantially improve teaching through potential mechanisms like changing skills and strategies more than motivation in all of the schools. This point is illustrated by comments like: "it helps with the forward planning of the lesson" (X3), which is a comment from a teacher in a low value added school; and

> …it tells you where to begin as a teacher in pitching your lesson. Some pupils are a lot more able from base line data than would first appear and you start to interact with them. It enables you to plan [lessons] more effectively from the outset. (Y4)

This is a comment made by a main scale teacher in a high value added school, which further demonstrates the relative importance of changing teaching practices compared to motivational levels in raising standards (Y4). In the high VA - high PM school, the most significant effect perceived by interviewees was on the learner and less so on the teacher and their practices. One middle leader commented "it is quite interesting when you analyse your data with other subjects to see some kids are coasting, some are underachieving, and more positively where some are performing at a higher level in your subject. So in that sense it has an impact on teaching and learning" (Z5). The inference from this is that a pattern was emerging in the high value added schools, which related to a perceived prioritisation of changing students' learning. This is another caveat to the empirical findings of the Case Study and not central to the thesis. However, it is considered in more detail in Part 4.

The use of baseline data was perceived to enhance learning through both motivational levels of learners and the support and development of learners. In the case of the low value added schools, learning was perceived to be improved more through the motivational levels of students than by changed learning strategies, particularly in the low VA - high PM school. Comments like "I think if the students are aware of their level, their learning will be improved because there will be a desire to go on improving upon the data" (W6), by a

middle leader, are illustrative of this point. In the high value added schools, introducing changes to learning strategies were more frequently perceived mechanisms than raising motivational levels of learners particularly in the high VA - high PM school. One middle leader made a representative comment in talking specifically about student learning among boys. He said:

> …we have tried to do more oral work in the lesson because one of the key issues especially among boys is their levels [written] tend to be lower than their actual ability or the potential they demonstrate in class discussions. The tendency for many boys is they don't demonstrate this in their written work. So what we are trying to do is scaffold their oral work, which will then enable them to reflect their understanding and ability in the written format. (Z5)

The suggestion is, once again, that there was an underlying emphasis on learning in interviewee perceptions of the effects of the use of baseline data.

The use of baseline data was perceived to improve leadership through potential mechanisms like planning, including lessons, and the monitoring and evaluation processes, including teaching and learning. In the low value added schools, the focus was on mechanisms like the support given to teaching through the enhanced planning of lessons enabled by an expanded information base. One middle leader commented that it helps teaching by helping to decide "how they are going to set children in classes" (W1) and that it would "give a good picture in planning strategies" (W6). In high value added schools, monitoring and evaluation was substantially more important than support given to the planning of how to teach lessons, and this was especially true of the high VA - high PM school. Monitoring and evaluation implies making judgements directed at learning as much as teaching. The comments on the use of data, by a senior leader, are illustrative of this point:

> [It] identifies areas where we can further improve and raise achievement; and I think the internal data has also given us that and where we could identify particular

students who might need help or particular groups of students who might need help. (Z11)

CPD was reported by most teachers and managers to improve teaching through mechanisms like the introduction of new teaching skills and raising motivational levels among teachers and leaders generally. In the low VA schools, CPD affected standards through developing both teaching skills and motivation. This was especially relevant to the low VA-high PM school (School W). The comment by a middle leader demonstrates this point in referring to techniques acquired through CPD/INSET: "Whatever you learn you bring it to the classroom in some sort of way…I went on a course recently on issues related to coursework assessment that are now used in the classroom" (W5). Another middle leader implied that CPD worked through motivating teachers "it gave me a focus to achieve a target" (W9) (by this, the teacher was referring to a PM objective). The generally held perception of interviewees in the high VA schools was that CPD exclusively improved teaching through a training potential mechanism: motivational processes were seemingly perceived to be non-existent. One main scale teacher commented, "going on a course reawakens you to look at new ways of delivery or different skills you can use" (Y2). The inference is that there was a distinctive characteristic associated with the values, attitudes and beliefs of the personnel of the high and low VA schools which underpins how they relate to teaching, learning and leadership. Further, this organisational or school culture was apparently not overridden by a major national policy like PM, which is principally directed at such processes as teaching learning and leadership. This matter is taken up in Chapter 10, the Discussion.

Practitioners generally perceived the impact of CPD on learning to arise from the development of teaching skill. Comments by a middle leader, like "if you are developing staff then they perform their jobs better and they are happier when they are teaching, they feel more skilled and are often more skilled as a result of CPD" and "about professional development having an effect on student learning" (W7) are illustrative of this point. However, interviews in two schools suggest that some improvements in learning are affected directly by CPD through enhanced knowledge about conditions of and strategies

for learning. Such findings were inconsistent with the general pattern that relates learning to value added in that the schools in this instance are low VA - high PM (School W) and high VA - high PM (School Z), with the high PM school perceived to have a more significant effect on learning through, for example, training teachers and thus learners in 'learning to learn' skills. One senior leader's comments were relevant in this respect. She reported:

> there have been examples of people coming back and cascading ideas to enhance student learning, independent learning skills, learning skills, learning styles, thinking skills, all of the sort of things that would give the focus on students themselves [and therefore learning]. (Z10)

Such a result would need to be considered in the context of the data summarised in Tables 8.1-8.5, which confirms the most frequent responses, as well as the school's improving attainment data in Fig 6.1.

The vast majority of interviewees in all four schools in the Case Study perceived that the main mechanism by which CPD worked was skills development. The low VA school interviewees generally perceived leadership to be supported through training in teaching skills and to a far lesser extent they also perceived motivation to be a factor. However, teachers in both high and low VA Schools held the general perception that training in teaching skills, which in turn supported school leadership, was far more significant. Comments by a main scale teacher, like "a fresh approach and thinking about new developments have to have a good effect on teaching in the department" (X1), illustrate this point. The high VA schools perceived that the main potential mechanism generated by CPD was through skills enhancement of both teaching and leadership. They did not perceive CPD to work through enhanced motivation. Another main scale teacher illustrated this point in saying, "when you go to a course and share the new practice with the department, in that sense it does help" (Z1) to lead the department. According to one senior leader, CPD "has an impact on how we do our jobs, … that we are well informed … have a chance to talk to our colleagues and again look at what practice is going on else where"

(Z11). The inference is that in the low VA schools the main potential mechanism in supporting leadership was perceived to be training teaching skills, and less so enhanced motivation. This is a caveat if not a limitation of the study that is discussed further in Chapter 10.

The vast majority of interviewees perceived the objective setting (appraisal) dimension of PM policy to affect standards of teaching. In both of the high PM schools, practitioners perceived that effects on standards were through the development of teaching strategies more than through the enhanced motivation of teachers. In the low PM schools, practitioners perceived the effect on standards of teaching to be more through enhanced motivation. Comments like "if we follow our objectives (appraisal) it will make us better teachers: it will improve us, as normally we have to address our weaknesses" (W1) and "we are continually using different teaching strategies and objective setting [appraisal] aids that …. can be encouraging" (X3) and therefore motivating were typical of the range collected. The inference of this is that embedded, whole school appraisal strategies or high PM policies affected the development of teaching strategies more directly, so that appraisal is more about teaching development than raising levels of intrinsic motivation. This inference is corroborated by a separate series of interviews (Tables 8.1 – 8.5).

Objective setting was perceived to affect standards of learning, both directly and indirectly, through the development of both learning and teaching strategies. In the three schools that were high VA or high PM or both, practitioners perceived objective setting to have a comparable affect. Comments included "when there is a review [appraisal] it is time to do your best" (W1) and implies that better teaching produces better learning because when asked about the impact on learning the subject aimed to produce their best teaching. This point is illustrated by another main scale teacher colleague in referring to objectives directed at improving behaviour management (as an aspect of teaching): "if the behaviour in the classroom is managed properly then more learning will take place" (W2). In the low VA-low PM school (School X), learning was perceived to be more directly affected. One middle leader said, in commenting on attainment, that it improved in one student group for a particular teacher "when she was given strategies on how to motivate GCSE Science

students" (X6). Another middle leader interpreted the effect of objective setting on learning to result in improvement through the development of students' learning, saying "it gave me reason to look for weaknesses in pupils and try to address those weaknesses" (X8).

The vast majority of practitioners perceived objective setting to affect standards of leadership. Some believed this to be frequently generated through support in developing teaching. This was a general perception held by interviewees in all four schools in that the impact of objective setting on leading was that it generated support. This is illustrated by one senior leader's comments:

> I think it [OS] has given us a focus on particular groups of students and on sorts of departments we line manage, or year groups that we line manage and the objectives we plan with them give you something measurable to evaluate and how strategies [related to teaching processes] are working. (Z11)

In high VA schools, this was perceived by some to be generated by improved levels of motivation. One middle leader commented that through the PM review, "the team leader is able to communicate interest in practices and growth in the department and encouragement of a team member's growth as a teacher" (Y5). However, there is no discernible pattern of enhanced motivational level in these schools and so therefore the inference is that enhanced levels of motivation are difficult to associate with high VA and PM.

Summary of Highlighted Themes

In summary, as a result of the analysis of the most frequent themes explaining the links between school context, the mechanisms by which improvements were made and the outcomes themselves, it was possible to identify some prominent cmo configurations. For example, in low VA schools, lesson observation was reported to improve learning through the sharing of good practice. It was also reported to improve leadership through enhanced m/e. Target setting was also perceived to improve leadership through more effective m/e. The use of baseline data improved learning, more so in the high VA and high PM school (Z), through the introduction of better strategies for learning. CPD was perceived to

improve teaching in high VA schools through the development of teaching skills to make learners more independent. This in turn was perceived to enhance the leadership in these schools. Objective setting in the high PM schools improved teaching through the whole school sharing of practices. However, learning was most frequently cited as a focus in the low VA and low PM school (X) where independent learning was prioritised to enhance VA. In conclusion, by focusing on the more frequent themes identified in the analysis, some prominent cmos have been highlighted. These cmos need to be considered when identifying the PM concept abstracted from the object of study (Chapter 10).

The above synthesis, Table 8.5, of the more frequent themes within each of the four schools of the Case Study produced a restricted range of themes for each of the schools. Consequently, certain potential mechanisms were demonstrated, above, to be dominant in each type of school. However, when each of the four sets of 'more frequent' or 'dominant' themes was combined from the four schools, the full range of themes was once more reproduced. The inference here is that if such themes are assumed to be representative of potential mechanisms generated, then they could be operating in most if not all schools to a greater or lesser extent and all should therefore be considered as relevant to any discussion about the conceptual abstraction of PM policy (Part 4, Chapter 10; Note 21).

In the next section, the primary categories for sorting out all of the perceptions reported by each interviewee are identified. The purpose of the section is to show which themes representing mechanisms are generated by each of the five dimensions of PM first and then to reduce these, by further clustering, into a smaller number of categories or parallel codes that can be used as a more manageable basis for considering the conceptual abstraction in Chapter 10.

Primary and Parallel Coding

In this section, the full range of themes is first identified in what is referred to as Primary Coding. This full range of themes, the Primary Code, is then simplified and reduced to a smaller cluster of themes in the form of a Parallel Code. In this Parallel Code, the themes

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Note 21: This is not to forget the fact that teachers were never directly questioned about the potential negative effects of PM.

are numbered and named. The theme number and name are given in the summary of the Primary Code in the first sub-section to follow below. The purpose of this is for cross-referencing so that the link between the Primary and Parallel Code can be identified more easily. Eight common themes were identified across interview answers in the Primary Coding of Interview Responses, or eight parallel themes and therefore eight numbered themes under the heading of Parallel Coding that follows below. Such an approach may seem crude and approximate. The underlying aim of the use of coding in this way was first to demonstrate the uniformity of the data gathered and second, but more importantly, to enable its coherence with the conceptually abstracted object of study, PM policy, to be demonstrated in Chapter 10.

The Primary Coding of Interviewee Responses

In Fig 8.6, themes linking the perceived effects reported by interviewees for each of the five dimensions of PM on aspects of respectively teaching, learning and leading that they (teachers, middle leaders and senior leaders) considered to cause an increase in standards are given in the "PM Dimensions" column. Theme numbers and (parallel) names are given in the adjacent column. Where themes have been given the same number/name, they are considered to be under the same classification. Thus, for example, all themes numbered 1 presuppose some sort of review and reflection of practice, as a potential mechanism generated by PM to raise standards. All of the themes listed are identified by the researcher as potential mechanisms. Finally, I should add that Fig 8.6 is better considered along with Fig 8.7

Fig 8.6

PM Dimensions and Themes	Theme Number/Name
How Lesson Observation Affected Teaching	**How Lesson Observation Affected Teaching**
Improved review & reflection of teaching practices	1. Improved review
Improved teaching strategy & planning to differentiate learners	2. Improved planning (& differentiation)
Improved/enhanced sharing of practice	1. Improved review
Improved review of strengths and weaknesses	1. Improved review

PM Dimensions and Themes	Theme Number/Name
How Lesson Observation Affected Learning	**How Lesson Observation Affected Learning**
Improved teaching improved the learning	3. Teaching improved learning
Improved review of strengths and weaknesses in the lesson	1. Improved review
Improved planning of the learning needs to be met	2. Improved planning
How Lesson Observation Affected Leading	**How Lesson Observation Affected Leading**
Improved m/e	4. Improved m/e
Improved coordination of sharing practice	1. Improved review
Improved motivation of teachers	5. Improved teacher motivation
How Target Setting Affected Teaching	**How Target Setting Affected Teaching**
Improved teaching practices to meet learner needs	1. Improved review
Improved motivation of pupils enhanced teaching	6. Improved pupil motivation
Improved planning enhanced differentiation	2. Improved planning
How Target Setting Affected Learning	**How Target Setting Affected Learning**
Improved motivation of pupils	6. Improved pupil motivation
Improved learning by enhanced engagement, purpose and independence in learning	7. Improved learning
How Target Setting Affected Leading	**How Target Setting Affected Leading**
Improved m/e	4. Improved m/e
Improved differentiation of needs & targeting of learners	2. Improved planning`
Improved motivation of teachers and learners	5,6 Improved pupil & teacher motivation
How Data Analysis Affected Teaching	**How Data Analysis Affected Teaching**
Improved review and identification of priorities for teaching	1. Improved review
Improved differentiation to adapt teaching to the group	2. Improved planning
How Data Analysis Affected Learning	**How Data Analysis Affected Learning**
Improved motivation of pupils	6. Improved pupil motivation
Improved differentiation of learning needs and levels	2. Improved planning
How Data Analysis Affected Leading	**How Data Analysis Affected Leading**
Improved m/e	4. Improved m/e
Improved differentiation of needs & targeting of learners Improved motivation of teachers and learners	2. Improved planning`
	5,6 Improved pupil & teacher motivation
How CPD Affected Teaching	**How CPD Affected Teaching**
Improved teaching to meet learner needs	1. Improved review
Improved motivation of teachers	5. Improved teacher motivation

PM Dimensions and Themes	Theme Number/Name
How CPD Affected Learning	**How CPD Affected Learning**
Improved teaching and therefore learning	3. Teaching improved learning
Improved learning through better engagement and assessment	7. Improved learning
How CPD Affected Leading	**How CPD Affected Leading**
Improved leadership skills, including planning	8. Improved leadership
Improved motivation of teachers and subsequently learners	5,6. Improved pupil & teacher motivation
Improvement in teaching skills in meeting learner needs	1. Improved review
How Objective Setting Affected Teaching	**How Objective Setting Affected Teaching**
Improved practices & skills (to meet learner needs)	1. Improved review
Improved review of teaching	1. Improved review
Improved motivation	5. Improved teacher motivation
How Objective Setting Affected Learning	**How Objective Setting Affected Learning**
Improved teaching improved learning	3. Teaching improved learning
Lessons planned to meet levels of learning, differentiation	2. Improved planning
Improved engagement	7. Improved learning
How Objective Setting Affected Leading	**How Objective Setting Affected Leading**
Improved leadership enhancing a sense of purpose	8. Improved leadership
Improved review of strengths and weaknesses	1. Improved review
Improved teaching and learning	2. Improved planning

Themes were not only common to interviewees' responses to a given question within a particular PM dimension within a particular school, they were also common, to a lesser extent, across other questions, other dimensions as well as other schools in the Case Study. Thus, for example, lesson observation improved m/e, and so did the use of baseline data and target setting.

In order to make the data more manageable and enable more efficient cross checking and auditing of it, themes were combined and a simpler Parallel Coding developed below. The eight Theme Numbers allocated alongside the forty-two Primary Coded Themes above represent no more than a simplification of the initial Primary Coding. It does not have any conceptual significance. It is no more than a reduction of the original data so there is less to cope with in checking the concept of PM in Chapter 10. The Parallel Code is no more than a heuristic device for organising data and in that respect it, together with the initial

Primary Classification, is within the Empirical Domain (Bhaskar 2008). The Parallel Coding is outlined next.

The Parallel Coding of Interviewee Responses

The Primary Coding or Fig 8.6 above can be reduced to the Parallel Coding or Fig 8.7 below. The names of the themes from 8.6 are emboldened and underlined. Both the numbers and the theme names (emboldened and underlined) included in Fig 8.7 correspond to and derive from those in Fig 8.6. Fig 8.7 is a reduction of Fig 8.6.

Fig 8.7: Parallel Coding (Primary Coding continued, Theme names underlined)

1. Teaching practices enhanced because of **improved review**: both strengths and weaknesses for improved learning as well as shared practices (LO).
2. **Improved planning** of strategies of both teaching and learning to meet learner levels/needs: differentiation and targeting of learners (LO).
3. Improvements in **teaching improved learning**
4. **Improved m/e** for more effective review of strengths and weaknesses
5. **Improved motivation of teachers**
6. **Improved motivation of pupils**
7. **Improved learning** from better engagement, purpose, independence
8. **Improved leadership** and management including planning to create a sense of purpose (for teachers and pupils and development of better teaching skills to promote progress, i.e. learning)

The advantage of this simplification of the Primary Coding is that it helps to illustrate as well as draw attention to the commonality in the findings from the four schools in the Case Study and the uniformity of the data. This is not to deny the existence of any variation within it. In fact, one of the issues for Part Four of the thesis is to resolve its place within current debates within the Sociology of Education about the growing "Performativity" in schools generally.

One very important point should be made about the nature of this Coding. The next step in the analysis would ordinarily be to subject the Primary Coding to a second level or secondary coding. This would produce a conceptual code. However, a conceptual code would not be a point of reference against which the original theory about the link between PM and standards proposed by conceptual abstraction could be "measured". They have a different ontological significance. Conceptual abstraction is not the same as conceptual coding and is discussed at length in Part 4, Chapter 10 of the Thesis. They are qualitatively different.

Much of the reported perceptions and thematic analysis raises questions about how this squares with those originally reported for the DfES Policy Makers. It is relevant to the present state of accumulation of data to consider these next.

The Perceptions of DfES Policy Makers

The reported perceptions of two DfES policy leaders on the development of PM corroborate the thematic analysis and the reports about the impact of PM above.

One Senior Civil Servant (SCS) made the point that a number of policies were introduced "to enable children to achieve more" (Appendix B). The DfES asserted that the purpose of PM was to help illuminate the work of teachers in this respect (Appendix B). It has helped to develop "coherence … between the use of student data, CPD, lesson observation, objective setting and school development planning" (Appendix B). Including target setting, these management strategies should "fit into a cohesive and coherent structure" (Appendix B). They were intended to form part of "one conversation" (Appendix B). "As a result, learning, teaching and leading are synchronised" (Appendix B). The SCS asserted that such a perception was corroborated by David Milliband's speech at the British PM Conference (DfES 2004).

There was a coherence and consistency about the SCS's comments, the more significant of which are included in this summary:

> The impact of PM to date generally is that it has brought more focus to CPD. [It marks] a shift from predominantly individual wants to predominantly professional needs. (Appendix B)

However, this is not to forget the pivotal and coordinating role, the "glue", that PM was perceived to provide. The SCS referred to the integrating function it had in relation to lesson observation, target setting, the use of data, CPD and objective setting in school development planning (Appendix B).

Such perceptions are relevant at this point in the data collection and this area of the Empirical Domain. They are also relevant to the more general discussions of Part 4. However, at present, there is a most pressing issue. The uniformity of the data collected raised issues about interview effects and the possibility of 'coaching'. Some form of internal validation became necessary to address such issues.

Conclusion

Finally, consistent with the thematic analysis completed above, another general finding made by the research was that a mechanism by which PM worked in the four schools was suggested to be through CPD. On the basis of what interviewees reported (including policy makers), it was reasonable to assume that PM worked for them through a systematic approach to CPD incorporating lesson observation, data analysis, target setting and objective setting. The plan was to re-interview all of the teachers from the schools in the Case Study, primarily as a form of internal validation against interview interference. As previously explained, this would require a point of reference (Chapter 5). In the follow-up interviews, I needed to find out what teachers thought they were doing and why they were doing it without influencing their answers. Therefore, it was not possible to 'theorise' the interviews in the usual way (Pawson and Tilley 2003) with questions partially 'closed': that is, 'directed' by theoretical commitments. So, accepting that any uniformity of answer in the first series of interviews could also be reflective of teachers' awareness of the discourses surrounding PM initiatives, I had to ask more open questions like 'why do PM?' in the second series. This is not to forget that the question was put in the knowledge that

the analysis of PM policy generated a view of PM that it worked through a systematic approach to CPD, so that even though the question asked in this follow-up interview did not imply a specific theory to test, there was always the possibility that this conclusion would not match interviewee replies.

The main aim of the follow-up interview was to minimise interference and error: to remove it would have been comparable to 'knowing the thing in itself'. In the event, the replies were relevant in a number of ways to the general findings of the thesis. It is to this final test of why teachers engage with PM and how it raises standards that the discussion now turns.

Chapter 9

Explaining Interviewee Commitment to PM: An "Internal Validation"

During the seven to nine months following the initial Case Study, interviewees were contacted once more to obtain their explanations of the initial findings of the research. Reported findings suggested that it was not possible to discriminate between schools on the overall effect of PM on standards. This raised the issue of why colleagues were committed to it. Virtually everyone who participated in the first series of interviews spoke in positive terms about PM policy, at least at their own school. In turn, this raised further issues about the validity and reliability of the research. Suspicions were aroused by the similarity in the themes identified in each of the four schools in the Case Study. While the 'fingerprint' of the distribution in responses to a given question in each of the schools was suitably unique, I had concerns related to over-coaching, in what Pawson and Tilley (2003) call 'teaching the overall conceptual structure' (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 167), in the original interviews when summarising the national policy. It was most important at this point, prior to a more detailed analysis, to establish the reliability of the data and to seek further clarification of it. The question that I wanted to put to interviewees in this second series of interviews had to enable me to refine my and interviewees' thinking about how PM policy worked as well as give some reassurance that, in refining thinking, subjects/interviewees were not coached into giving particular answers (Note 22). For example, directly asking questions like: 'do you think PM raises standards by providing structured CPD?' might well put thoughts in subjects' minds rather than identify those that were actually guiding what they were doing in the process of policy implementation. So, in this dual process of 'conceptual refinement' and (internal) validation I was only able to report back at a general level what effect PM policy was reported to have had if I were to remove all of the doubts that I had about 'coaching'. Consequently, the questions that I wanted to ask them had to be more challenging: 'why do you think the policy worked?' or 'what was your reason for engaging with it?' or 'why are you committed to using PM?' In short, I wanted to ask interviewees 'why do PM?' As such, the question requires a reinstatement of their thinking

Note 22: This is not to forget that there are other potential sources of interview bias e.g. the identity of the interviewer was not made anonymous as is usually the case.

in the first interview some eight months earlier. This would facilitate conceptual refinement, without coaching them into reinforcing the theory being proposed. Additionally, the process of making interviewees link their thinking to their everyday practice, provided a source of corroboration and, ultimately, a form of within method validation (Denzin 1970).

Consequently, a second series of interviews was set up with these questions in mind. Interviewees from the original schools, in the Case Study, were asked 'why do PM?' Each was contacted by phone using the information recorded from their first interview. In some cases, subjects didn't immediately remember who I was, so I reminded them (Note 23). Then, following the usual introductions to interviews (Chapter 5), I explained that the overall response to the Case Study was positive and that I needed their help to explain this. It was slightly surprising that no one pointed out that PM was a statutory or legal requirement. Apart from the usual vocal over the phone encouragement, one of the disadvantages of telephone interviews is the inability to give visual feedback to support and encourage subjects, so no other comments were made and only the one question was asked, apart from 'anything to add?' at the close of the interview. Interviews lasted on average about five minutes. The aim was to access what they thought about what they did, i.e. to access the mechanism or theory/thinking part of the Pawson and Tilley (2003) diagram above (Fig 5.3).

By way of summing up, in September of 2005 teachers from each of the four schools in the Case Study participated in a one-to-one telephone interview either at their homes or at their schools. One single theme permeated all of their responses. A thematic summary of responses is given in Table 9.1 below. The table contains a synthesis of the themes permeating the responses given by the teachers in each of the schools in the Case Study, at each level in the organisational structure: this included senior leaders, middle leaders and main scale teachers, as shown.

Note 23: It could be suggested from this response that interviewees were not influenced by the interviewer's identity

Thematic Summary of Teachers' Explanations: Why Subjects Engaged with and Implemented PM Policy

Table 9.1

	School W	**School X**	**School Y**	**School Z**
Organisational Role	High PM Low VA	Low PM Low VA	Low PM High VA	High PM High VA
Senior Leaders Said:	It is a systematic approach to CPD for school improvement	It is a structured approach to CPD for improvement	It is a structured way to use CPD for school improvement	It is a more focused way of reviewing practice through CPD
Middle Leaders Said:	It is a way of affecting improvement through a more systematic approach to CPD	It is a more methodical approach to CPD	It improves the school systematically through CPD	It is a more focused way of improving practice through CPD
Teachers Said:	It is a way of improving professionally through improvement training and CPD	It is a focus for CPD and improvement	It helps improvement through a focus on CPD	It is a way of affecting professional improvement through a more focused approach to CPD

More detailed information covered by this summary is given in Tables 9.2 – 9.5 below

In essence, the reason that all interviewees gave as their rationale for "doing" or implementing the policy was that it is a structured or focused approach to CPD or professional development for school/self improvement.

Summary of the Second Series of Interviews

Table 9.2 School W: A School with Low Value Added at KS4 and a High PM Classification

Interviewee Question 16, 17	W1 T	W2 T	W3 T	W4 T	W5 ML	W6 ML	W7 ML	W 8 ML	W9 ML	W10 SL	W11 SL
Why do PM? *PM affects improvement by a systematic approach to CPD was a common theme..*	*"PM enables me to address my weaknesses so that I can improve as a teacher… In my case the use of lesson plenary helped"* *"PM supports and leads to improve-ment through training and CPD"* *"PM is like a platform, structure or scaffold for professional improvement"*	*NO* *REPLY*	*PM enables you to focus on reviewing your work.* *So that you can develop and improve.* *"The aim is to get the best out of your students and so improve as a teacher."* *It is improvement through a more focussed CPD"*	*"I feel positive about PM and buy into it because it is a useful aid to improvement.* *It is not only a matter that you identify strengths and weaknesses because without identifying weaknesses it would not be possible to better yourself as a professional.*	*NO* *REPLY*	*PM "enhances your PD through self review".* *This is possible "by what you can identify and also what you analyse to be your strengths and weaknesses"* *"By enabling you to improve, not stay as you are and improve in an objective way through advice and support."* *"Because of this "CPD" is more effective."*	*NO* *REPLY*	*PM "makes you think and question your work.* *"So that you review your teaching to improve your performance. The meetings give you support and direction.* *Direction which in essence is focussed improvement.* *It is a structured approach to review and improvement"*	*NO* *REPLY*	*NO* *REPLY*	*PM works because it provides time to reflect on PD and recognises achievement* *"It offers a focus on CPD in a structured way to facilitate improvement and career development"*
Anything to add? Very little added.	*Agreed*		*Agreed, added through CPD*	*Agreed, added through CPD*		*Agreed, added through a focused CPD*		*Agreed, added through a focused CPD*			*Agreed*

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Table 9.3 School X: A School with Low Value Added at KS4 and a Low PM Classification

Interviewee Question 16, 17	X1 T	X 2 T	X3 T	X4 T	X5 ML	X6 ML	X 7 ML	X8 ML	X9 ML	X10 SL	X11 SL
Why do PM? ... *PM affects improvement by a systematic approach to CPD was a common theme.*	*PM helps level practice by enabling us to share good practice.* *It is a planned way of improving your practice.* *This is because it provides a basis for discussion and a focus and structure for improvement.* *It helps communication for improvement.*	*We do it because:* *It gives a sense of direction and purpose.* *It is a source of feedback and encouragement.* *It makes you more aware of a need to improve and also how to improve.* *"PM provides a clear focus on CPD to bring about improvement"* *The collaboration it fosters is important to improving teaching.*	*It works because it gives the feedback needed to develop and improve.* *The focus on improvement through CPD makes it work.* *It works by supporting development*	*It works because it meets career progression needs.* *It gives feedback on what and how we are doing.* *"Essentially it provides a focus on career development and improvement through CPD and continuous learning"*	*NO* *REPLY*	*NO* *REPLY*	*It helps to nurture and develop staff. It is essential for personal development in improving schools.* *PM is a conduit to adapt and respond to change.* *PM helps develop our views and aspirations.* *PM facilitates retraining to improve.* *PM provides a mechanism for school improvement as an integral part of a good school.*	*It encourages teachers to improve by providing a framework of support.* *It gives teachers a feeling of support in their teaching.* *"It is a way of improving through CPD in a planned approach."*	*Meets the need to progress and improve.* *PM is satisfying because it provides a framework to facilitate professional improvement.* *Attempts to link PM with salary would be a distraction.* *So far the salary issue has been well managed.*	*Teachers are able to influence the area they wish to develop and improve on.* *This makes it worthwhile.*	*There is a focus on improvement, self-evaluation, and CPD* *As a leader, the sum total of "non threatening PM " is whole school improvement through CPD.*
Anything to add? *Very little added.*	*Agreed*	*Agreed*	*Agreed, added Helps CPD*	*Agreed, added focus on CPD and career development*			*Agreed, added that it enhances CPD*	*Agreed, added that it improves CPD*	*Agreed*	*Agreed*	*Agreed, added that it is a way to use CPD for school improvement*

Table 9.4 School Y: A School with High Value Added at KS4 and a Low PM Classification

Interviewee Question 16, 17	Y1 T	Y2 T	Y3 T	Y4 T	Y5 ML	Y6 ML	Y7 ML	Y8 ML	Y9 ML	Y10 SL	Y11 SL
Why do PM? *PM affects improvement by a systematic approach to CPD was a common theme.*	*It is useful for review and a way of checking your progress and development.* *It helps with your monitoring so that you do not become complacent*	*PM provides "a focussed approach to CPD".* *"It ensures that everyone is supported in their development".* *"PM is a focussed and methodical approach to CPD"*	*NO* *REPLY*	*PM provides a focus for professional improvement and development.* *In addition, with the right manager, i.e. if the interaction with appraiser and appraisee are good, then PM can also be motivating.*	*PM is "a more systematic, rigorous and effective way to focus on improvement and training."* *It applies to everyone at all levels.* *It has affected "improvement for all in teaching and learning" especially.*	*NO* *REPLY*	*NO* *REPLY*	*PM helps "review strengths and weaknesses so that we can improve" our practice.* *PM supports a "focus on developing teaching and learning in a constructive and systematic way".* *By reviewing performance with others it gives objectivity to the process of review: that is, if the policy is followed properly.*	*PM is good for monitoring purposes. It is also good for sharing practice and helping to improve the performance of my department.* *It enables us to identify areas for improvement and development.* *It is a focus for CPD and improvement.*	*Engages with it because it is an objective assessment of performance.* *It is "an objective way to progress professionally and in your career".* *In summary, "PM is a structured way to develop for improvement and for your career".*	*PM provides an opportunity for "a dialogue about improvement and development in a structured way".* *PM "provides the scaffold for improvement through CPD"* *"I buy into it because it gives me the chance to develop in a way I chose to": that is," in a non-threatening way".*
Anything to add? *Very little added.*	*Agreed, added that it supports CPD and improvement*	*Agreed*		*Agreed, added that it helps CPD*	*Agreed*			*Agreed*	*Agreed*	*Agreed*	*Agreed*

Table 9.5 School Z: A School with High Value Added at KS4 and a High PM Classification

Interviewee Question 16, 17	Z1 T	Z2 T	Z3 T	Z4 T	Z5 ML	Z6 ML	Z7 ML	Z8 ML	Z9 ML	Z10 SL	Z11 SL
Why do PM? *PM affects improvement by a systematic approach to CPD was a common theme.:*	*It is a coordinated approach to sharing and therefore improving our practice.* *It helps plan how we are going to or can improve our teaching.* *It supports how we review teaching and learning.* *It is school improvement through a coordinated approach to CPD*	*It has helped me improve as a teacher by:* *Improving monitoring and evaluation for support of how we/I teach.* *This has helped better identification of:* *Priorities that we need to address;* *Training needs and CPD.* *It has improved the delivery of my lessons by creating a focus on:* *What level students work at and also toward* *Prioritising students' learning needs.* *It helps improve teaching by better planning of PD.*	*PM supports reflection and review of your professional practice.* *"It helps develop new strategies" for teaching.* *CPD is important in these improvements.* *A coordinated approach to improvement incorporating CPD.*	*NO REPLY*	*PM develops a clear sense of purpose, what you need to do throughout the year.* *It is useful in reflecting on how to plan lessons, "reflecting on differentiation, the delivery of lessons and so forth".* *It is relevant in terms of career planning.* *It is a way of improving teaching by a more reflective use of PD.*	*It has a positive impact on performance, particularly teaching and learning.* *It is a way of coordinating our development needs.* *These are identified by an enhanced monitoring and evaluation system.* *It makes for a coordinated approach to improvement using whole school CPD.*	*It helps us to monitor, evaluate and support each other in improving what we do.* *Through PM we can identify which teaching skills need to improve so that we teach better and the students learn better.* *So appropriate monitoring and evaluation help identify areas for improvement, appropriate CPD is provided, coordinated through PM, results in improvements all around the school.*	*PM supports the monitoring and evaluation processes in the School. It helps identify areas where support is needed. It sets expectations.* *It initiates planning and ultimately through CPD it helps improvement in teaching and learning. It is a planned approach to school improvement using CPD.*	*NO REPLY*	*PM has led to a revision of teaching strategies in the departments that I line manage.* *I think it has created "a greater awareness of people thinking about what specific strategies are going to raise results".* *Because data is available, "it has sharpened everyone's practice".* *CPD is more effective, which has "impacted on lesson planning and delivery, sharing and greater use of strategies like AfL, clearer objectives shared with students in lessons and more detailed feedback and marking".* *It's a planned "approach to school improvement through a more effective use of CPD"*	*A structured approach to CPD for improvement.* *It generally identifies areas for development. These are then supported by a whole school programme of CPD. All of this is coordinated through PM.*
Anything to add? Nothing added.	*Agreed*	*Agreed*	*Agreed*		*Agreed*	*Agreed*	*Agreed*	*Agreed*		*Agreed*	*Agreed*

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All of the thirty-two teachers that were interviewed for a second time (nine teachers from the first series of interviews had moved on, one was in bereavement and two did not answer my telephone calls) from all four schools in the Case Study reported that their motive for engaging with PM policy was professional development for improvement. Improvement variously referred to personal and/or whole school. Teachers' thinking behind their doing PM was a very significant point of reference/'criterion for truth' or a form of validation in interpreting the data generated by the interviews carried out at the four schools.

Validation had a specific purpose in the present context. Its purpose was to overcome the potential coaching of interviewees by the Researcher. "Coaching" is a potential hazard for the retro-ductive strategy in outlining the proposed concept under test. The follow-up interview presented the last opportunity to confirm that interviewees' original responses were an accurate reflection of their thinking. Denzin (1970) has talked about using different questions in a survey to elicit the same information. He referred to this as triangulation within a given method. Although the questions asked had a different epistemological status and they were put at a different time and in a different place, the underlying principle was much the same. This is not to forget that the thesis is able to draw on other corroborating data and strategies. So, for instance, there is 'experimental' information in the form of conceptual abstraction (Chapter 10); secondary (quantitative) data (Chapter 6); as well as other secondary qualitative data outlined in the Literature Survey (Chapter 2). However, this is not to deny that for the retro-ductive strategy of this thesis, all measurement is directed by the concept of PM proposed following abstraction or that eventually the "degree to which [it is] a valid representation of reality will be a matter of judgement" (Blaikie 2000, p. 266). In this respect, it would be no different to the deductive and inductive strategies.

"Explaining interviewee commitment to PM" has another important consequence besides providing "internal validation". It arguably would complete the context mechanism outcome configuration that Pawson and Tilley would achieve through "cumulative synthesis" (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 121). The common interviewee explanation of the desirability of PM policy was that it offered a structured approach to CPD for school

improvement. This it would seem 'made them' buy into the policy and 'encouraged' them to 'make it (PM) work' (Chapter 5, p. 109). Conversely, based on the consensus of interviewees, schools in the Case Study used PM to affect improvement (raise standards) through a mechanism of structured CPD (Note 24). The one feature common to all of the schools in the Case Study is that they were categorised as 'Challenging'. The tentative suggestion, based upon empirical evidence only, is that in the context of schools in 'Challenging Circumstances' PM raises standards through a perceived or potential mechanism of structured CPD. However, this is a tentative conclusion based on perceptions from within the Empirical Domain.

To be clear, the perception held by policy subjects, that PM is a systematic approach to CPD which raises standards, was a significant piece of data in evaluating/ assessing/ analysing the impact of PM on standards in schools. Each of the points made, including the differing levels of thinking implied by subjects, assigned to the Empirical Domain as well as the 'experimental' nature of conceptual abstraction within the Real Domain, would require extensive discussion in order to begin to answer the research question 'what effect does PM policy have on standards of attainment in schools?' It is to issues such as these that the focus of the thesis now turns.

Note 24: That teachers were buying into the policy in this way could be considered as additional evidence that the PM policy was embedded in these schools.

Part 4

From the Empirical Domain to the Real Domain and back to the Empirical Domain:

The Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this final part of the thesis is to explain the data collected in Part 3 and to place this in an historical context relevant to the implementation of the national policy for PM. This is done by conceptual abstraction of the PM policy with reference to the data collected. The explanation is therefore within a Critical Realist framework.

This process of conceptual abstraction distinguishes the approach of this study from one that might be taken by Scientific Realists like Pawson and Tilley. For this reason, conceptual abstraction is given detailed consideration and it is discussed next.

Chapter 10
Conceptual Abstraction

Conceptual Abstraction in the Study of PM is beyond Constructivist and Experimentalist Approaches

Explaining conceptual abstraction and how it links to the findings in the Case Study

In Chapter 5 of the thesis, I outlined the methodological framework for the study and also how this was used to develop the research design. In outlining the methodological framework, I attempted to explain the shortcomings of Constructivism and Experimentalism and locate the research design within the established literature for Scientific Realism. In this context, the thesis drew heavily, but critically, on the work of Pawson and Tilley (2003). The main criticism of their work derived from a preoccupation with Middle Range Theory (MRT), the lack of consideration of structure in the object of study and a criterion of internal validation for the everyday practices of professional life, which would serve as an objective point of reference from which a potentially all-embracing scientific understanding of the impact of PM on standards could be developed. This should not be viewed as deterioration into the epistemic fallacy, as will be explained below. However, the main purpose of this chapter is to explain the scientific nature of the Case Study at the core of this research. If Science is characterised by experiment, it is important to explain how the present study is scientific; there is a need to clarify the ontology of the Case Study. The status of teachers' comments and how they contribute to the development of theory in relation to an independent reality is particularly relevant, as this implies nature and natural necessity. The problem is to explain how themes/quotes, while they are the essence of people's thinking, are coherent with the conceptual abstraction, and subsequently with a scientific theory.

Once the argument for the methodological framework of the research design has been consolidated, incorporating an ontological point of reference, it will be easier to show how causal mechanisms can be identified in a way that would not be facilitated by a more direct ethnographic constructivist approach, based upon a consensus of participants' perceptions.

Further, having consolidated the method of conceptual abstraction, it will be easier to explain why it is not considered to be an induction. This is apposite because it will then be possible to show how this Realist approach has revealed more than an Experimentalist approach could.

The Scientific Nature of the Study

What makes scientific investigation, particularly the natural sciences, distinct from other forms of investigation is its dependence on the experiment as a source of data (Bhaskar 2008; Danermark et al 2002). For the natural sciences, an experiment is a means by which the natural course of events is manipulated.

The aim for science would be to generate an outcome by manipulating the natural course of events, through controlled experiments, so that the mechanism generating the outcome can be studied in isolation from other mechanisms. It would attempt to ensure that the mechanism under study worked without interference from other mechanisms. However, controlling events involving teachers, or any conscious, intentional, reflective, self-changing object, in this way would be a very complex manipulation. Quite simply, we could change our actions as a reaction to the experimental setting. So instead of isolating a potential mechanism that linked PM to increasing standards by manipulating concrete events, the study chose to isolate potential mechanisms by isolating them in thought, by abstraction. This conceptual abstraction is the social scientist's equivalent of the natural scientist's experiment. This was the kind of scientific approach that the study adopted.

So, conceptual abstraction was the means by which the mechanism generating an event, e.g. the link between PM and increasing standards, was isolated in thought. PM policy is the "object under study" (Danermark et al 2002, p. 44). The question now is what is it about PM that produces the event: increases in student attainment? What constituent elements of this object of study can be abstracted that have causal powers that are indispensable to it as an object of study recognised as PM?

In order to appreciate PM as a conceptual abstraction from reality, it is necessary to identify constituent elements that relate to the data identified in the empirical reality of the Case Study and at the same time are internally related to each other. As Danermark et al put it, "we abstract, isolate, a set of internally defined social relations from a particular structure" (Danermark et al 2002, p. 47). It remains to first identify the constituent elements of the object of study - PM - explain how they are internally related and then trace them to the empirical observations made in the Case Study. The aim is to move from 'deep' in the reality to its 'surface' events, the observed events or the Empirical Domain referred to by Critical Realists (Fig 6.2).

An appropriate starting point to expound this conceptual abstraction is the PM policy itself. The policy conveniently refers to five principal dimensions, as explained in Chapter 2 (DfEE 2000b). To recap, they are the use of baseline data to identify the level of learning of the students, the use of lesson observation to corroborate this level, the setting of targets by the teacher directly related to this level of learning, the objectives agreed between manager and teacher and the CPD objective inextricably bound up with these (Note 25). The point is that the baseline data agreed (the level of learning reached), the observations confirmed (the level of progress made), the targets set (the progress to be made by the pupils) and the objectives agreed (the progress to be enabled by the teacher), including the CPD objective (the development in the teacher to ensure s/he is skilled to enable), are structures that are, through the leader (manager), teacher and pupil (learner), internally related to each other. This is because each element is understood in relation to the others via the leader, the teacher and the learner. The learner, and what s/he does, is defined in terms of the teacher, and what s/he does, and both are defined in terms of the leader and what s/he does. It is a reciprocal internal relationship that is also a conceptual abstraction incorporating this concrete internal relationship. This is not only of the mind or theoretical imagination. "The abstract is to be understood as an extract from reality" (Danermark et al 2002, p. 48). In this particular instance, the extract is the national policy for PM as it was implemented in the four schools in the Case Study. However, "the abstract categories, deal

Note 25: Arguably, lesson observation, use of baseline data, CPD, objective setting, teacher, learner, leader etc. are conceptual here and could be written upper case. There will always be duality at the point where a perception is incorporated into a concept of internal relations. However, please also see Note 27 p. 252.

with those mechanisms that produce the concrete (observable) phenomena" (Danermark et al 2002, p. 49).

The notion of standards can also be understood as part of this conceptual abstraction. The consequence of moving learners 'up' through the levels of learning is internally related to baseline data, lessons observed, targets set and objectives 'agreed' between learners, teachers and leaders. An increase in standards, if this is to be understood as a social relation, is abstracted as a learner behaving in a different way that can include new knowledge new understanding as well as being able to perform new tasks. Increased standard, here, is the outcome of a reciprocal internal relationship between the roles of leader, teacher and learner within the structure of PM. It is the power to affect by the leader, by the teacher and the learner that locates causes, provides the dynamic, accounts for the process, in an otherwise transient, static snapshot of a structure.

As Danermark et al. (2002, p. 52) state, "abstractions freeze the moment": they say less about the process of change. However, it is at the level of abstraction that causal connections, for the Critical Realist, are located. The assumption is, as previously explained, that there is a level of reality beneath the level of events, where empirical observations are made and where causes are found – mechanisms generating events can be identified. For this study, the mechanisms are generated by the object of study, PM.

To return to the focus of the 'discussion', the conceptual abstraction so outlined assumes that PM is a public and social policy. More importantly, it assumes that policies like this combine with agents' perception to evolve, if not help generate, a structure for social action. It remains to demonstrate how such structures - this conceptual abstraction as it has been outlined - relate to the causal mechanisms and the themes as they were identified in the perceptions of interviewees in the Case Study. It is important to clarify the ontological domains of the concepts, mechanisms and themes in the above discussion. It is necessary to do this in order to circumvent a major methodological issue for the thesis, the obfuscation of the Epistemic Fallacy, so confusing epistemological with ontological criteria (Bhaskar 2008).

Concepts, Mechanisms and Themes

A schematic summary of the conceptual abstraction that incorporates the empirical themes, like those in the Case Study, in relation to the three ontological domains identified by Bhaskar (1998), the Actual, the Empirical and the Real are represented in Fig 6.2 above. The diagram in Fig 6.2 ontologically locates the relationship between the identified themes that link to the perceptions made by the teachers interviewed in the Case Study. These observations are within the Empirical Domain. The conceptually abstracted structures i.e. those derived from the object of study, as previously explained (p243 - 244), are located within the Real Domain. This link relates to the generative mechanisms arising from the reconstituted object of study abstracted from the Empirical Domain and, to be clear, located in the Real.

The causal mechanisms emanate from within the Domain of the Real and are hierarchically layered, just as the internal relationships between reconstituted elements are hierarchically layered (Fig 6.2). This is so because reality itself, according to Transcendental Realism, is layered (Bhaskar 1994). However, for the Critical Realist position taken in this study, this is not to know "the thing in itself". It is to say that reality can be conceptualised in multiple ways and this is one of them. The rank order of these layers is given in Fig 10.1 with the deepest and most determinant being the Physical Layer. The layer in which this study is rooted is determined by the structures that comprise the object of study i.e. PM. These emanate from the internally related structures of social action.

PM as a Social Structure

PM is assumed to be a social structure, expressing social relations, and so needs to be explained in terms of mechanisms from the Sociological Layer of the Real, as illustrated by Fig 10.1 (p. 246). As already suggested, this is based upon the ontology that the Real is layered. The mechanisms from the deeper layers explain those above so that those from the Psychological explain those from the Sociological.

Fig 10.1   Sociological

                                                Psychological

                                                Biological

                                                Chemical

                                                Physical

The Case Study is based on the assumption that PM policy is a structure for social action. So as a social structure it entails powers and mechanisms and these are rooted in the Sociological Layer. PM is the object of this study and how this relates to rising standards is determined by its structure arising from conceptual abstraction. "Objects have powers by virtue of their structures, and mechanisms exist and are what they are because of this structure….There is an internal and necessary relationship between the nature of an object and its causal powers" (Danermark et al 2002, p. 55). So, for example, within the PM structure, Leader, Teacher and Learner are within a "total" structure of internal reciprocal relations (Note 26). A Leader, within PM, not unrelated to their knowledge of whole school needs in their managerial role, has the power to cause the Teacher to review professional practice, which was invariably focused on their classroom role in the Case Study (Chapter 7). This is analogous to a landlord having the power to charge rent of a tenant. The outcome of reviewing professional practice can be an empirical effect conditioned by the Leader - Teacher relation within the structure of PM. The initiation and completion of the review is contingent upon the fulfilment of certain conditions, such as PM policy requirements, including time of year and others like teacher-leader availability. The mechanism of Review, through the abstracted structure of PM, is also linked to increased standards, as already explained above. An increase in standards caused by Review within the structure of PM, in practice, is contingent upon the context in which this takes place. Interviewee perceptions were consistent with one another in saying that PM raises standards by affecting teaching, learning and/or leading through a potential mechanism of, for example, review. However, the contexts in which this takes place are indeterminate. But, most importantly, the abstract structure of PM, based upon the national policy, links to interviewee perceptions about the various strategies (as they would refer to

Note 26: Upper case is used for Teacher, Learner and Leader here because they are as defined by the internal relations of the conceptual abstraction within the Real Domain. Please also see Note 27.

them) or potential mechanisms, including review, planning, teacher development and all of the themes identified above and referred to again in the discussion below, by which they perceive standards to be raised. This notion of coherence between concept and perception is one issue to do with epistemology; there is another, and this is considered next.

The scheme above outlines the ontology on which the Case Study is based, Fig 6.2. It illustrates what is the nature of the real. It is a Critical Realist ontology. It assumes what the real must be like if it can be, as it is and has been, studied scientifically (Bhaskar 2008). This in turn assumes what it must be like if there can be experiments (Bhaskar 2008). It presupposes closure, the isolation of physical events, in the case of the natural sciences, and conceptual abstraction, the isolation of 'objects' in thought, in the case of the social sciences (Danermark et al 2002). However, if the findings are to be of any use, this conceptual abstraction needs to be considered in relation to a reliable empirical base. The Case Study, if it is to be of any use, must deal with reliably reported perceptions. There must be some point of reference (not a criterion of external validity or truth) to ensure that the perceptions about the effects of PM upon which they are based are also reliable and not distorted by interview. So as well as being clear about the ontological status of the study, it is also important to be clear about the Empirical Domain upon which the study is founded. At this point the ontological status of the study has been consolidated; it is important next to be clear on its epistemological status before finally going on to the coherence between the abstracted concept and the themes identified in the answers of the interviewees.

Epistemology: a point of reference or the basis of knowledge and criterion of truth
What role does epistemology have within the Critical Realist framework and the work of the Case Study? The purpose of this section of the chapter is to explain the role that epistemology has within this thesis and to say what it does and does not do in the data collection process outlined in Part 3.

Here it is appropriate to explain how epistemology relates to the Critical Realist (CR) ontology generally. To recap, the thesis is based upon the ontology circumscribed by

Fig 6.2. At this point it is relevant to locate the study of epistemology, particularly with respect to Experimentalism and Constructivism. The implication is that epistemology as such arbitrates over the efficacy of knowledge. This is generally based on correspondence for Experimentalists and consensus for Constructivists. Briefly, for them, statements about being are reduced to statements about knowledge. At least, this is what a Critical Realist such as Bhaskar would say (Bhaskar 2008, p. 36). Epistemology, so described, apprehends and defines reality as identical with empirically grounded conceptions, including those derived from the individual perceptions of everyday (professional) practice. Bhaskar (2008) identifies this as the Epistemic Fallacy. For the Critical Realist, epistemology, used in this way, is preoccupied with matters that are of the Empirical Domain, as illustrated by Fig 6.2. The CR epistemology is based upon an accessible independent reality. The nature of access to this is socially and historically determined. In this thesis, the epistemology is based upon the Coherence definition of truth.

To continue with the line of thinking that epistemology can be understood as a means of arbitration over whether theories are true or false, then the Pragmatist point of reference used in Chapter 9 could be equally vulnerable to the accusation of the misuse of epistemology and committing the Epistemic Fallacy. This would be a reasonable supposition to make because it would seem that instead of using correspondence or consensus for purposes of arbitration over the validity of teacher perceptions, the 'yardstick' - the thinking and doing link - is used instead. However, while this might be a reasonable view, the theory/practice interface is used in Part 3 to test the impact of the interview questioning on teacher perceptions. It was a strategy born of a concern for distortions to teacher perceptions arising from the interview situation, particularly coaching. In that sense, it was used as a point of reference to test not the validity of their perceptions but rather the coherence between them. The latter was found to be the case and little evidence of distortion arising from the interview situation, including "coaching", was found. Epistemology was not used to ascertain the nature of being.

So looking more closely at the purpose of this 'pragmatic' in clarifying the role of epistemology in the Case Study, Collier (1994) says:

We may be able to make many coherent statements which may be true or false without ever being able to find out which.

If this is so, the question 'what can we know' is far from being answerable in advance of claims about what there is which it could then arbitrate. The point is rather, by keeping questions about what there is open, to put our current knowledge constantly into question; to keep us asking: Is this really true? Does it match the real world better than other theories or not? (1994, p. 83 - 84)

The argument here is that the thesis may ostensibly begin in the empirical world, the Empirical Domain, as it takes the Critical Realist position in looking at the perceptions of agents practicing PM. However, by adopting a retro-ductive strategy at the outset, the existence of an independent reality is assumed in asking the ontological question "what must (the social world of) PM be like if it were to raise standards of attainment?" To be clear, the 'pragmatism' was the epistemology chosen as the basis of the everyday practical life of professional teachers. It was assigned to test any distortion in the perceptions of teachers arising from the interviews in the Case Study in the absence of "the epistemology of everyday life and its ontological foundations" in the Critical Realist's toolbox (Collier 1994, p. 260). The epistemology was not used to validate the nature of teachers' everyday life.

The uniformity in response between teachers' first and second interviews identified in Chapter 9 needs to be explained in this context. For example, the comments they made in the second series of interviews could have arisen because of the way in which DfEE discourse about PM, arising from the nature of the roll-out of PM policy nationally, could have permeated discussions, i.e. discourse rather than practice in schools. This might well be relevant to any conclusions about the impact of PM on standards. However, given that two chronologically discrete sources of data are mutually consistent, it is reasonable to assume that claims about DfEE cultural penetration would not undermine any inference made about the reliability of the interview process. This is to say there was very little evidence, if any, in the follow-up study, which employed an open question strategy, to

suggest that the first series of interviews, which employed closed questions, produced coaching effects on interviewees' responses. On the contrary, I should add that the respondents' answers, in both sets of interviews, were consistent with their peers'/colleagues', at different points in time. Further, individual subjects' responses were also consistent over time. Their reported perceptions of what they thought they were doing were consistent with the answers they had given to a distinctly different set of questions some six to eight months earlier. The above account is an explanation of the role of epistemology in the data gathering. It remains to square the CR epistemology used with the definition of truth upon which the thesis is based, i.e. Coherence.

Epistemology was not used to validate knowledge, as already explained. This is because it would suggest that:

> …you do not realize that an empirical connection in itself cannot identify the active mechanism or mechanisms, nor does it contribute to any profounder information about the interaction of the forces behind an observed pattern. (Danermark et al 2002, p. 153)

The identification of mechanisms would have to be done by closer scrutiny, e.g. the Case Study using schools W, X, Y, and Z and linked to conceptual abstraction.

> In other words, empirical regularities are pieces in a jigsaw puzzle of searching for mechanisms, not arbiters [as previously suggested]. When a quantitative approach discloses an empirical regularity, this is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for explaining a phenomenon. (Danermark et al 2002, p. 153 - 154)

So although the increase in attainment in schools is synchronous with the national roll-out of PM policy, this is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for explaining the impact of PM on standards. Such an explanation would require the "intense and focused study" like, for example, the four carefully selected schools in the thesis in which potential mechanisms were sifted/teased out from a thematic analysis of the perceived effects of the

various dimensions of the PM policy on standards (Part 3). It is coherence between propositions about mechanisms generated by conceptual abstraction and propositions about themes of perceptions (of potential mechanisms) made by interviewees that underpins the Epistemological Realism of the Thesis, including its Case Study. However, further clarification is necessary.

Clarifying the Data Collection within the Realist Ontology and Epistemology (based on coherence) of the Thesis:

Events, Mechanisms and Structures

The purpose of this section is to clarify both the ontology and epistemology of the collection of the data in Part 3 of the thesis, and most importantly how, as a part of 'the depth realism' within a Critical Realist framework, the data relates to 'Events, Mechanisms and Structures'. The focus of the section is Fig 10.2 (p. 250), which should be considered alongside the Primary and Parallel Codes, Figs 8.6 and 8.7, above.

Fig 10.2   E1 ------------------- -------------------E2-------------------------------------- E3 **The Empirical**

[M1 --- M2 --- M3 --- M4 --- M5 --- M6 --- M7----- M8]

Te ——— Le ——— Ld   **The Real**
S1 ———— S2———— S3 ———— S4 ———— S5
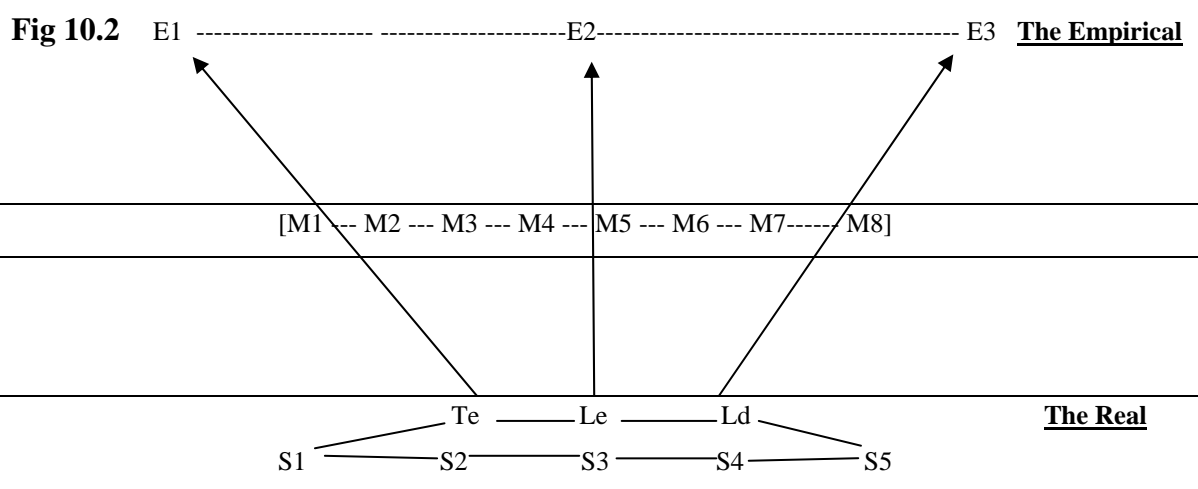
The arrows are from S1-S5 and Teacher - Learner - Leader to E1 to E3 and they are identified as M1 to M8 (see Fig 8.7). Any of the eight mechanisms (M) could in the appropriate context be generated from the internally related structures (5 Dimensions of Policy S internally related to the teacher, learner and leader roles) and give rise to any one or more of the three events (E) e.g. improved teaching, learning, or leading, or all three - perceived. See also Figs 8.6 and 8.7

E denotes events. There are three types of 'observable' events and they respectively relate to improvements in teaching, learning and leading that are perceived to have taken place variously by those teachers interviewed in the Case Study. The role of Teacher, Learner

and Leader, as part of the conceptual structure, were considered key in the Case Study to understanding the effect of PM on standards perceived as improved teaching, learning and leading.

There are nominally eight Mechanisms, denoted M1 – M8. These are derived from the eight Parallel Codes (Chapter 8, Fig 8.6 & 8.7). Arguably, these should be the same in number, as they are themes identified from the Primary Code. However, such rigour is not necessary, as it is not relevant to the aim of the present explanation.

There are five key internally related structures, S1, S2, S3, S4 and S5. The structures are the five dimensions of the PM policy. However, they are a structure of relations that will include Teacher, Learner and Leader in which lessons are observed and the mechanisms generated by this, M1---Mn, that would be and are perceived to generate a rise in standards by teachers in the Case Study or in which targets are set, baseline data is used, or CPD takes place or in which objectives are set. Each of these gave rise to a range of mechanisms. So for example, one could conceptualise that in School W, Lesson Observation within the PM abstraction, through a variety of Mechanisms that included Teachers and Leaders Reviewing Strengths and Weaknesses, Sharing Practice and the Enhancement of Planning, produced the event/effect, E1, of Improved Teaching. All of this would be coherent with the perceptions reported and summarised in Table 8.1 (respectively: W1, W2, W3, W4, W7, W8, W9, W10, W11; W5 and; W6, p.). (Note 27).

If Fig 10.2 relates to the ontology of the thesis, the Mechanisms referred to, M1-M8, relate to its epistemology. They are coherent with each other as well as with the perceptions of those interviewed. In other words, the conceptual abstraction of PM, the related Mechanisms and ultimately the themes incorporate the perceptions of the teachers in the interviews of the Case Study. In the next section, this abstraction is related to the Case Mechanisms incorporate the themes of perceptions of the teachers in the interviews of the
.

Note 27: Where a perception is coherent with a structure (e.g. PM) it is considered to share an identity with it or it can be incorporated into the structure and be conceptualised by it. At this point the perceived mechanism could be upper or lower case. It could be upper case as part of the PM concept or lower case as a part of someone's - agent's – perception.

Case Study if, and only if, they are coherent with them. In the next section, this abstraction is related to the Case Study data collection.

Relating the Abstraction to the Case Study

So far I have outlined the necessary relations between the structures, powers and mechanisms associated with the object of study, PM, as it is conceptually abstracted from the national model policy implemented in the four schools of the Case Study. In brief, I have identified the nature of the object of study and its necessary internal relations. In the closing stages of this section I aim to explain the ontological nature of the Case Study. This will entail explaining the status of teachers' comments, recorded in the interviews, as individual concepts derived from the perceptions of individual teachers in relation to an independent reality transcribed by an object of study, PM, located by conceptual abstraction.

To be more precise, the quotations recorded from interview have been identified as 'what (was) said rather than how it (was) said' and characterise the essence of people's thinking: an emphasis on what is said by people is considered real for them (Bryman 2004, p. 412). I want to show that while these themes, quotes etc. can be used to denote the essence of teachers' thinking, they are also coherent with and relate to the object of study, the conceptual abstraction. For this reason they have a special significance. This significance derives, not from the frequency with which they occurred, but from the fact that they are constitutive of the object of study, the PM policy identified by conceptual abstraction. So the aim of this closing discussion is to show how comments about 'review', 'focus on students' needs', 'identifies strengths and weaknesses', 'improves teaching' are all coherent with the constituent elements of the object of study - PM - and therefore properties of the structures within the conceptual abstraction. Such themes reflective of teacher perceptions may well be common among the interviews in the Case Study, but more importantly they can be shown, in abstraction, to be part of both symmetrically and asymmetrically internally related structures within the concept of PM in the Real Domain and coherent with the mechanisms it generates (Fig 6.2).

In the following, I consider in turn the different types of comment made by teachers in their interviews about the impact of each of the five dimensions of PM on learning, teaching and leading. The aim will be to show how such quotes about teachers' reality are coherent with the object of study. They enrich and make the conceptual abstraction of the PM policy what it is. They 'reflect' the nature of what has been abstracted as PM. Without 'focusing on student needs', 'considering strengths and weaknesses', the object of study PM, as the conceptual abstraction, would not be what it is. However, each one is a representative theme that is considered and used from the Parallel Coding in Chapter 8. These become the focus and they are coherent with and are an 'extension' of the object of study, as will be explained in the next section, just as the dimensions of PM policy were shown to be above. Each of the eight elements of the Coding is covered. However, the particular focus here is School X. It could just as well have been School W, Y or Z or themes representing the eight elements of the Coding or a selection from all four schools of the Case Study. For each of these, or a selection of them, a similar discussion would apply.

Comments on the Effect of Lesson Observation on Teaching in School X

Looking at lesson observation, the themes identified for conceptual abstraction, in the evaluation of its impact on teaching, include more effective review by considering strengths and weaknesses, sharing practices, motivating teachers, promoting self reflection and supporting teachers. These are strategies, potential mechanisms for the researcher, identified by teachers in School X through which, by their perception of the national policy, PM has helped to raise standards (Table 8.2). They generally relate to **Parallel Coding 1, 4 and 6** (Chapter 8). Lesson observation is well supported in the literature as a strategy for improving teaching practices and the work of Smith and Reading (2002) is relevant in this respect (Chapter 2). Elliott's (2009) study, a form of Action Research, and the work of others like Marton and Pang (2004) that he quotes are illustrative of this too (Chapter 3).

It would change the nature of the object of study - PM - if Lesson Observation as it is used in PM did not enable Teaching Practices to be Reviewed. Here, 'enable' operates with the full power of the generative 'cause'. As Sayer puts it, a cause 'produces', 'generates', 'creates', 'determines' or even 'enables' something (Sayer 1992, p. 104). It would be

inconceivable that, as a constituent element of PM, Lesson Observation and its implied internal relations did not enable the Review of strong and weak Teaching Practices or Teaching. The empirical findings of the Case Study are coherent with this and are in line with the work of Jennings and Lomas (2003), with respect to both teaching and management practices (Chapter 2). Similarly, the Haynes (2002) study about the improvements arising from the introduction of PM (Chapter 2) is also relevant. To be clear, Lesson Observation would generate improvement in Teaching through the Mechanism of Review. Review (upper case) as (not when) it is incorporate of the conceptual abstraction of PM.

Another mechanism that would improve teaching as a constituent element of the object of study is Sharing Practices. The work of Smith and Reading (2002) is again supportive in this respect, particularly with regard to their comments about enhancing professional dialogue (Chapter 2). This implies, although not made explicit by the interviewees in the Case Study, sharing those practices that work that lead to improvements, increases in the levels of learning, the raising of standards of attainment etc. Given the outline of conceptual abstraction above, the suggestion is that the Sharing of good Practice (about raising levels of learners) between teachers could be linked to an internal relation between Leaders, Teachers and Learners within the structured social action of PM. This refers to a social action that is structured to raise the levels at which learners learn.

Motivating teachers to improve their teaching is another theme identified that could be conceptualised as a constituent mechanism essential to PM policy, the object of study. How is the mechanism 'Teachers wanting to Raise Levels' of learning enabled by Lesson Observation within PM? Again, it would be inconceivable that PM could function to raise standards without the agreement of teachers. Similarly, it would be difficult to understand how leaders, teachers and learners could operate as such within such a structure of internal relations unless they were disposed to. Why they should be disposed to is also relevant and the discussion returns to this very important question below, once the abstraction of the themes tabulated is comprehensively justified. Once they are linked with appropriate structures, coherence is established within the PM object of study.

Self-reflection is synonymous with 'reflective practitioner'. It presupposes a responsibility on the part of the teacher to want to reflect on their practice so that they take ownership in the process of improvement. One main scale teacher typically made a comment that "it has a good effect [and] makes me reflect …. [It] keeps me focused on the things that I am doing well and not doing so well so that I can put them right" (X1, Thematic Analysis School X, Appendix B). So it, the structure, has powers to influence or affect by the 'Mechanism' 'making me Reflect' or 'keep me Focused'. Improvement here is commensurate with 'enabling' increases in the levels of learning. It touches on a similar issue, which is the disposition of teachers to: participate in raising levels of learning; relate to lesson observers in a particular way, and ultimately; engage in the structured social action of PM. It is difficult to conceptualise PM, as it has been abstracted, without it 'enabling' teachers to Reflect on their Practice, particularly in relation to Lesson Observation as an integral part of this.

The support afforded teachers, perceived to cause an increase in standards, is another theme identified in the comments of interviewees as an effect reported to arise from lesson observation. Within the structure of PM, a manager/leader would not be what they are in relation to teachers, or for that matter, learners, without the disposition to give support and/or conversely, in the case of the teacher and learner, to receive support, in raising levels of learning. So in much the same way as for the previous themes, it is considered to be coherent with the conceptual abstraction of the object of study. This is because PM would not be what it is, nor constituent structures like Lesson Observation, unless they were able to 'generate' Mechanisms, such as 'Enabled Support' for Teachers and Learners in raising Levels of Learning.

This completes a discussion of the themes as they were identified by interviewees for the impact that lesson observation has, through PM, on teaching. Learning was considered in the course of the discussion but more focus is needed on this.

Comments on the Effect of Lesson Observation on Learning in School X

There are two main themes here, or, as will be explained, two identifiable powers of the constituent elements of the object of study or two potential mechanisms for affecting standards. The two themes are: 'improved teaching resulting in improved learning' and 'evaluating and identifying learners' needs'. One interviewee's comments, in particular, are especially informative and constitutive of the object of study. She explained that better teaching improved learning because the changed teaching strategy was more appropriate to learners' needs (X2, Thematic Analysis School X, Appendix B). As previously explained, Teachers, Learners and Leaders are each internally related within the abstracted structure of PM. In this improved Teaching is understood in terms of more effective Learning, which implies meeting the Needs of Learners so 'enabling' them to move to the next Level of Learning. The conceptual abstraction is coherent with these themes, based on teacher perceptions, identified in the Case Study. They are demonstrable as mechanisms and relate to **Parallel Coding 3 and 5** (Chapter 8). Such themes are also supported by the literature. McCrone et al (2009, p. 58), in their evaluation of Ofsted Section 5 Inspections, found that the impact of lesson observation on assessment was significant and positive and therefore also supportive of some of the findings in this present study.

The precursor of 'better teaching' would be evaluating and identifying the needs of learners as learners. For within this framework of the object of study, PM, in order for learners to move to the next level, it would be necessary, in the logical and philosophical sense of the word, to form a judgement about what needs learners had in order to move them to the next level. PM would not be the same object of study if the potential for better, more appropriate, teaching to arise from the Evaluation and Identification of Learners' Needs, was not an essential and necessary part of the structure. It is therefore viewed as another Mechanism, coherent with a potential mechanism derived from the thematic analysis that would generate a rise in standards.

Comments on the Effect of Lesson Observation on Leading

A distinctive effect of lesson observation on leading, reported by interviewees, was that it helps manage monitoring and evaluation and set expectations at an appropriate level (X8,

Table 8.2). These themes, based on teachers' perceptions, are identifiable as potential mechanisms and relate to **Parallel Coding 8** (Chapter 8), which is about the positive effects of PM on leadership. Monitoring and Evaluating Performance is entailed by the role of Leader in relation to the Teacher/Appraisee and is an expression of the internal relationship between them. The use of upper case here denotes an internal relationship between Teacher and Leader within the structure of PM. Setting Expectations is also endemic to the Leader/Teacher internal relationship. If there were no expectations about what standards should be achieved, then improvement would not be 'enabled': the primary function of the PM structure would be lost. In summary, the object of study would not be the same, as it would be differently constituted. M/E is therefore understood as a mechanism for raising standards. There is additional empirical evidence to support this conclusion. Ofsted inspections, with regard to lesson observation, are arguably a form of monitoring and evaluation. In this context, the McCrone (2009, p. 58) study has also identified lesson observation as appropriate and important to improvement.

Comments on the Effect of Target Setting on Teaching, Learning and Leading

There is just the one theme that needs to be discussed in the context of the effect of target setting on teaching, mainly because the theme is potentially deceptive and the effect is arguably not what it seems. This is, target setting 'influences' how teaching is carried out and what is taught (X2, X3, X4, and X5). In relation to the object of study, Target Setting is incorporated within the structure of PM policy. Targets relate to the levels of learning to which pupils need to aspire. The levels set would affect both teaching strategy and what is taught. The Levels set would be agreed between Leader and Teacher, within the PM structure, in the first instance, and between Teacher and Learner subsequently. To recap, there is an internal relationship between the role of Leader, Teacher and Learner. Target Setting is inextricably bound up with the internal relationships between these roles. It is a matter of natural necessity that it, Target Setting within the object of study PM, has the power to affect what and how Teachers Teach as, of necessity, this affects what Level and therefore how Pupils Learn, rather like the Landlord having the power to Charge Rent. More simply, Target Setting requires agreeing the Level of Learning, which requires that Teaching be at and about that Level of Learning. Target setting was reported to improve

teaching through a potential mechanism of changing the 'what' and 'how' of it. This was identified as planning and was perceived to more explicitly generate improvements in learning than teaching. So planning would be the potential mechanism incorporated within the structure of PM as Planning. None of this is to deny the complex nature of target setting. It is to explain some of its effects, as reported in this study, that are coherent with the PM structure of internal social relations.

The effect of planning within PM is one of the perceptions made by interviewees that has not previously been considered commensurate with the conceptually abstracted object of study. In other words, planning is a potential mechanism emanating from within the object of study PM that would enable, in the sense used by Sayer (1995), pupil progress. It would not make sense to consider PM as a management structure unless it entailed Planning for improvement. Objective Setting that arises out of PM Review necessarily entails Planning: for example, prioritising areas for improvement and planning to implement agreed strategies to bring this about. Planning is entailed by all aspects of the PM abstraction that is enabled by the constitutive relationship between Leader and Teacher, Teacher and Learner and Leader and Learner. It as a mechanism is coherent with **Parallel Coding 2** (Chapter 8) and is therefore considered to be another mechanism that has its source within the conceptual abstraction. There is additional evidence to support this too. The DCSF (2008, p. 152) have confirmed enhanced pupil progress through more rigorous target setting both at individual school and pupil level. In other words, a study of target setting in isolation as an empirical study is claimed to influence pupil progress, so it would be reasonable to expect a similar outcome when target setting is incorporated in PM. In fact, this is supported by the PM literature (Chapter 2). Jennings and Lomas (2003) argue that PM enhances target setting as well as review procedures. The claim here is that Target Setting affects Pupil Progress generatively through a Planning mechanism. This generates explicitly two perceived events: improved learning and enhanced leadership.

There is one theme previously mentioned to be relevant to the present discussion but not explained and that is motivation. This theme is identified by interviewees in saying that learners are motivated to improve by target setting (X3, Table 8.2). 'Motivate' here refers

to the fact that target setting influences teachers by giving them a reason to change their professional practice. Price Waterhouse Coopers (DCSF, 2008), in their evaluation of a DCSF pilot on 'Making Good Progress', found that when target setting is incorporated with a high profile approach to assessment for learning, it had a significant positive impact on learning (DCSF 2008, p. 152). The theme, **Parallel Coding 6** (Chapter 8), is a potential mechanism. It arises out of learners being given more purpose in having a target to aim for. As previously explained, Target Setting is inextricably bound up with the Leader, Teacher and Learner internal relationship within the PM structure. Target Setting is internally related to this structure that generates enhanced Purpose in Learners. This is coherent with the perception that target setting affects both learning and leadership through the additional purpose it gives. However, this is not to conflate agency and structure, as Giddens (1984) does. Quite the opposite, it is not to forget the ontological independence of both agency and structure (Bhaskar 1998). PM is being studied as a structure of social action within a Critical Realist framework.

Comments on the Effect of the Use of Baseline Data on Teaching, Learning and Leading

Some of the themes based on the quotations of interviewees and how they are related to the dimensions of PM have already been discussed above. At least this is the case for those themes that represent potential mechanisms for an increase in standards generated by the use of Data within the PM structure.

In the case of 'the effect of the use of Baseline Data (BD) on Leading within the PM structure, many themes, and the potential mechanisms they represent, have already been considered above and the underlying logic already explained for them. In the case of BD, it "assists the formation of teaching groups and the corresponding allocation of staffing" (X4) and "leadership improved through the use of BD because it helped monitoring enable interventions" (X10). These have not previously been considered as potential causal mechanisms and so therefore the logic of their internal relations within the PM structure has yet to be explained.

In that the use of BD "assists the formation of teaching groups and the corresponding allocation of staffing" (X4) it helps group learners with similar needs and matches them up with appropriate staffing expertise. This, in turn, can be shown to be asymmetrically and internally related to meeting learners' needs as learners (Danermark et al 2002). The last element is constitutive of the role of Teacher, as well as Leader, within the structure of PM, the object of study. If this were not constitutive of the Leader-Role-in-PM, then the object of study, including Leader, Teacher and Learner, would be differently constituted to the one outlined above: it would no longer be the same object of study. So therefore, "Assists-the-Formation-of-Teaching-Groups…." would be another generative causal Mechanism emanating from within the conceptual abstraction. Similarly, the use of Data in enhancing-Monitoring-and-Evaluation could be shown to be another Mechanism. This would be through the way in which Leader is internally related to Teacher and Teaching through the Leader's m/e role. These mechanisms are coherent with the themes within **the Parallel Coding 2 and 4.**

There are findings within this study that connect the structure of PM via the mechanism of using baseline data to events that relate to an increase in standards. The corroborative literature on this is quite sparse. However, Kirkup et al (2005, p. 210), working for NFER, have found that the use of data has had a positive impact on teaching and learning in primary, secondary and special schools. They also noted that teaching and learning improved via enhanced leadership processes like, for example, more effective allocation of resources and staff as well as more effective PM (2005, p. 210).

Comments on the Effect of CPD on Teaching, Learning and Leading

There is just the one theme that needs to be discussed in the context of the effect of CPD on Teaching. Many of the themes have already been considered above and the underlying logic already explained for them and how they are commensurate with and constitutive of the power of *CPD*, which is ontologically linked to the internally related structure of PM (Note 28). In the case of teaching, CPD "has a positive impact on teaching [to raise standards] when it is school focused": such a theme has not previously been considered to

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Note 28: Italicized and emboldened *CPD* is used to refer to CPD as a constitutive structure of PM in the Real Domain.

be a constitutive power of a structure of PM. However, the statement is asymmetrically (Danermark et al 2002) related to developing teaching skills to meet learners' learning needs (at School X). At the risk of unnecessary repetition, the element meeting learners' needs as learners is constitutive of the Teacher-Role-in-PM and if it were not, the conceptual abstraction i.e. the resulting PM structure would no longer be the same or equivalent object of study.

All of the themes, or potential mechanisms, arising from the effect of CPD on learning have been considered above to be generated by other dimensions of PM. Conversely, the related mechanisms have been identified, albeit as powers of other constitutive structures within the PM abstraction. So, further explanation is considered unnecessary in establishing potential internal relations between teachers, learners and CPD programmes. However, there are some themes, and related potential mechanisms, that require further clarification. For example, *CPD* is deemed to 'enable' (because of its internal relation with the role of school-leader-in-PM) 'critical self review' (X6). Put very simply, the improvement of teachers to improve learners necessarily requires self-review. Teachers, in the context of the PM abstraction, carry out the Self-Review for that very reason. It is review to change to improve. 'Enabling' Self-Review is also constitutive of the role of school Leader within the PM abstracted structure. 'Critical' in this context would be redundant. *CPD* as such is internally related to the role of school Leader within PM to affect/ 'enable' Self-Review. The relationship is 'asymmetrical'. *CPD* and the role of Leader within PM both entail/require Self Review, but not vice versa (Danermark et al 2002). It is similar in that while PM necessarily requires Self Review, this could take place outside of the PM context. The point is that the empirical identification of CPD affecting leadership by the mechanism of 'facilitating self review' can thus be seen to be coherent with the conceptual abstraction of PM outlined at the beginning of this chapter. Self-Review, including (critical) self-review, is a power of a constitutive structure (*CPD*) of the PM abstraction. Facilitating or enabling Self-Review is therefore identified as a Mechanism by which PM is able to raise standards within the Critical Realist framework. The object of study, PM, is constituted by the *CPD* structure, which has the power to generate Self-Review, and this (structure) is internally related to others, e.g. Lesson Observation and Objective Setting. This power is a

property of the constitutive structure *CPD*. As a power, it can be understood as a Mechanism (for raising standards) within the Real Domain of PM. In generating an event, a mechanism links the real structure of the object of study with the Empirical Domain, in which the event occurs. Tyldsley's (2004, p. 57) study on 'the Effectiveness of a Literacy Training Course' is relevant to a literature on the impact of CPD on standards both of teaching and learning and corroborates some of the data gathered in this study. It is particularly important because it empirically relates CPD to increases in (KS2) attainment data. The point is that the coherence between the empirical reports of the Case Study and the generative effect of *CPD* on attainment within the structure of the conceptual abstraction are made all the more real at one level and reasonable at another (Note 29).

Another theme that requires further explanation, related to the impact of CPD on leadership, is the 'dialogue for improvement'. Once again the role of Leader entails meeting with the Teacher in the context of *CPD*. It is through both *CPD* and the school Leader that a 'Dialogue for Improvement' is 'enabled'. This internal relationship is similar to that of the landlord and tenant internal relationship, which gives power to the landlord to charge rent. The point is that the empirical identification of CPD affecting leadership through a 'dialogue of improvement' can be seen to be coherent with the structures of the conceptual abstraction of PM outlined above. The 'Dialogue of Improvement' is the potential or power of a constitutive structure of the PM abstraction, namely *CPD*. The object of study - PM - is constituted by internal relations that enable a 'Dialogue of Improvement'. It is inconceivable that there could be PM, as defined by the national policy, without the power to generate a 'Dialogue for Improvement'. In addition, this is similar to the Mechanism 'Review for Improvement' and as such relates to **Parallel Coding 1** (Chapter 8). Propositions about the perceptions of interviewees within a theme are coherent with propositions about the Mechanism that *CPD* has the power to generate that are coherent with propositions about the effect- Increased Standards - within the conceptual abstraction.

The 'synchronization of career development with improvement' is another variation of the 'more effective planning' theme, 'enabled' by the impact of CPD on the school leadership.

Note 29: At the risk of labouring the point, all of the themes incorporated as potential Mechanisms within the abstracted structure of PM are internally related across the structure. To be more precise once conceptualised they should be written in upper case e.g. Self Review.

This will need to be properly explained and an account given of why it is commensurate with the PM structure. The *CPD* structure is internally related to the Leader role within PM so that 'Development with Improvement' is 'enabled' in the Teacher role which is internally related to the Learner role, the level at which Learners Learn and which is synonymous with the Standard at which they Learn. Development can be professional, career or personal: all are accommodated by the PM structure in the way they impinge upon the role of the Teacher within this structure. Each is internally related to both the role of school Leader and *CPD* within the PM structure. At the empirical level, within the Empirical Domain, it is 'perceived' as and coherent with, the theme career development synchronizing with professional improvement. This relates to perceptions, potential mechanisms, within the **Parallel Coding 8** (Chapter 8). 'Synchronizing individual development with school improvement' is another theme identified within the Empirical Domain, through the interview process, that is coherent with a Mechanism originating from within the conceptual abstraction in the Real Domain. There are few examples where CPD has been demonstrated to enhance the leadership explicitly. However, the introduction of the standards protocol for Teachers and Subject Leaders, the NPQH and the Scottish Qualification for Headship suggest that the role of the leader could be enhanced by CPD (Munn 2008, p. 61; Furlong 2008, p. 727).

All of this adds to the overall impression that CPD, within PM policy, has a positive impact on teaching, learning and leadership practices. Such a conclusion is also well documented (Chapter 2). Smith and Reading (2002) and Fitzgerald (2003) both comment on the enhanced effect of CPD through PM (Chapter 2). Others before them in the age of resistance to appraisal, the 1980s and 1990s, discussed at length earlier (Chapter 2), have commented on the mutually beneficial effects of synchronising appraisal with CPD (Darling and Hammond 1983; Powney 1991; McMahon 1992).

Comments on the Effect of Objective Setting on Teaching, Learning and Leading
There are two themes that need to be discussed in the context of the effect of objective setting on teaching that have not previously been discussed. The first of these is objective setting affects teaching by 'enabling' "a rise in achievement through a focus on student

groups" (X8). A statutory requirement at the time of the Case Study was to set at least one objective to enhance pupil progress. The pupil progress objective was, in the case of the individual teacher, directed at a teaching group. The structure of Objective Setting is such that it is internally related to the role of the Teacher within PM. Objective setting entails, and is generatively linked to, Pupil Progress and the Progress of Teaching Groups; the role of the Teacher within the PM abstraction entails progressing groups of students (teaching groups) in their Learning. Objective Setting as Pupil Progress generatively would, and apparently does, affect a rise in achievement through a Focus on Student Groups. At the empirical level, the Empirical Domain, this is also a perception made by interviewees. The point being made is that the perception, potential mechanism, is coherent with the object of study, PM the conceptual abstraction.

The following explains why the process of objective setting improves teaching by making it "more school focused rather than individual" (X11). Objective Setting entails reference to the analysis of whole school Student Data, Targets Set based on these as a reference point, Lesson Observation linked to whole school issues and CPD linked to the School Improvement Plan. Correspondingly, the role of the Teacher, within the PM abstraction, entails improving the level of Learning of their students by reference to Learning Levels nationally and within the school, Setting Targets accordingly, using the feedback from Lesson Observations by reference to whole school and general (national) good practice and undergoing **CPD** in the context of the School Improvement Plan to support the Objective Set (X11). In the Real Domain, the structure of Objective Setting is by its nature internally related to the role of the Teacher, which, within the structure of PM, is internally related to whole School Needs rather than individual and personal ones. Similarly, and coherent with this, at the empirical level, the Empirical Domain, the interviewee perceived that objective setting improved teaching by increasing the focus on whole school needs rather than individual ones. This theme can be incorporated within, and is commensurate with, the object of study, PM, in the Domain of the Real outlined above, following conceptual abstraction. In short, "teaching becomes more whole school focused" (X11) is a theme that can be incorporated as a Mechanism by which standards are raised within the conceptual abstraction. It is coherent with what teachers perceive.

Objective setting is considered to have an interesting effect on learning. It is reported to improve learning because it helps to "develop teachers to engage learners more effectively and so raise levels of learning" (X7). The internal relationship between the role of Teacher and Learner as well as levels of Learning has already been explained. Teaching, as it is abstracted within PM, also entails engaging Learners in their Learning. This is, arguably, what teachers are expected to do generally, regardless of PM. However, within the PM abstraction, there is a necessary internal relationship. This pertains to giving Learners more control over their Learning rather than deleting the role of the teacher. The point is that this theme is commensurate, as well as coherent, with the conceptual abstraction of PM as a potential mechanism and its link with increased standards. I should also add that this particular theme was common to a number of interviewees at various times and is conveniently subsumed by the **Parallel Coding 7** (Chapter 8). To be clear, "Engaging Learners (more effectively)" (X7) would be another Mechanism emanating from within the conceptual abstraction coherent with interviewee perceptions.

A theme underlining one of the comments of a middle leader points to a perception that objective setting impacts on the role of the leader in that it "gives [an enhanced] sense of purpose" (X9). Such an effect of a structure/dimension within the PM abstraction has not previously been discussed. A sense of purpose is entailed by both the nature of the Objective Setting structure and the role of school Leader within the PM abstraction. The effect of the Objective Setting structure on Leadership could be generated through a Mechanism of Purposeful Action that would be internally related to both of these structures (the role of the leader and the Objective Setting structure). At the risk of sounding repetitive, the interviewee's perception, at the empirical level, that objective setting 'gives' the role of leader 'a sense of purpose' could be incorporated into the 'Real Domain' of the conceptually abstracted structure of PM. The theme related to this perception is also conveniently subsumed by the **Parallel Coding 8** (Chapter 8) and so therefore 'enhancing the sense of purpose' (X9) is highlighted as another Mechanism within the conceptual abstraction coherent with interviewee perceptions. There are a number of studies in the literature relevant to giving '(a sense of) Purpose' in the context of objective setting and/or

appraisal: one that is of particular significance in this respect is that of Reddekopp (2007). She comments that appraisal can be powerful in leading a school, for instance, driving it toward a "common mission", namely student success (Reddekopp 2007, p. 40).

All of the thematic summaries from all of the interviews carried out in the Case Study can be incorporated into, or shown to be coherent with, the PM abstraction in this way. To recap, the abstraction is based upon the national policy for PM as it is outlined in the 'Model Policy' document (DfEE 2000b). The policy is defined as a structure for social action. The themes 'post incorporation' become part of the network of internal relations within the concept, the social structure of PM. However, the themes and the teacher perceptions of which they are composed were only identified as mechanisms (M) because they are coherent with the structures of the object of study. This is an epistemology based on a coherence definition of truth. Interviewees answered the question what impact, if, any the various dimensions of PM had on standards. The reported themes therefore were ostensibly perceived to be the means (or potential mechanisms) by which the five dimensions of PM affected standards. The Parallel Coding(s) represent (all) of these themes. Each of these eight Codes is not only commensurate with the concept that explains how PM raises standards, they can also be incorporated into the abstraction (see p. 228). In this sense, they represent many of the causal mechanisms by which PM would and arguably does, so it would appear in certain circumstances, impact upon standards.

It is appropriate to summarise the arguments so far to secure a platform for further discussion later. From the above, one very important point needs to be made. All of the perceptions reported in the Case Study, as circumscribed by the Parallel Coding, are coherent with one or other of the causal mechanisms within the conceptual abstraction articulated so far within this chapter. They are also coherent with the theme and perceptions in the second series of interviews (Chapter 9, p. 238) and by implication the conceptual abstraction. In addition, these findings resonate well with an extensive appraisal and PM literature above (Chapter 2). For example, while Bollington and Hopkins (1989) do not explain the impact of appraisal on standards, they do argue for the benefits of integrating appraisal with school-based review and other practices too (Hopkins 1991)

(Chapter 2). Most importantly, when such processes are inclusively rolled out in the schools nationally as an integral part of the policy for PM the potential effect would be cumulative. In this context, national standards would, arguably, be expected to rise significantly.

Nevertheless, there is much criticism, particularly among writers such as Cutler and Wayne, about PM constraining and controlling the professional practices of teachers, as well as a particularly extensive critique from what could be referred to as the Performativity culture of schools. These criticisms are variously about stifling creativity of both teachers and students and subsequently learning (Gleeson and Husbands 2003; Ball 2004; Katsuno 2008 etc). Such criticisms are discarded on the basis that theirs would not be relevant to the working definition of achievement or attainment being considered and subsequently to the research question posed. However, there are more closely related issues that need to be addressed.

In the course of the thematic analysis in Part 3, a number of 'interesting' 'anomalous' patterns were noted in the Empirical Domain. For instance, leader respondents' comments were generally whole school oriented or focused, whereas teacher respondents' comments were more oriented to their individual professional practice. This raises the question are these just caveats and nuances to thematic analysis. They might not relate to any constituent element of the conceptual abstraction but they are not considered to be dissonant or contradictory. Alternatively, if they are contradictory, is this where the conceptual abstraction of PM reaches its limit of adequacy?

Caveats and Nuances or Potential Limits to the Conceptual Abstraction of PM
The purpose of this study in analysing the effect of PM on standards in schools within a Critical Realist framework is to tease out the mechanisms generated by PM that would, coherent with the teacher perspective, cause this increase in standards. This is not to forget the complex context in which the national PM policy was implemented by statute and successfully embedded, including the interference from the numerous improvement strategies of the Standards Framework (as explained in Chapter 4). To recap, the aim, in

the light of the apparent rise in standards in schools that took place following the introduction of PM in 2000, is to identify potential causal mechanisms that relate to this increase. However, there are a number of patterns and/or trends in the Case Study data that are considered to challenge or undermine this potential link. The following is an attempt to review these trends in the context of the concept of PM that has been developed in the preceding sections in this chapter. The potential range of trends in the themes identified is beyond the scope of this discussion. In the present circumstances, the intention is to review those that are considered to be both the most challenging and relevant. There are some eight trends, two of which are combined, that I would like to consider.

In Chapter 7 of the thesis, it was noted that the thematic analysis revealed a substantial emphasis on effects on learning perceived by interviewees from School Z in comparison to the three remaining schools, W, X and Y. The suggestion is that the teachers at this school attached a higher priority to learners' needs. Further, it might be significant that School Z was characterised as high VA and high PM (Communication 1). In high VA schools, pupils are understood to make more progress in their learning: this is how Ofsted defines VA (Frameworks 1998, 2005, 2009). This begs the question of whether this is because it is a school where PM was more strongly related to whole school targets in comparison with two of the other schools. School W also has high PM but low VA. So, on the face of it, there was no apparent connection between high or low PM and progress in learning (VA as it is defined here) as far as the Case Study is concerned. The implication is there was no apparent link between the type of PM policy and learning (Communication 2). This is consistent with the perceptions reported by some forty-four teachers in the study. These relate to the very substantial impact that PM was perceived to have on learning and how, so it was reported, this was brought about. PM was a well-reported potential mechanism for raising standards in these schools. So to be clear, while there was no apparent connection between high and low PM and VA (which could be deemed equivalent to pupil progress), it did not follow that there was no connection between PM generally and pupil progress. For example, Ofsted (2006) have reported that "the best results occurred where …. PM, school self review and development and CPD" were integrated "into a coherent planning cycle" (Ofsted, 2006, p4). The suggestion is that a coordinated approach to CPD was more

important. Further, in School W alone there were some 50/55 positive responses about the impact of PM, through the five policy dimensions, on learning, i.e. pupil progress. To conclude, there is substantial coherence between the PM concept derived above and the teacher perceptions reported in the Case Study, as a result of which, causal mechanisms were identified linking the various dimensions of PM with learning.

There appeared to be a link between the perceptions of interviewees and their organisational role and this is apparently something that the PM conceptual abstraction does not anticipate (Communication 3). There are a number of studies, commensurate with this finding, that note the development of teachers' views according to their role as a teacher - for example Lortie (1975) and more recently Meirink et al (2009) - and this could be an issue for the present study. However, the development of the concepts of identity and internal reciprocal relations are based upon the interdependence between roles so that teacher, leader and learner are defined in terms of each other. Thus, for example, Teacher would be concerned with and needs to prioritise self-development and review, whereas Leader is concerned with and needs to prioritise other/all development and review. So, whereas teacher W1 talks about the individual being "helped to review strengths and weaknesses" (W1), a leader talks about "sharing practices and reviewing new strategies" (W10). There would be no Lead teacher if there were no teachers to lead. There would be no organisational leader if there were not individual needs in the organisation to address or support. So in terms of the PM conceptual abstraction, Teacher-specific and Leader-specific roles are anticipated and understood in terms of each other. The link between organisational role and perceptions held is explainable in terms of the power of the Leader role to prioritise social action within the Organisation/School. It is explicable within the conceptual abstraction (p. 251, Fig 10.2). The issue is more of a caveat, rather than fundamental, to the aim of the thesis.

In school Z, planning was a dominant mechanism for PM affecting standards. It was considered a significant mechanism in that the effect of the use of data analysis on learning was, according to the trend in the vast majority of perceptions, the result of planning pupil progress (Communication 4). It becomes all the more interesting when considered in the

context of this particular school having high value added, implying that pupils made more progress in their learning at this school compared with schools nationally. The relative value quoted at the time was substantially in excess of 1000, the average (Ofsted 2004). This would square with the perceptions reported by teachers in interview. The reported trend of planning is in line with the role of Learner, Teacher and Leader within the conceptual abstraction from the PM national policy: for instance, 'Planning Learning' is synonymous with 'Planning Progress through the Levels of Learning'. Planning is not a particular focus in the other high VA school and there might be something about the organisational context of high VA - high PM schools (in contrast to high VA - low PM ones) that generates a culture of planning, particularly of pupil progress. Looking at Zoul's (2010) "Building School Culture One Week at a Time", this is not an unreasonable suggestion. Further, it would be inappropriate to suggest that there is a trend or pattern developing based on a sample of one. In one sense, the information is at the limit of the study. It does little in helping to tease out the mechanisms generating increases in standards, which is the main aim of the thesis. In this context the matter is arguably a caveat.

In Schools X and Y, the impact of review, monitoring and evaluation were less explicit as themes identified in the analysis than in Schools W and Z, where it had more of a focus (Communication 5). This could be because high PM is linked to more explicit systems/structures of monitoring and evaluation. The issue is to what extent can this discrepancy be explained by the PM abstraction? Is there something about the low PM Schools that can be explained in this way? In high PM schools, the focus is on school targets when teacher and leader objectives are set. In other words, all pupil progress would be evaluated in relation to this, very clearly defined point of reference. Monitoring and evaluation would therefore have more focus. There would be and was a clearer expectation for the monitoring and evaluation strategies in Schools W and Z. The leaders in all four schools would have the power to monitor and evaluate, but in Schools W and Z, this would have an aim dissimilar to Schools X and Y and therefore the mechanism for raising standards would not operate in the same way at these schools.

While all four schools have an improvement trajectory similar to an average national trend, the trajectory for School Z is more pronounced. An Experimentalist would be inclined to argue that this might arise from a combination of high PM and high VA and set up an analysis of variance accordingly. However, it is suggested that this discrepancy is probably more to do with organisational factors within these schools beside PM. For example, the number of vocational qualifications rose nationally from 15,000 to 50,000 from 2004 to 2005 (DfE 2010). School Z introduced vocational qualifications in 2002. This would go some way towards explaining the relatively enhanced rising standards and also the value added by this school. An anomaly like this highlights a weakness in the Experimentalist's approach to explanation. For the Critical Realist, trends are no more than a prompt for further investigation. Events within the Critical Realist framework are explained by their underlying mechanisms and related structure (Danermark et al 2002, p. 55).

"Learning was perceived to improve predominantly through improved teaching" (Communication 6). Teachers generally perceived that the dominant influence that PM had on learning was through improved teaching. That they stated this as a matter of fact is not an issue. There are many examples in the literature research connecting effective teaching with learning. Most recently, Zepke and Leach (2010) reviewed the strategies for improving engagement. Postholm (2010) has looked at the effects of self-regulation on learning and teaching. Angle and Mosely (2009) have established a statistically significant connection between teacher expectations and learning outcomes. Finally, by way of emphasising the extent to which such a view is embedded in the literature, as early as the beginning of the last decade Kember and Gow (1993) considered "conceptions of teaching and their relationship to student learning" (Kember and Gow 1993, p. 20). So, it is very relevant to ask how the conceptual abstraction from the national policy for PM could accommodate or explain this? Why, within the conceptual abstraction, does improved Teaching entail improved Learning? As already explained, Teaching within the PM abstraction entails progressing through the various National Curriculum levels of learning. There is a reciprocal internal relationship between them. They share a conceptual identity with one another and with Leading, within the PM abstraction. The nature of Teaching is such that the Teacher has the power to change Learning, to raise Levels of Learning to new

and higher Levels. There are various potential mechanisms by which this could have been brought about and one common perception reported by interviewees was the "improved teaching that resulted from improved planning which synchronised learning objectives with learner needs" (X1, Appendix B). The point here is that within the conceptual abstraction, the Teacher has the power to influence the Learner through this very mechanism. Perceptions within the Empirical Domain are coherent with Mechanisms from within the Real Domain, at least for the Critical Realism in this study.

There appears to be an underlying emphasis on the use of learning strategies to raise standards through the use of baseline data as part of PM in higher VA schools (Communication 7). This emphasis is consistent with the concept of VA, which is a measure of student progress relative to their attainment on entry to and leaving the school. The focus on learning or motivational strategies to raise attainment through the use of baseline data relates to two potential mechanisms consistent with the PM abstraction for raising attainment. Learning strategies refer to processes like planning lessons to target individual learning needs, so maximising their engagement in the learning process. This would also motivate pupils by making learning more relevant. The difference is that motivation, the way it was used by interviewees, implied a lower level of engagement in that teachers needed to (influence) "motivate students to learn" (Y6). All of this is commensurate with the higher VA Schools operating at a higher level of progress in learning, which is what is indicated by the VA measure. Topping and Saunders (2000) conclude that "the volume of reading done and success in reading comprehension have a positive impact on teacher effectiveness in terms of value added" (Topping and Saunders 2000, p. 328). Such findings are consistent with the argument here about higher-level learners being better engaged and learning more. This is not intended to be rigorous or quantitative: the aim is to demonstrate that the PM conceptual abstraction is able to accommodate and account for nuances like the variation in emphasis on the use of learning strategies. This variation should not be attributed to PM, but rather to the mechanism by which PM operates through different agencies, for example. Agency here refers to those occupying the Leader, Teacher and Learner roles. This is not to ignore varying community and social contexts, including economic ones. In short, the impact of PM will affect

standards, including VA, differently according to the mechanism used by agents like teachers and leaders that, in turn, could be influenced by context. Benton et al (2003) through the NFER would also advise caution in drawing conclusions from Value Added Data, as levels of significance and overlapping outcomes would tend to undermine many conclusions drawn (2003).

The converse of there being a focus on strategies to improve learning in high VA schools is the focus on teaching and motivating pupils in low VA schools (Communication 8). As already suggested, in high VA schools, pupils appear to be more fully engaged in their learning, which is why, to develop this (learning) further, it is a matter of natural necessity that the focus must be on strategies that would raise their levels of learning. In the lower VA schools, it is suggested that there might be greater degrees of disengagement and disaffection: this could be why teachers reported more focus on teaching to engage and/or motivate, so that when interviewees refer to what the focus has been regarding improvement, they turned to teaching strategies in the context of PM that are more about engagement in the learning. In this context, Falout et al (2009) have demonstrated that "beginning, less proficient learners …. were least likely to control their effective states to cope with demotivating experiences…degrade classroom group dynamics…. and [cause] long term and widespread negative learning outcomes" (Falout et al 2009, p. 403). Looking across the tables for the low and high VA schools, there is more talk about teaching strategies as the potential mechanisms by which PM brought about improvements in the former (Tables 8.1-8.4).

Whole school appraisal strategies or high PM policies generated improvement through the development of teaching strategies more directly, so that appraisal in the high PM school is less about affecting motivation than it is in low PM Schools (Communication 9). To be clear, PM was perceived to affect standards positively in both types of school. In the high PM schools, the perceived dominant improvement strategy arising from the objective setting process was through the development of approaches to teaching, whereas in low PM schools, staff were encouraged or motivated by the objective setting process. This could be for any number of reasons. However, assuming that enhanced motivational levels were

generated by the PM structure within the school, in a low PM School the focus would be more on individual CPD in the context of the school's development plan. In the high PM schools, the focus, particularly in the case of the pupil progress objective, was directly linked to the school's target agreed with the LA some twelve months earlier. Arguably there could have been greater ownership of the objectives initially, at least, in the low PM Schools. This would explain why teachers felt more encouraged at these schools and also why there might have been a more businesslike approach to 'immediately' identifying teaching strategies to meet or cope with school targets, which perhaps they felt more of an obligation to meet at the high PM schools. This raises the question of why the low PM schools chose to focus on CPD in the context of the SDP in the first place, rather than build priorities around PMRs. There is a substantial literature, discussed at length in Chapter 2, about the cultural disposition of the teaching force to a particular type of appraisal scheme, namely one focussed on professional development, historically linked to the incorporation of the public sector and the development of the NPM. More recently such issues have been revisited by Willmott (2002) in his account of the 'new managerialism' (Willmott 2002). The initial disposition of teachers and leaders, interviewed towards objective setting, whether it was the challenge of school targets or the encouragement derived from a CPD-focused PM structure, was emphatically positive about the effect they perceived PM policy to have on rising standards of attainment (Fig 6.1, Chapter 6). Developing strategies of teaching and mobilising (motivating) teachers to meet objectives are both potential mechanisms by which standards of attainment could be raised, as previously explained, through the PM abstraction. So, to conclude, the variation in the impact of high or low PM on standards is another caveat rather than a limit to the application of the conceptual abstraction of PM.

The conceptual abstraction of PM policy was made possible by a retro-ductive research strategy through the transcendental question 'what would a PM policy look like if it were to raise standards?' The question remains would similar conclusions have been drawn through an inductive, deductive or abductive approach? Has the Case Study, within the Critical Realist framework, suggested anything that an Experimentalist or Constructivist

approach would not have? Is there anything in this study beyond Experimentalism and Constructivism?

Beyond Experimentalism and Constructivism:

Experimentalism

As an approach, Experimentalism would be in one way too simple and yet, in another, too complex for the present study of PM. It would be too simple in that it omits the issue that PM policy has worked "through their subjects' liabilities" (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 36). Teachers have variously engaged, albeit positively, with PM, making it work for a range of different reasons and, in reality (Real and Empirical Domains), through a plethora of different mechanisms. It would be beyond the remit of the Experimentalist to seek out policy subjects' explanations of why they engage with PM, as it was necessary to do in Chapter 9, for example.

On the other hand, Experimentalism would be too complex a strategy in that it seeks to generate opportunities to remove variable influences: "the social conditions favourable to [the] success" (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 52) of a policy with its incessant drive to locate 'dependent' or confounding variables, as some Critical Realists refer to them. Such a drive "represents an endeavour to cancel out difference" (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 52). It would take the categories of PM and Value Added, and aim to normalise one against the other in a simple input/output quasi-experimental approach. In an attempt to locate confounding variables, it would need to flatten out subject perceptions and completely miss the mechanism(s) behind the workings of PM policy. In a complex quasi-experimental approach based on evidence and solely on input/output, the evidence "cannot speak for itself" (Pawson and Tilley 2003, p. 53) a generative link could not be identified. Therefore, "conjunctions are never constant" (p. 53) and they would be, with great difficulty, for the implementation of a multi-dimensional policy like that of PM.

In Chapter 6, for instance, there is some apparent co-variation between School Y (low PM - low VA) and School Z (high PM - high VA). The attainment gradient of the latter over the five years following the introduction of PM, is far higher than that of the former. This

could tempt the oversimplified conclusion that it is the PM policy, or, following a more complex analysis of covariance in 'drilling' down beyond surface effects, it might locate other more significant factors like, for example, exam policy. However, even assuming that the analysis bottomed out, any residual pattern would also need to be explained. All of this could be substantially simplified through a double rather than a single hermeneutic, i.e. by accessing agents' perceptions.

Further, there would be the temptation to obfuscate the fundamental difference and independence between VA and Attainment. VA implies pupil progress from baseline on entry to the school, whereas attainment implies the standard reached or level of learning reached at the end of a stage. High VA can be linked to high Attainment (Ofsted 2005 and 2009). However, the connection can vary, especially at the higher and lower attainment ends. In fact, schools are advised to vary rates of progress depending upon the level of attainment of particular pupils. In this context, there are a number of contingencies. High attaining schools can have low VA. Low attaining schools can have high VA. Potentially high VA schools can have low VA because of early entry for external assessments. Potentially, high VA or low VA schools can have respectively low and high VA depending upon exam entry policy. Pupil progress can also vary according to individual and school contexts. For this reason, Ofsted developed the concept of contextual value added CVA (Ofsted 2005). Such variations would require quite a complicated analysis of variance, all designed to locate dependent variables, and the end product could still be impractical (Chapter 11). All that was required in the present study was to analyse and evaluate individual and subjective interpretations through a simple conceptual abstraction.

Finally, explanation is not synonymous with trends and patterns, as it would be for a quasi-experimental approach (Sayer 2000). The problem is that "a causal statement does not deal with regularities between distant objects and events [cause and effect]" but, for a Critical Realist, with what an object is and what it can do by its nature (Danermark et al 2002, p. 55; Sayer 2000, p. 13, p. 14). This is a step beyond Kant, for whom "which x causes which y …. is a purely empirical matter, open to scientific investigation to determine" (Groff 2004, p. 31). To be clear, given the preoccupation of the thesis with things and internally

related wholes, it is a step back from Hegel and one toward Kant in recognising the existence of an independent reality. It is this independent reality and the focus on internally related wholes that drive the thesis, which is based upon a Critical Realist approach in arriving at the conceptual abstraction from PM policy. It is this abstraction that provides the basis for a causal analysis and identification of the mechanisms that link PM policy to rising standards, the main aim of the thesis.

Constructivism

The subject - object relation for the Experimentalist is too simplistic. The main aim is to interpret the object of study in a single hermeneutic, similar to the approach of the natural scientist (Sayer 1992). In the case of the social scientist, the relation between subject and object is twice removed as the subject's interpretation of a subject's interpretation of the object of study in a double hermeneutic. The problem for the Constructivist is that a study becomes a continually shifting, one without any recourse to an independent reality, as explained in Chapter 5. It is a continually shifting one, 'determined' by the changing subjective intentions of individual professional teachers, notwithstanding others' e.g. pupils, inspectors and the rank-reading public.

The object of study for the Constructivist becomes the subjects' world. There would be little structure to the investigation as such other than to develop a consensus view of subjects' perceptions. The aim would be to attempt to reconcile subjects' views through negotiation to produce consensual constructions so that PM policy "can be understood only within the context in which [it is] studied" (Guba and Lincoln 1989, p. 45). It would be difficult at best to link PM with increased standards (Literature Survey Chapter 2).

If there is no independent point of reference or material reality, it is doubtful that the Constructivist would have identified the importance of CPD to teachers interviewed in the Case Study. CPD did not surface as a dominant influence in the first series of interviews. This could have arisen because of the way the interviews were structured. However, the fact remains that interpretations of the first series of interviews were much more fluid, without an objective point of reference, whether that be the 'theory practice" interface or the essence of PM policy in raising standards identified in the conceptual abstraction. In

summary, without the five dimensions of policy surfaced through the initiation of a conceptual abstraction, it is questionable whether a Constructivist study would have added to all those preceding it. There is the very real risk that the effects of PM would be reduced to the views of a range of professional teachers, namely those in the study.

By the same token, it might well be argued that this present Case Study does little more than build on the reported perceptions of teachers. However, this would be an oversimplification and a crude position to take. The research began with the statistical data about the progressive rise in standards in schools nationally paralleled by the introduction of PM. It extensively researched the literature on PM and Appraisal and in so doing located a commitment, a rationale for doing PM or Appraisal, a point of reference in the guise of a PM or appraisal whose purpose was to generate and coordinate professional development, or CPD as it is currently referred to. Then, assuming the existence of an independent reality, social action structured by PM policy, an objective point of reference was sought as a means of internal validation. In this respect, findings were related to the material practice of professional teachers. Reasons as causes were found for teachers doing PM. Once the reliability of the data was established, it provided the incentive to complete a time-consuming conceptual abstraction of PM policy, from within the Sociological layer of the Real Domain, to explain the rising standards in the schools of the Case Study. This conceptual abstraction seemed highly coherent, with many connections to the empirical data. However, ultimately a value judgement had to be made about how well the theory connects to an independent reality: one that cannot be known in its entirety, or, as Kant (1997) put it, "we cannot know the thing in itself" (Kant 1997, p. 21). In the present context, this is the object of study, PM, and how it works precisely to raise standards.

Further, in pursuit of the mechanisms generating higher attainment through PM, an independent sample of thirty secondary schools, drawn from the top 10% of highest achieving schools in the country and the bottom 10% were surveyed in 2006 (Appendix C). Headteachers were unanimous, and most notably positive, about the impact of PM on standards. However, they were also unanimous about it not having the most significant impact on standards (Appendix C). This points to one of the significant limitations to the

study in that it does not indicate the extent of the impact of PM on standards: only that it is perceived to have a noticeably positive effect. When the headteachers were asked to identify the key levers for rising attainment at their high and respectively low achieving schools, they variously referred to curriculum change, assessment, vocational courses and staff development (Appendix C). To be more precise, there was not one clear and coherent strategy reported. The survey was useful in that it was another independent source citing the positive impact of PM on standards. However, as an enquiry it was methodologically flawed or arguably unscientific, from a Critical Realist point of view, in that there was no conceptual abstraction and therefore 'experimental control' underpinning the study. The survey was completed without incorporating the PM structure initiated in Chapter 5 and fully developed in the present one. The data collected was therefore, methodologically, of little greater value than many of the studies critiqued in the Literature Survey (Chapter 2). Its ontological status or origin was within the Empirical Domain of the Critical Realist framework (Bhaskar 2008). They would be considered to be events not linked to identified mechanisms or internally related deep structure(s).

In conclusion to this part of the Discussion, I have attempted to explain how I made a conceptual abstraction from the national policy for PM in Schools. Following on from this, I have applied the abstraction within the Critical Realist framework to the data gathered from structured questioning of teachers in four schools. These are part of the Case Study. Working with the thematic analysis of this data, from Chapter 7, I have coded the data and condensed it into a parallel code to make it more manageable (Fig 8.7, Chapter 8). In this format - the Parallel Code - all of the data was incorporated into the conceptual abstraction of PM by citing the perceived strategies reported by teachers as potential mechanisms that would generate an increase in the 'levels of learning' or standards, events in the Empirical Domain. These were related to structures deep within the Real Domain. There were numerous coherent connections identified between the deep structures within the Real Domain and the data, generated by the structured questions in the Case Study, or the perceived events within the Empirical Domain. Additional potential scenarios arising from the data and the perceptions held by teachers, issues of significance, needed to be addressed. These were also considered and were concluded to be either a caveat to the

abstraction or at worse limits to its relevance. Finally, I made a brief comparison to other major strategies that could have been used in this study, namely Experimentalist and Constructivist approaches, and pointed out some of the potential deficiencies in relation to the Realist framework used here.

The subtext to all of this is that the national policy for PM is a structure for social action, and within this I have identified the Leader, Teacher and Learner roles. Such a structure is based upon the assumption that a school is treatable as a microcosm and that there are structures within it that sustain and which can be related to other parts of the wider social structure. They have nevertheless been treated as distinct but not autonomous. The roles of learner, teacher and leader, within the Empirical Domain, have been changed by the inclusion of PM within a school. They have been changed by the dimensions of the policy. These are the powers that a structure like PM entails, namely internally related structures like Lesson Observation, Target Setting, Use of Baseline Data, CPD and Objective Setting. These powers are distributed within the Role Structure which makes Leading, Teaching and Learning different.   It is reasonable to make an assumption about the existence of such structures given that as early as 2002, HMI found PM national policy to be operational in at least 67% of eighty-two schools in a case study (HMI 2002). To be clear, the roles of Learner, Teacher and Leader within PM have been assumed to be embedded within schools in a way that is similar to but not as pervasive as nor as distinct as the landlord and tenant relationship within the Capitalist Social System (Note 30). Such Leader, Teacher and Learner roles, it is suggested by the Case Study, are dominant PM structures within schools. Similarly, Landlord and Tenant are dominant structures within a capitalist society.

PM structures like these and their associated powers, including what has been referred to as the 'five dimensions of policy' 'add up', as indicated by the Case Study and attainment trends in schools, to a rise in standards of attainment.

A number of issues need to be properly addressed. First, the range of views of teaching and learning that gave rise to the evidence in the Case Study that the abstraction is based upon has to be considered. It is reasonable to suggest that these views are mutually supportive.

Note 30: PM policy was reported by headteachers, at the initial telephone conversation, to be embedded in line with national requirements in each of the four schools of the Case Study. This would have been confirmed by External Advisers and Threshold Assessors, contracted by the DfEE at the time, during their annual visits.

The question is "how reasonable?" The potential disaggregating of what teachers and researchers understand teaching and learning to mean needs to be revisited in evaluating the conceptual abstraction carried out above (see Chapters 3 and 11 for example about the potential disaggregating of views of teaching and learning). Secondly, the most recent research into the effects of PM is a relevant issue. Finally, there is also the matter of how successful the isolation of PM has been in considering its impact on attainment in this study. The Case Study needs to be properly placed in context before the Thesis is brought to its Conclusion. This context is considered next.

Chapter 11

The Context of the Case Study

Chapter 4 highlighted the difficulties of isolating a link between any one policy like PM and standards of attainment. Such an argument questions the very idea of the conceptual abstraction internally relating PM policy to standards within a Critical Realist framework, proposed in Chapter 10. The reports and initial conclusions of the Case Study in Chapters 7 and 8 also become vulnerable to further scrutiny.

A number of related issues need to be addressed. One arises out of recent empirical research on the impact of PM on school improvement. A second arises out of the reported diversity of teachers' views on teaching and learning and the disaggregating effect this might have on the findings in this Case Study. Then there is the third issue of isolating policies from within the Standards Framework and connecting any one of them, particularly PM, to increased attainment.

Recent Research on the Impact of PM on School Improvement

As explained in the previous section, there is some noticeable variation in the perceptions of the impact of PM on improvement between those of the Case Study (Chapters 7 and 8), a selected sample of high and low value added (Chapter 8) schools nationally (Chapter 3, 2006) and more recently a national survey of some 2000+ teachers (Poet et al 2010). However, notwithstanding the composition of these samples, the times at which they were taken may, arguably, have some historical significance. At the time of the Case Study, PM was relatively new, and its impact, together with a number of potentially enhancing initiatives, including Threshold and External Advisers, would have made teachers more aware of, sensitive to and positive about any effect it might have. More recently there would be some uncertainty arising from the length of time since the policy had been rolled out or implemented. The point is that the national survey referred to was actually completed in November of 2010, over ten years after the policy was first implemented. The novelty of 'sweeteners' and inducements like for instance Threshold increments and

External Advisers, being well established, would no longer have significant impact. There would have been, arguably, a diminishing effect on the positive features of the policy. This would have been exacerbated by any slippage in the original policy. This, for example, is illustrated by the politicisation of the lesson observation process, whereby the number of observations and time allocated in any one PM cycle was restricted as a result of negotiation with the Teacher Unions (DfES 2006a; NUT policy 2007; DfES 2007). The suggestion is that the 'policy press' in the time preceding the latest survey was more in deficit and oppressive than that during the time of the Case Study. This would have impacted on teacher perceptions.

Another dimension that would affect teacher perceptions is the culture/ethos/climate of the four schools that were the subject of the Case Study. It is in contrast to the indeterminable number of institutions that the 4,392, "nationally representative sample of teachers", who returned their questionnaires in the most recent survey were from (Poet et al 2010, p. ii). Looking at the Case Study, at the empirical level it is understandable that there is uniformity in the reported responses. All of the schools were judged to be well led by recent Ofsted inspections. Each received good inspections. There were certain similarities between schools in this respect in that they conformed to the output model of the Ofsted "good" criteria. In particular, there was a very strong resemblance between the schools in terms of the policy language reported (Chapters 7 and 8), so that, for instance, the teachers all the way across the Case Study referred to "levels of learning", target setting, "self review" and so on. All of this relates to the apparent performative culture they shared (Ball 2003).

In conclusion, the empirical findings of the Case Study can be squared with these other more recent findings on PM.

The Relevance of the Diversity of Teachers' Views of Teaching and Learning to the Case Study

The evidence of the disaggregating of teachers' views of teaching and learning referred to in Chapter 3 is a significant issue for the cogency of the Case Study. It is also relevant to how it relates to performativity arguments.

The potentially wide range of teachers' views of teaching referred to would raise significant questions about what exactly PM was impacting on even if it did result in improvement. Teachers may well have made reference to improvements in teaching, but if this were not based upon a shared meaning, they could well have been talking about changes or improvements to different realities. In short, it begs the question "improvement in what?"

Regrettably, the Case Study never questioned respondents directly over what they understood to be good teaching and learning; nor, for that matter, what improvement in teaching and learning meant to them, which in turn raised the matter of what constituted improvement. However, against this the Case Study has identified uniformity in how teachers perceived PM to affect teaching and learning: in other words, what the outcomes were. Teachers were explicit in linking improvements in teaching to raised levels of learning as defined by National Curriculum criteria or GCSE grades. To be clear, the data collected implied what they meant by good teaching. Further, there was sufficient consistency in what respondents said to enable a strong coherence with a conceptual abstraction based on a thing called PM internally related to a thing called Standards. How well this compares to a more constructivist approach is debatable. A more constructivist approach would have been able to articulate any diversity in the views of teaching and learning held by the teachers in the Case Study. However, without an independent reality as a point of reference, any attempt at a conceptualisation would have been an average or synthesis of teachers' views. The suggestion is that in the extreme, the Critical Realist (Retroductivist) approach compares favourably to that of the Constructivist (Abductivist) and on balance would seem to be a reasonable approach to take.

It would be reasonable at this point to assume that the Case Study, expressing a uniform link between PM and standards of attainment, is arguing that a performative culture permeated the four schools. This is not the intention. Given the structure used in the interviews related to PM and Standards, a significant internal social relation was reported if not identified. This is not to suggest that this is the only internal social relation. The notion of the potential "diversity of teachers' views of teaching and learning" suggests that other internal social relations exist beside the performativity one. The argument is that this particular link was prevalent in the schools that were the subject of the Case Study and that it would be reasonable to assume that it is present to a greater or lesser extent in schools nationally.

On the other hand, the position and argument of the Case Study does not necessarily support the view that the performative social relation is the dominant one. It is only to recognise that it is real and exists. There are doubtless other policies, representations and social relations that extend beyond the Standards Framework. The point is that the uniformity of response in the Case Study in contrast to the views of teaching and learning elsewhere would be symptomatic of a generative mechanism emanating from a similar structure of internal relations identifiable within each of the four schools that were studied.

Isolating Policies within the Standards Framework

The effect that other standard raising initiatives, arising from the Framework (DfEE 1998c), would have had on teacher perceptions within the schools of the Case Study needs further consideration. Many teachers would not have been fully cognisant of the deluge of initiatives arising from the Standards Framework and their potential impact on standards. Teachers would not have been aware, or at least fully conscious, of the impact of the many initiatives taking place, nor did they give any indication of being aware of them and therefore of their effects over time. Conversely, PM would have been written large in their consciousness at the time of the Case Study. Appraisal and eventually PM was at the brunt of the transition to NPM over a period of two decades, as explained in Chapter 2. There existed a very strong possibility that PM dominated teachers' consciousness in the years that followed the Standards Framework. Some of the acquiescence arguments from the

Performativists are relevant in this respect and would resonate with such a view. They have argued at some length that while initially teachers were 'confronted' by PM and resisted it, more recently, through the embedding of league tables and performance being linked to career development, teachers had begun to acquiesce and participate in and subscribe to a performativity culture, at the forefront of which was and is PM. Such studies relate variously to changing teacher attitudes to PM (Marsden and Belfield 2005 and 2006): this is manifest as "Resigned compliance" for Farrell and Morris (2004, p. 81), shifting teacher identities under the pressures of performitivity policies for Avis (2005) and Perryman (2006), the commodification of teaching and teachers for Ball (2004) and "Government control of teacher performance, competences and presumably even identity" for Katsuno (2008, p. 15). However, all of this suggests that an embedded PM policy exists and has been 'observed' in the Empirical Domain. It is consistent with the real internally related structure that generates higher standards, as abstracted in Chapter 10.

To state that PM policy was well embedded (Note 31) is not to forget that during the period under study, education was the subject of a range of other policy initiatives, and other social policies that might have impacted on standards of attainment (particularly in schools in 'challenging' circumstances). It would be difficult to isolate the impact of PM on attainment from such changes other than in thought. This raises two questions. First, was it possible to isolate the effects of PM from other changes? What exactly does the thesis attempt to explain?

First, empirically, it is suggested that it would not be possible to isolate the effect of PM from the numerous other influences, including the many arising from the implementation of the Standards Framework.

Second, what the thesis claims is that, firstly, given teachers' overwhelmingly positive views of PM, it is plausible to argue that PM contributed positively to raised standards, and secondly, that these range of teachers' perceptions and views is coherent with the conceptual abstraction of the policy in the context of a school as it is discussed in the thesis.

Note 31: Schools that were shortlisted for the Case Study were considered good schools by Ofsted and reported by their headteachers to have embedded the national policy for PM. Headteachers in schools nationally would have been advised by visiting External Advisers and Threshold Assessors of the level of implementation of PM. 'Embedded' would have meant fully implemented.

In other words, the detailed structural analysis of the policy is consistent with teachers' perceptions as they were reported in the Case Study.

In essence, there is a limit to what can be said about the effects of PM on standards. In the context of the variety of government changes considered relevant at the time, teachers in a case study of schools in challenging circumstances reported that PM helped improve attainment. However, these reports are also coherent with the concept of PM that was developed in the Case Study. It is a concept that offers an explanation of how standards of attainment could have been raised. It would therefore seem reasonable to suppose that PM could have contributed positively to the raised standards in the schools in the Case Study. However, in the absence of a national survey of the impact of PM on standards of attainment in 'schools in challenging circumstances' and in the context of the reservations expressed by the survey completed as part of this study (Appendix C) and a more exhaustive one completed by Poet et al (2010), any stronger claim would be considered inappropriate.

Summary: Revisiting Domains

Finally, to complete the circle, the range of initiatives generated by the Standards Framework would have at least some impact on the upward trend of attainment of the four schools. It is inconceivable that analysis of variance of so many variables of unknown magnitude would have enabled even the most persistent Experimentalist to ferret out any one influence from the multiplicity of policies and constellation of changes arising from the Standards Framework (1998c). It would be less likely that they could conceptualise, in the sense used by Critical Realists, any connection that they might isolate. Constructivists may well have articulated the Empirical Domain more exhaustively, but they too would have remained in this domain if explaining meant synthesising perspectives or views. As explained in Chapter 5, an approach that adhered closely to that of Pawson and Tilley (2003) would be vulnerable in this respect. The Critical Realist could lay claim to crossing into the Real Domain through abstraction and identity. What this position offers is a lens, rather than a simple illumination, that is capable of greater depth in seeking out real internal relations within events and between things in the context of the highly complex social

world of schools that became one of the consequences, intended or otherwise, of the Standards Framework of New Labour in 2005. What this approach lacks, for the present study, is the facility to answer the question 'what is the extent or the significance of the effect of PM on standards [as defined] in schools?' This would require a much more extensive study of all of the initiatives and policies generated by the Standards Framework. It would, at the least, need to be combined with an analysis of the relative significance of the various sets of internal social relations that such a study would entail.

To sum up, the chapter has revisited the empirical maelstrom of policies and influences generated by the Standards Framework of New Labour. Recent empirical research does not detract from these complex circumstances as they were outlined in Chapter 2. All of this contrasts with the uniformity of findings in the Case Study, Chapters 7-9. However, as explained in this chapter, these findings do not preclude such complex circumstances: ironically, they all add to the argument. In order to link a policy like PM, from within the described maelstrom, to the rising "standards" of the time (circa 2005), as indicated by the 5A*-C GCSE pass rate, the argument is that conceptual abstraction within the retro-ductive method of the Critical Realist would seem a reasonable position to take given that it offers an acceptable explanation of how PM could impact on the standards of attainment in the four schools of the Case Study. At least three qualifications need to be made. First, the explanation assumes the reliability of the data collected, particularly the range of teacher perceptions reported. Second, survey data collected on schools nationally including that of the present study (Appendix C) and more recently Poet et al (2010) are substantially less uniform. Third, the very positive results of the investigation were based on four 'schools in challenging circumstances' and in the absence of survey data on the impact of PM on standards in such schools nationally it would be inappropriate to consider generalising the findings of the Case Study to include all schools of this type.

Part 5
Chapter 12

Conclusion

Contributions to Research

The study makes a number of contributions to research on the impact of national policy on schools. The first refers to the literature on Appraisal and PM in relation to rising standards. The topic has been extensively surveyed and the potential for research on the effect that such policies have on standards of attainment in schools has been reported.

It specifically contributes to the application of a retro-ductive research strategy to the study of the effects of PM on standards of attainment in schools. In this context a Critical Realist approach has been applied, for the first time, to the study of a national policy in education.

The Case Study central to the thesis has reported, with internal verification, that for the four secondary schools in challenging circumstances, the teachers were distinctly positive about its effect on standards of attainment, including the national curriculum levels at which children learn. The reports from the Case Study, including representation from policymakers are not considered to be exhaustive (Section 3 p. 303). However, they were consistent with an empirically based analysis of the PM national policy completed in preparation of the structured questions used for interviews in assessing the effects of PM.

In consolidating the Critical Realist approach, a conceptual abstraction of PM policy was carried out, internally relating the main dimensions of the policy with the roles of Learner, Teacher and Leader within a school context and in relation to the rising standards of attainment reported by the DfES. This was shown to be highly coherent with the empirical information accumulated from the structured interviews completed in the Case Study. This abstraction provided an explanation for the effects of PM and reinforced the conclusion that the policy could have had a positive effect on the trend of rising standards (Chapter 1, p.

12) that appeared to be taking place in the four 'challenging schools' in the Case Study (Chapter 9, p239).

The main findings in summary are as follows: PM is reported to have had a positive effect on standards in four challenging schools. Further, a retro-ductive research strategy incorporating Critical Realism is a reasonable approach to use when assessing the impact of a national policy in a school. This particular approach has the added advantage of the explanatory power of a conceptual abstraction of the object of study in the context of the structure of the social action of the school.

More specifically, the research was designed to address two main questions and one supporting question. The supporting question was made up of four subsidiary questions, which will be discussed below. The subsidiary questions are fundamental to the two main research questions.

The findings related to the response to the first two main research questions (Chapter 1, p2) are considered next. **Research Question 1** related to the effect that PM had on attainment. It was answered by breaking it down into two subsidiary questions, namely "what are the principal structures/dimensions of PM?" and "what effect do they have on standards of attainment?" The policy analysis identified five principal structures/dimensions. These gave rise to a set of fifteen supplementary research questions contained in Chapter 5 (Fig 5.9, p. 130). The five principal structures/dimensions were lesson observation, target setting, use of baseline data, CPD and objective setting. The supplementary questions asked relate to "what effect each of these five dimensions had on teaching, learning and leading in raising standards of attainment?" By way of drawing a summarily concise conclusion the perceptions of teachers reported on the effects of the five dimensions of policy on teaching learning and leading were overwhelmingly positive (Note 32). The impact that each of the five dimensions of policy has on school performance have also been studied independently of the contribution they make to PM. The effect these have had on teaching, learning and leadership is also generally reported, in the literature, to be positive.

Note 32: That is, given the questions that interviewees were required to answer in the original research design.

It is thus possible to conclude that PM policy has been reported from teachers' perceptions to have a positive effect on standards of attainment in the four 'challenging' schools involved in the Case Study. These schools were representative of a range of learning contexts based on their levels of performance and the way in which the PM policy was implemented. The study showed that there did not appear to be a substantial contextual influence on the effect of the policy. The full range of responses was reported regardless of whether PM policy had an individual focus or a whole school one or whether the school was high achieving or not. The general perception of teachers interviewed was that because it offered a planned or structured approach to CPD, they engaged with and assented to it (Note 33). The apparent significance of whole school or individual focus implied by reports seemed to contradict the literature (for example Fidler and Cooper 1989). On the other hand, teacher engagement arising from the role of CPD in the national policy for PM is consistent with other findings in the literature (for example Darling-Hammond et al 1983; Powney 1991).

The apparent lack of significance of the policy focus, i.e. whether it was implemented with an individual or organisational emphasis, was suggested to arise from the use of 'challenging' schools in the Case Study. PM policy as it was rolled out in the Schools in the Case Study was reported to entail a structured approach to CPD. A well-structured approach to CPD could be more important to the survival of teachers in a 'challenging' school. The data suggests that the substance of training tended to be related to the challenges of each school, including enhanced feelings of support. This could have overridden the impact of any personalised provision. However, it was not possible to confirm this in the Case Study. So, it was not possible to say that the content of the CPD had diminished the importance of personalised provision. It was not possible to relate this to the literature on the relative impact of personalised and whole school CPD. However, CPD was found to be important to the implementation of PM both empirically and conceptually and PM was reported to be effectively implemented, and embedded, whether it had an individual focus or an organisational one.

Note 33: It is possible that this could be related to or enabled by the 'challenging school' context. However, the suggestion, while possible, is speculative. It is based on a sample of four schools in 'challenging circumstances' (Chapter 9, p. 238).

Research Question 2 was "why does PM affect standards in this way?" This question was answered in terms of generative causation: that is, an explanation was given in conceptual terms within the Real Domain. The starting point in answering this question was interview subjects' answers to the questions in the structured interviews. It continued with a series of follow-up interviews in which teachers reported that the main reason for their doing PM was that it "offered a structured approach to CPD". The follow-up interviews were a form of internal verification of the reliability of the findings in the first series, in which PM was reported to raise standards. Both of these are within the Empirical Domain. The conceptual abstraction of the object of study, PM policy, in Chapter 10 is an attempt at explaining why, in the context of the structure of a school, PM raises standards in this way. This conceptual abstraction, within the Real Domain, is coherent with the perceptions reported in the Empirical Domain. The conceptual abstraction is not an induction, as some might argue. It was derived conceptually from the retro-ductive question "what would the structure of PM be like if it were to raise standards of attainment in a school?" The abstraction was not formed by progressive generalisation (Hartwig 2007) or cumulative synthesis (Pawson and Tilley 2003). These are arguably examples of induction. The conceptual abstraction was constructed from the key internally related dimensions of the PM policy that were also internally related to the role structure of the school and linked to increased standards of attainment. There is a qualitative difference between the conceptual product of induction/cumulative synthesis and that of retro-duction, at least in this instance. It is linked to the internal relations operating between the concepts derived from the latter approach. The conceptual abstraction, for the Critical Realist, takes the study into the layered, internally related reality of the Real Domain, identifiable as the sociological layer. PM, by this approach, is considered to increase standards of attainment in the Case Study because of the way in which it relates to the leadership, teaching and learning in the schools and participants' understanding of what constitutes rising standards of attainment.

Finally, **Research Question 3** was broken down into four subsidiary parts. Each part question needed to be answered in order to provide a platform to answer the two main research questions, one and two. In the case of the first subsidiary question, it was important to find out what research had been carried out already in answering the previous

two main questions. The focus of research studies had predominantly been about strategies of successful implementation rather than what the impact of Appraisal or PM was. Secondly, while there were many studies that had generally employed a Constructivist approach, few if any had attempted to exert some form of experimental control in studying Appraisal or PM. This has been loosely referred to as a scientific strategy in the thesis. However, no studies that considered the effects of Appraisal/PM on standards in an experimental context were found in the extensive survey of the literature carried out. The present study attempted to incorporate elements of both, through a methodology based upon a Critical Realist perspective. Thirdly, the study considered the potential of alternatives to this approach centred around either Constructivism or Experimentalism in the context of the Scientific Realism of Pawson and Tilley (2003). The answer to the fourth subsidiary question relating to which research methodology my thesis should be guided by, namely the Critical Realist, emerged from a critique of the potential alternatives already considered in response to the third subsidiary research question, above.

Looking back at the conceptual abstraction and forward to the implications of the thesis for future research there was at least one more finding that requires particular emphasis. Chapter 10 outlined the internal reciprocal relationship between the dimensions of PM policy incorporating the roles of leader, teacher and learner as part of this structure. The point is the dimension CPD is part of this structure and as a matter of necessity in the Real Domain it must also be structured. In the Case Study, teachers consistently reported the reason they did PM was because it provided a structured approach to CPD. This structuring of CPD and the CPD structure within the conceptual abstraction are ontologically distinct and therefore qualitatively different. Teachers' reference is to the surface real or the Empirical Domain and the conceptual abstraction refers to the deep real or Real Domain. Critical Realism is a depth realism (Benton 2001, p. 121) and so propositions about the surface real and the deep real would be coherent but qualitatively different. Propositions about the latter are necessarily internally related. The coherence underlines a persistent internal relation that arguably has its roots in the liberal egalitarianism of the Plowden era and the 1960s (Willmott 2002), sustained as indicated by the tensions that influenced appraisal research in the first historical phase (Chapter 2) and

similarly by the mutually consistent reports gathered in the Case Study 2004/5. This coherence could be an important focus for future research and is considered more fully below.

In the case of **future research** generally, there are a number of other areas that could also be considered for further study.

A first concern would be to extend the research to include non-challenging schools, as this would help to improve understanding of the role of CPD in PM or appraisal in engaging the assent of teachers in implementing the policy. One issue related to this is the commitment of teachers to PM policy when CPD is not as relevant to their needs. One factor that would be particularly important, for example, is the need to survive. Arguably, the stresses and strains of the everyday practical life of being a teacher would be enhanced in the working environment of a "Challenging School" that is highly committed to CPD. In this context, it would be appropriate to monitor or survey attainment data over time for challenging and non challenging schools, separately.

There are other sectors of education that could be explored: for example KS2 and KS1. Would there be similar findings? The problem for these Key Stages is the reliability and trends in the attainment data. Leagues tables and performativity were less well embedded in the primary sector around the time of the introduction of PM. Related to this, trends in SATs results would attract less attention. However, teachers' reported perceptions would be particularly interesting in this respect. The size of the schools and the number of teachers could be another issue.

The findings that have emerged from this study that point to further research include the generative linking of national policy with school output data. It would be useful to explore the application of this methodological approach to other aspects of the effects of policy directives on the work of schools. By this approach, I refer to first the retro-ductive strategy of analysing objects of study, at the empirical level, in the context of the organisation (Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2001). The aim would be to develop a middle range

theory to give structure to an empirical investigation in which the effects of the policy are tested. Then a detailed conceptual abstraction from the object of study in the context of the school and the anticipated effects of the policy under investigation would be carried out. Such an approach might be appropriate in the present social and political climate where performance and standards continue to be rigorously scrutinised in schools (DfE 2012).

The Schools Standards and Framework Act (1998) together with the parallel and subsequent development of the Ofsted Framework for Schools (1999, 2005, 2009, 2012) have quite dramatically affected the educational landscape, including that of secondary schools. One of the most notable aspects of this change is the range of output data that has become available, both qualitative and quantitative. It may not be considered reliable by the research fraternity because it would not have been subject to the same rigorous scrutiny. Its reliability would be questioned. However, such data, especially if it is quantitative, would be of interest as a potential source of deriving causal mechanisms. This may amount to nothing when subjected to the scrutiny of retro-ductive research but trends and patterns have the potential to signpost future developments. There are research tools and strategies that are capable of controlling and managing the generation of knowledge out of the complex range of information that has become available. In this context, while there are others, the retro-ductive strategy and the Critical Realist perspective would seem to be a potentially useful approach in which objects of study within the school could be isolated in thought, so providing a platform for causal analysis and the generation of new explanatory knowledge.

Finally, a particularly significant and consistent finding reported in the Case Study that needs to be considered is the reason teachers gave for "doing PM". This was its incorporation of a structured approach to CPD. In September of 2012 the present Government changed the focus of PM policy so that teachers could be made more accountable through it (DfE 2012). Related to this, once the new policy has become properly embedded, it would be relevant to once again test teachers' reasons for doing PM as well as for the potential persistence of the internal relations that were argued to be coherent with the reported findings of the present Case Study. The question is: 'will the

PM policy eventually implemented and embedded be coherent with that promoted by Government and its policymakers?' Conversely: 'will vestiges of the liberal egalitarianism of the Plowden era, as Willmott (2002) refers to it, continue to persist?'

Reflections and Evaluations

For **the main reflections** there are some important questions that remain unanswered. However, I want to focus on the practicalities of the approach taken in tackling the present study. This is because they raise the question about improving the initial inquiry to the research I have just attempted. The approach was cautiously incremental. It rigorously considered the methodologies on offer and the research implements to use. The decision about a research strategy and the eventual design were all well measured. This might be considered to be an over-focused approach that was time-consuming, whereas a more practical approach that incorporated national sampling and the piloting of research implemented in a range of different types of school, beside those in challenging circumstances, would have required a more expansive approach and possibly yielded more useful results. Some of the issues and potential consequences of a more expansive approach are considered next.

1. The effects of power relations on the implementation of PM

Interviewees' roles within the school were identifiable in the presentation of interview results. However, interviewee perceptions were explained in terms of the concept of PM that I developed. By way of recapping on this, leaders' roles were defined in terms of followers' roles; for example:

> I [as leader] think it has very much tightened up the work of my department. We have been able to tighten up and focus on schemes of work so that the objectives of units and each individual lesson [taught by followers – teachers] are very clear. It means you can give a big focus on success criteria and monitor progress [of those taught – learners] against these. (Z7, p. 404)

In this context, the study overlooked any impact that structural, and especially power relations, in the school might have had on both the implementation of PM and its contribution to shifts in attainment. Bartlett (1998, p. 227) has argued that teachers see "appraisal differently depending upon their position in the school hierarchy. It would appear that senior management, those who appraise and those who are appraised perceive appraisal in the light of their own positions". Further, there has been widespread reporting in the earlier literature on appraisal about tensions between employers and unions over policy type and the very real threat that it poses to teachers. Similarly, the national policy for PM was introduced as a statutory requirement. In other words, for the first time in the history of appraisal policy, there were checks at every level of policy that all schools were implementing the policy in line with statutory requirements. Implementation was rigorous and all teachers were obliged without exception to do PM as outlined in the model policy document. Arguably, this might have produced some tension-related perceptions: for instance, teachers were not being given a great deal of choice about how they did PM. Related to this are a few comments in the Case Study that are suggestive of potential disaffection: for example, one middle leader in School W thought that objective setting had little impact on learning "because it happens only once annually" (W5). Similarly, a senior leader said "I would like to think that a teacher is developing their practice through setting their objectives and that it would have an impact on the classroom, certainly with a classroom-based objective, so learning should be better" (W10), and added, "it could be one class that you focus on" (W10). Both sets of comments could be indicators of potential disaffection, as they would have required a literal interpretation of the national policy. If there were underlying tensions in the schools in the study, this would raise a number of questions.

The first question is: *could power relations have carried over from past conflicts?* For schools in general, the literature on this is mixed. For example, Ball (2004) reported feelings of alienation and disaffection in the schools in his study. However, other researchers described a less negative picture (Farrell and Morris, 2004; Avis, 2005; Perryman, 2006; Katsumo, 2008). The suggestion is that teachers' engagement with policies like PM can be explained as acquiescence to performativity generally.

Performativity here refers to a mode of state regulation that "requires individuals to organise themselves as a response to targets, indicators and evaluations. To set aside personal beliefs and commitments and live an existence of calculation" (Ball, 2003, p. 215). So on the one hand, performativity has a fraught heritage, as implied by the expression 'acquiescence to it', since this entails initial resistance, while on the other it entails acceptance of and engagement with the notion of 'performance'. Conversely, there are studies that report on a positive response to PM (Jennings and Lomas, 2003). In this context, the responses in the present Case Study would therefore not be surprising. Given that the schools in the Case Study were improving schools, and had reportedly fully 'embedded' the national PM policy (Notes 1 and 31), the suggestion is that teachers had accepted it and engaged with it, implying little if any resentment. At least this is borne out by both teachers' overwhelmingly positive response to the questions they were asked in the structured interviews and their replies to the follow-up open-ended interviews some six months later. However, headteachers' replies to a national survey of low and high achieving schools completed alongside the Case Study (2005), while very positive, were less emphatic. More recently, such findings are supported by the literature (Poet et al., 2010). These surveys were far more reserved about the effectiveness of PM than the present Case Study. Such reservations might be related to potential underlying disaffections that may have surfaced in comments like the ones referred to above and similarly those discussed at greater length below.

The second question relates to comments made by middle leaders, for example on target setting, such as "it makes sure that you have certain aims and you reach those" (W9), or, referring to the use of baseline data, that "it does upset some teachers when you are thrusting levels in their faces, so you can put people's backs up unless it is used carefully" (W7). The question is: *could this be evidence that main scale teachers found PM respectively coercive and threatening?* This would raise issues about how aspects of policy might have influenced different actors' (main scale teachers') relations to PM if they did feel coerced or threatened. For example, one would have expected that entrenched negative attitudes, such as those arising from feelings of being coerced or threatened, would have

had a significant impact on the answers teachers gave to the questions they were asked in the structured interviews of the Case Study.

Entrenched negative attitudes would at one extreme have muted or constrained teachers' responses to the structured interviews, and, at the other, explicitly surfaced as denial when asked: *what effect, if any, the various dimensions of the policy might have on standards?* In the Case Study, there was no evidence of denial in teachers' answers to interview questions. In fact, responses appeared to be overwhelmingly positive and, where there were some isolated reservations (Table 8.1-8.4), they could be linked to the way in which PM policy had been implemented by a middle leader. For example, not carrying out interim reviews or meeting more regularly are more likely to have been the result of work overload and time management problems than disaffection and policy subversion.

The opportunity to question teachers about any latent or potential disaffection was not built into the structured interview. However, they were encouraged to describe the effects of PM exactly as they saw them, "warts and all", and I did not sense any coercion or disaffection in teachers' answers. Their responses did not appear to be guarded, muted or constrained in any way. For example, teachers were unanimous in wanting to contribute further to the follow-up interviews, suggesting no feelings of coercion or of being threatened on their part. Teachers appeared fully engaged with PM; some spoke enthusiastically about it. However, this is not to say that the same teachers may not have had knowledge of disaffection somewhere in their school or of what impact this could have had on standards. It is only to claim that there was very little evidence, from the structured interviews, of disaffection in any of the schools in the Case Study, including toward the national policy for PM. The evidence gathered corroborated claims by the headteachers that the policy was fully 'embedded' (they would have been informed by their External Advisers and Threshold Assessors). To be clear, while teachers had the opportunity to raise issues about PM, they were not questioned directly about any concerns they might have had. Ironically, this could quite easily have been incorporated into the structured interviews, as explained at some length below (4. p. 311.).

2. The lack of anonymity of the interviewer

The fact that I made myself known to interviewees as a headteacher from another school could well have influenced their responses. In attempting to minimise bias, the more conventional approach would have been to attempt to preserve anonymity. However, as at that time I was given wide media coverage, including the front pages of the main broadsheets and tabloids, and was recognised by at least one person in each of the schools at the time of the Case Study, the break with the convention was apposite. In these circumstances it would have been unethical not to have been transparent about my background. This raises issues related to interview bias that require a more robust discussion of my headteacher role in relation to respondents' replies, the findings in the Case Study and the extent to which this may have influenced conclusions.

The four schools in the Case Study were good schools, by Ofsted criteria, in which PM policy was properly embedded in line with statutory requirements. The headteachers of these schools were not known to me before the interviews other than from my preliminary telephone conversations with them about PM policy and potential interest in a research study. In the schedule for the interviews (Appendix A) at each of the schools, there was no provision made for a meeting with the headteachers before they took place or any feeding back to the headteacher at the end when the interviews had been completed. Interviewees would have known that I arrived for the start of the first scheduled interview and left at the end of the last on each day. It was explained at the start of each interview that objectivity on their part was essential to the success of the project, funded by NCSL, and that it would be in everyone's interest to describe the effects of PM exactly as they perceived them to be, "warts and all" - as they saw them. In spite of this mild encouragement, no issues were raised by any of the subjects, the vast majority of whom were teachers. However, interviewees were not directly questioned on this. Respondents were also told that feedback would be in the form of an anonymous written report. Bias was removed as far as practically possible. It is also relevant that interviews were relaxed, free flowing and characterised by full engagement, cordiality and mutual respect. Finally, I should add that teachers in their responses did not appear to be guarded, muted nor constrained in any way.

As an experienced interviewer and Ofsted inspector, I noted that the usual signs of interview bias - inconsistency in respondents' comments - were absent. In fact, a cursory glance down all of the columns in each of the tabular summary of interviewee responses should confirm the lack of inconsistencies of this nature (Tables 8.1-8.4). Irregularities of this nature were correspondingly absent from the original interview notes. Further, interviewees' comments are corroborated by the output data of the four schools in the Case Study as well as the abovementioned Ofsted reports. However, while on the face of it, subjects' comments may have indicated that the policy was embedded, this was never systematically challenged in the Case Study. The potential for locating disaffection was not properly integrated into the structured questioning.

The reported comments made by the same respondents in the second series of interviews are relevant in this context. This is illustrated by the initial reaction of a number of interviewees in which they could not remember who I was. Accepting that beliefs and dispositions can change over time, the implication is that they were not significantly influenced by my background.

It does not follow from this discussion that bias arising from the headteacher role of the interviewer can be ruled out. All that can be said is that, in the circumstances - multiple interview roles and attendant influences, media coverage etc. - suitable precautions had been taken and that there was little evidence in my findings to suggest that interviewees' comments had been influenced by the lack of anonymity about the background of the interviewer.

3. Research method and the tendency to marginalise diversity in the interview data
A disadvantage of the particular application of CR methodology adopted in the study is that it had the unhelpful consequence of marginalising diversity in the 'raw' interview data. The application of the approach could have rendered the outcome more uniform. This is because it could be considered to discourage the explanation of potentially relevant responses in interviews even though they may have been in a minority. This point needs to be addressed. It is important to evaluate the reduction of the research to specific areas and

to consider the variety of other diverse areas that could have been developed more in a different project.

There are two distinct aspects to this marginalisation and possible development of other diverse, related, areas. First there is the analysis of the national policy and how it operates - as it is required to by statute - in the Empirical Domain. This relates to how the policy was required to be and generally was implemented in schools nationally (HMI 2002). The analysis provided the framework for interviews of the teachers carried out in the Case Study. Second there is the conceptual abstraction from the policy linked to the data collected in the structured interviews of teachers from the schools in the Case Study. This relates to an explanation or conceptualisation of the data and has its roots in the Real Domain. The abstraction would enable the identification of some of the mechanisms that would tend to generate the event that is the focus of the study - a rise in standards.

The policy analysis and the development of the structured questions for interview is considered as part of the first aspect referred to above. The main aim of the research was to analyse and evaluate the impact of the national policy for PM on standards as indicated by the GCSE pass rate. An analysis of the policy accepted five structural dimensions (in line with DfEE guidelines for the implementation of PM). The Case Study focused on teachers' perceptions about the possible effects of each of these on teaching, learning and leading, and also their effects, if any, on standards, particularly GCSE pass rates. The thinking behind this was to minimise any potential emotive response by teachers against a policy that had been enforced by statute and which was characterised by a long and troubled history. The aim of this approach was to minimise potential contamination of teachers' perceptions, during the interview, of the direct effects of PM by its recent history and vestiges of its troubled past. This approach assumed, as claimed by headteachers in the initial telephone conversations, that the policy was properly embedded. Those interviewed had an opportunity to dismiss or denigrate the effects of PM. However, such an approach, including the policy analysis upon which it was based, arguably discourages exploration of potentially negative minority responses. This is because the mode of questioning - "what effect, if any?" - presupposes that a particular policy structure exists. The structure that

framed the questions would need to be used to guide the interviews, as this was the nature of the statutory policy, but they could and should have also included questions that were capable of locating potential disaffection.

Comments by middle leaders that target setting was reported to improve teaching because "it makes sure that you have certain aims and you reach those" (W9) and, referring to baseline data, that "it does upset some teachers when you are thrusting levels in their faces, so you can put people's backs up unless it is used carefully" (W7) have potentially negative undertones and could have been investigated further. The first is reminiscent of Cutler and Waine's reference to "good old fashioned coercive responsibilities" (2000, p. 178). This second comment relates to Bartlett's idea of a hidden hand of control (1996). Such comments could be explained by reference to the context in which they were made: i.e. good schools in which PM policy was fully implemented. The first comment was considered to reflect the positive effect on teacher motivation (W9) and the second good management practice of a caring middle leader. This was assumed because of the positive uniform response of the vast majority of interviewees to the structured questions about PM. However, had such comments been pursued in a more flexible/expansive research design, it would have provided for, at the least, a more measured evaluation of the impact of PM.

There are other critical comments within the literature on PM. One relates to the constraining and potentially confusing effects that PM can have on learners. A middle leader referred to such potential effects in saying "students are getting three or four targets for different subjects and if it [target setting] were streamlined it would be a bit more useful" (W7). Such comments imply the potential to both constrain learning and confuse learners. There are a number of studies that are relevant in this respect: the most relevant is that of Gleeson and Husbands (2003). They argue that learning and human agency should be determinant and not short-term targets, as the middle leader from School W would seem to have us believe. It seems unlikely that pursuing these potential negative effects of target setting on standards, in the Case Study, would have uncovered an adverse ideological commitment underlying the perceptions of W7 comparable to that of Gleeson and

Husbands. The weight of empirical data gathered suggested that the middle leader was strongly committed to PM (Table 8.1).

There are very good reasons for reducing the research to the specific areas of policy. That the national policy for PM was implemented according to DfEE guidelines through these areas is not the least important of these. To have excluded these specific areas would be tantamount to ignoring the statutory elements of a national policy (DfEE 2000). The policy had been implemented nationally according to an HMI survey (2002). The analysis of the policy referred to above is consistent with these guidelines. However, a more expansive approach to the research would have provided for a more measured evaluation, at the least, of the impact of PM on standards of attainment. Such an approach could have, for example, produced more data to challenge the link between PM policy and standards proposed by the present study and even identified other significant causal chains.

The second distinct aspect, referred to above, would say more about the potential for the development of other diverse areas. At one level, the conceptual abstraction of policy to incorporate the data, like any conceptualisation, is also arguably constraining, marginalising some - albeit a minority - of the data collected in the present study. This relates to one set of internal relationships that are coherent with the data. There could, of course, have been others. The abstraction conceptualises a link between PM policy and rising standards. It would tend to explain the link. Even if the data was highly reliable, there could have been other abstractions - rather like 'normal science', discussion about it became preoccupied with articulating one mode of explanation to the exclusion of others. This would be fine for natural science, where concepts are more stable, but more difficult to apply to the more transient social world. In other words, the abstraction no more than offers one explanation of how standards tend to rise in four schools in which the national policy for PM was firmly embedded. The explanation was based upon the recorded perceptions of teachers within these schools but not to the deliberate exclusion of other potential abstractions and other explanations. However, one way to consider the more diverse influences on PM is to address them at the more general level of ontology. This approach is adopted next.

The conceptual abstraction of the PM policy is considered to result in a structured social entity made up of the following parts - Lesson Observing, Target Setting, using Baseline Data, completing CPD, Objective Setting, Leading, Teaching, and Learning - that are internally related to each other and enacted by social individuals within a school. The national policy for PM, as analysed in Chapter 5, is considered to be an organisational structure that is located within schools generally. Each part relates to the role structure of PM as well as to that of the school. However, social individuals comprise organisations, in the sense in which they are used here, and the roles within them articulate relations between them and coordinate their actions. The consequent complexity, and potential for more diverse outcomes, points to a weakness in the way the conceptual abstraction is used to explain the impact that PM would tend to have on standards in a school and on schools generally.

Individuals as social beings are considered to be bundles of beliefs and dispositions (including values and attitudes). They are also considered to have the power of reflexivity - to decide on what course of action to take in enacting their role in the organisation and/or within related social structures - for example, in implementing PM. This should be seen as an indeterminism not a voluntarism or a form of methodological individualism, since the thesis assumes that decisions are affected by or emanate from dispositions and beliefs acquired from past social experience that could be the product of many social structures and groups. The point is that the abstraction would appear to marginalise, ignore or not consider wider social structures: for example, reinforcing influences like external advisers (including the governing body), local authorities (through curriculum leaders within schools) and more normative social, potentially inhibiting, influences such as new staff (with common dispositions), parents, unions, staff and other associations, for example. It would appear to ignore many of the influences to which complex organisations like schools are permeable. Such influences could, for example, have been manifest in the anomalous comments referred to in Chapter 10. The potentially 'inhibiting influences' referred to above could, as an illustration, generate mechanisms to suppress the lesson observation structure within PM through the unions (as well as the staff association and staff generally);

the target setting structure through the PTA; the use of baseline data structure through the staff association and so on. In principle, mechanisms could be generated that would suppress/blur a potential link between PM and standards and therefore reduce the power of the PM structure (through the individuals enacting it) to tend to raise standards. I should qualify this by restating that these inhibiting influences were apparently not present in the data collected.

The approach taken would appear to be an oversimplification. Arguably, it could be considered rational and overly structural, focusing on the managerial aspects of the school to the exclusion of any political and/or normative influences. It could be considered to undermine the performativist arguments of Ball and others, for example. However, this would exclude any consideration for the context of the study. The schools in the Case Study were selected because they were considered to have embedded the policy - the majority of schools would have done so at the time of the study in 2005. Their staff were firmly committed to PM, which in itself was indicative of their dispositions and beliefs - and the lack of potential among teachers, indicated by the data, to subvert the policy or to become disaffected. I should add that all of this supports the argument about acquiescence found in schools and referred to by performative researchers at the time and more recently. However, issues related to oversimplification and the potential to marginalise some of the data remain.

Data collected in the present study, by survey in 2005, and a more recent study in 2010 question the uniformity of that collected in the Case Study and therefore the conceptual abstraction (Poet et al 2010). In the absence of a national survey of the impact of PM on standards in 'schools in challenging circumstances', these surveys undermine the data collected in the Case Study rather than the conceptual abstraction based on it. However, it is an abstraction that has yet to be tested or challenged and requires qualification, if only to rationalise the doubts raised by these two studies as well as the potential mix of causal outcomes alluded to above.

Does the conceptual abstraction account for the complex web of inter-relationships that are likely to arise from the role structure of PM and the beliefs and dispositions and the individual reflexivity that teachers as social individuals (as agents) bring to the schools in the Case Study as well as those of other structures? Does the conceptual abstraction obfuscate/bracket out/normalise and/or take no account of this complexity? Each of the eleven individual teachers, subject to a wide range of normative influences, in each of the four schools in the Case Study would have had some control over their actions about how to perform their role within the PM policy/structure and similarly over their perceptions about how this affected outcomes, i.e. standards of attainment. However, this is to accept that they reliably reported these perceptions.

There was a uniformity about the perceptions reported that suggested a strong commitment to PM policy. The schools used in the study had also reportedly embedded the policy. It may well be that the net effect of teachers' beliefs and dispositions enhanced their commitment to the policy so that among causal chains generating or inhibiting an increase in standards, in the schools in the Case Study, this would appear to be a significant one. There could have been numerous other policy structures generating a rise in standards, including the many referred to in chapters 4 and 11 and other more local ones arising from the organisational and institutional structures of each of the schools in the Case Study as well as the combined reflexivity of how these were enacted. Taking the data as a given, the net effect of all of these potential influences would appear to enhance commitment to PM. In this context, the conceptual abstraction would represent a point of reference, a bracketing out of the multiplicity of influences operating, while recognising the complexity of the situation. One aspect of this breadth of evaluation is that arguably, no matter how far the analysis was extended, there would always be something missed.

The point is that if an explanation of an event is to be of any use, it should prioritise the most relevant causes of the event. Increasing standards of attainment corresponded to the introduction of the national policy for PM including within the four schools of the Case Study. PM was considered a significant relevant cause among others acknowledged at the time (Chapter 4 and 11). There are two important criteria to be clear on: the aspects of the

event to be explained - improved teaching, learning and leading, and the powers that make the most significant contribution to these, i.e. the relational (role) structures within the abstraction - Teaching, Learning, Leading, Lesson Observing, Using Data, Target Setting, Using CPD and Objective Setting.

On this basis, any attempt to explain events in a social science, especially the one underpinning this study, would appear to be excessively challenging. The above abstraction has involved a number of subjective decisions about which causal chain to follow. Those in Chapters 4 and 11 were placed to one side, i.e. both bracketed out and not accounted for. However, the natural sciences are in one sense no different. Take the example of a reported frequent and regular nose bleed. It could be: the result of the blood failing to clot around vulnerable tissue, over-exuberant participation in contact sport, polyps, use of anti coagulants, use of blood vessel stimulants or a combination of two or more of these causes, and so on. The question is which line of enquiry to select? The decision about which causal chain to follow would be subjective. All that the scientist/doctor might hope for is to identify the most significant causal chain. Similarly, all that the social scientist might hope for is to identify the key mechanisms at work and the interactions between them: for example, the mechanisms identified via teacher perceptions and the anomalies contained within this study.

The event of rising standards is multiply determined and what could be said of the PM structure/abstraction, accepting the reliability of the data it is coherent with, is that it would tend to cause the rise in standards observed in the four schools in the Case Study as one among a number of possible mechanisms. It is an abstraction that is coherent with the data that was collected from each of the schools in the Case Study. Two points need to be made. First, the main data source was based on the perceptions collated to explain the rising standards of four individual schools within the Case Study. Second, it was a rise in standards that corresponded to and was commensurate with the rise in standards in schools nationally over a five-year period at the time. It also prompted the Case Study that became the focus of this thesis. However, in the absence of corroborative survey data on the impact

of PM on standards of attainment in 'schools in challenging circumstances' nationally, it would be inappropriate to consider any causal connection between the two.

To be clear, a consideration of other diverse areas could and should have been made, and in at least two ways. First, the investigation within the four schools in the Case Study could have been made more expansive (see below). Second, a national survey of headteachers' perceptions of the impact of PM on standards of attainment in (their respective) 'schools in challenging circumstances', could have been carried out.

Thus, while the conceptual abstraction is arguably an oversimplification, it would be one, given the data it relates to, that requires additional evidence to review it. The many diverse areas referred to above, related to the framework of the main research question and research sub-questions used in the Case Study, could have been explored in a more expansive research design. The suggestion is that this - provided that other more significant causal chains were identified - would have resulted in the development of a different conceptual abstraction.

To recap, it is accepted that the concept based interview, incorporated by the CR position taken in the thesis, would to some extent marginalize diversity in the raw interview data. However, this has been exacerbated in the present study by a research design that could and should have adopted a more expansive approach.

4. Questions to prompt negative responses

By way of clarification, the structured interviews did not include questions that directly encouraged only positive responses. However, this is not to deny that the inclusion in the interview schedule of questions that directly encouraged negative responses about PM would have helped to go deeper into teachers' experiences of it and therefore provide for a more measured evaluation of its impact on attainment. There are questions that could have been asked to encourage, for instance, negative evaluations of PM. These could have provided a more challenging test of the positive evaluations received and made for a more measured evaluation of the impact of PM on standards.

Interviewees were given the opportunity to respond negatively in that they were asked what effect, if any, aspects of PM had on standards. They were not guided to react positively and in fact one or two responses were negative. The study went to great lengths to diminish potential interference from the legacy of union activity from past controversies and residual tension arising from the fact that the PM policy was implemented according to the constraint of recent statutory requirements. However, it would have been more appropriate to have purposefully confirmed the absence or presence of any underlying disaffection or tension toward PM within the schools of the Case Study. This is not to ignore the fact that the national PM policy for teachers was initiated through a highly structured national program of INSET for school leaders, leaving them in no doubt as to how this would work in schools, nor the close monitoring of the schools' implementation of the policy (at least for its first five years) through the input of External PM Advisers who worked with governing bodies and headteachers of all schools and Threshold Assessors who scrutinised the performance of teachers also sampled from all schools, including those in the Case Study. These DfEE-contracted consultants reported on the level of implementation, the highest of which was 'embedded' and the lowest 'not met'. The schools in the Case Study were reported by the headteachers to be categorised as 'embedded'. However, the omission referred to above is inappropriate. Conversely, including a carefully measured more expansive search for underlying tensions whether it had a positive or negative outcome makes the more structured approach to the research that was adopted less meaningful. The evaluation of the impact of PM on standards of attainment, while reasonably conclusive, is incomplete without it.

In this context, such an adjustment to the methodology would have been manageable in the early stages of the study. This is because appropriate questions could have been included in the original pilot. A lack of potentially interfering responses surfacing at this stage could have been incorporated into the research method. This would have been conceivable through minor modifications to the interview design while still incorporating the five dimensions of the policy structure.

One approach to the interview design could have been to allow subjects to give their perceptions about possible effects of the five dimensions of PM and then to follow each of these up by a question such as: *were there any other effects of lesson observation [policy dimension], including negative ones that might impede performance?* Similarly, following a subject's outline of the effects of target setting within the context of PM, a similar question would be put: *were there any other effects of target setting?* This would be repeated with each of the other dimensions of policy: i.e. use of baseline data etc.

There are other approaches to the design that could have been included, especially given the overwhelmingly positive response by teachers in both the pilot and the Case Study. For example, each interview could have been closed with just one question: *Were there any other effects of the policy, including negative ones that might impede performance, that you can recall?* However, the ultimate design, including the substance, order and arrangement of the questions, would have been influenced by whether interview effects were detected in the pilot study or not. In this context, whatever the modifications made, they would have provided for a more complete and measured evaluation.

The modifications suggested above were not made within the Case Study. I would incorporate such changes into the research method, in a more expansive approach, were I to begin the study again. However, the research has made significant progress in answering questions about the impact of Government policy like PM on controversial and difficult measures of school performance such as standards of attainment. While in developing the methodology, new questions and issues have been generated that are beyond its present scope, sufficient progress has been made to suggest that, accepting the reflections outlined, it has the potential to deal with these. In conclusion, the thesis offers an alternative approach to the scientific study of national educational policy as it impacts on school outcomes derived from a theory of social action and based upon the Transcendental Realism of Roy Bhaskar (1998). The suggestion is: the retro-ductive research strategy adopted in the Case Study, within a Transcendental Realist framework, could be considered a productive and reasonable one to take.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions and Schedules

Interview Questions for Case Study Schools

Please note that I explained to interview subjects that the questions I was about to ask were aimed at gauging the impact of PM on standards. So if I were to ask a question about the effects of leadership (I was not going to) they should consider its effects within the framework of PM policy. A key phrase underpinning all of the questions was "within PM policy."

The questions asked were:

1. What impact, if any, does/has the use of lesson observation have on teaching?
2. What impact, if any, does/has the use of lesson observation have on student learning?
3. What impact, if any, does/has the use of lesson observation have on leadership and management practices?
4. What impact, if any, does/has the use of target setting have on teaching?
5. What impact, if any, does/has the use of target setting have on student learning?
6. What impact, if any, does/has the use of target setting have on leadership and management practices?
7. What impact, if any, does/has the availability and use of student data have on teaching?
8. What impact, if any, does/has the availability and use of student data had on their learning?
9. What impact, if any, does/has the availability and use of student data had on leadership and management practices?
10. What impact, if any, does/has the use of CPD had on teaching?
11. What impact, if any, does/has the use of CPD had on student learning?
12. What impact, if any, does/has the use of CPD had on leadership and management practices?
13. What impact, if any, does/has the use of objective setting had on teaching?
14. What impact, if any, does/has the use of objective setting had on student learning?
15. What impact, if any, does/has the use of objective setting had on leadership and management practices?

Interview Questions for Policy Makers

The questions put to policy makers were within the same PM framework. I explained that I was interested in the effects of the five dimensions of PM policy. So the questions asked in a relatively unobtrusive structure were:

What would you consider the impact, if any, of:

lesson observation,

target setting,

data analysis,

CPD and

objective setting

within the framework of the national policy for PM implemented in 2000?

Interview Schedule School W

Tues 23rd Nov 2004		Wed 24th Nov 2004	
W11	0840am	W1	0915am
W6	0915am	W9	1005am
W2	1005am	W4	1105am
W7	1105am		
W5	1155am		
W10	0110pm		
W3	0200pm		
W8	0250pm		

Interview Schedule School X

Mon 6th Dec 2004		Tues 7th Dec 2004	
X6	0830am	X10	0820am
X4	0920am	X1	0920am
X2	1020am	X8	1020am
X9	1110am	X11	1110am
X5	1210pm		
X3	0205pm		
X7	0305pm		

Interview Schedule School Y

Tue 14th Dec 2004		**Wed 15th Dec 2004**	
Y11	0800am	Y2	0855am
Y10	0835am	Y8	0955am
Y6	0910am	Y7	1115am
Y4	0955am		
Y1	1115am		
Y9	1215pm		
Y3	0200pm		
Y5	0300pm		

Interview Schedule School Z

Wed 9th Feb 2005		**Thurs 10th Feb 2005**	
Z3	0900am	Z1	0900am
Z10	1000am	Z6	1000am
Z5	1115am	Z8	1115am
Z9	0100pm	Z4	0100pm
Z2	0200pm	Z7	0200pm
Z11	0330pm		

Appendix B

Thematic Analyses for Schools X, Y, Z and Policymakers

Themes Identified for Case Study School X

The Impact of Lesson Observation on Teaching, Learning and Leadership processes

On Teaching

Teachers taking part in lesson observation generally perceived it to improve their teaching practices and skills. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms reported by which lesson observation affected teaching. These were the identification of strengths and weaknesses and therefore review of teaching skills (X1, X2, X4, X5, X6, X8 and X11), sharing practice (X7, X9, X10), and according to one less experienced teacher, that lesson observation motivates teachers (X3).

Two teachers, four middle leaders and one senior leader perceived lesson observation to promote the identification of strengths and weaknesses and review of teaching. One main scale teacher made a typical comment that "it has a good effect …. makes me reflect …. keeps me focused on the things that I am doing well and not doing so well (X1).

A middle leader took a broader view in saying:

> [through lesson observation] you get to see what is going on in the classroom …. It enables you to see good practice and think about how this good practice could be disseminated across departments. It enables you to identify any weaknesses that may occur with a view to rectifying or reviewing them. (X5)

A senior leader saw this as part of a more general process of support and control. He said: "the lesson observation is there as a vehicle of help and quality control" and "it gives them [teachers] a chance to focus on their actual practice" (X11).

Two middle leaders and one senior leader perceived lesson observation to improve teaching through sharing good practice. Typically, one middle leader said, "it gives me a much better idea about where the strengths of my department are and then helps disseminate those strengths among others" (X7). A senior leader said "it also provides you with an

opportunity to give people other ideas" (X10). The comments from senior leaders may be linked to their role in the school.

One particularly inexperienced teacher found lesson observation to be motivating. She said "you need to be told, 'that strategy is a good one keep, it up'" (X3).

In summary, lesson observation was perceived to have a positive impact on teaching practices. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which lesson observation was reported to improve teaching.

On Learning

Teachers taking part in lesson observation generally perceived it to improve their teaching practices and skills. There were two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms reported by which lesson observation affected learning. They were that learning improves because teaching improves (X1, X2, X3, X5, X8, X9, X10 and X11), and learning improvement is supported by the review of learning (X6 and X7). According to one less experienced teacher, that improvement was not significant (X4).

Looking at the impact of lesson observation on student learning and the comments made by the three main scale teachers, the comment: "I think it [lesson observation] improves the teacher …. therefore helps the students because they are getting better quality lessons" is representative (X1). In the case of the four middle leaders, their view was very similar and is appropriately represented by comments like:

> it establishes where good practice is going on, what things are going well, so I can then say to the teacher what she did well and have an exchange of ideas about what the teacher was doing [teaching] to keep the students engaged on the task [learning]. (X8)

However, one middle leader made sharing practice a special case of improve-teaching-improve-learning. Lesson observation often results in "disseminating good [teaching] practice to other faculties", and this "will have an impact on most students" (X5). The

comment of the senior leader was very similar but at the next level of generality. "Areas of development are worked on, areas of strength enhanced, the quality of teaching is positively impacted and then also the quality of learning" (X11).

Lesson observation was also perceived to improve learning by encouraging the review of learners' learning. This was a view held by two middle leaders. Essentially, this was about identifying strengths and weaknesses, those who are learning well and those who are not and need support. It was to do with making teachers aware: "it means they can focus on certain students who are not experiencing what they should be experiencing" (X6). They also made the point that lesson observation took place formally and informally within the process of PM and monitoring and evaluation and outside it. "We have a lot of LSAs giving support in the classroom, so they unofficially point things out to you"(X7). In relation to this, a less experienced teacher said that "it [lesson observation] would need to be more formal and rigorous for it to have the best impact" (X4).

In summary, the impact that lesson observation was reported to have on learning fell into two quite distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms. They included improved teaching, the review of strengths and weaknesses and informal processes.

On Leading

Teachers taking part in lesson observation generally perceived it to improve leading and leadership practices and skills. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms reported through which lesson observation improved leading. These were monitoring and evaluation (X1, X3, X5, X7, X8 and X11), more effective sharing of good practice (X6, X9 and X10) and support for staff allocation and development (X2). According to one less experienced teacher, it was not formally happening (X4).

Focussing on the impact of lesson observation on leadership and management practices, and the comments made by the main scale teachers about monitoring and evaluation, the main scale teachers recognised the need for managers to identify areas to be prioritised for their development. "Senior management can check the strengths and weaknesses of teachers" and "think about what training courses they might want to go on" (X1). Such

comments are consistent with those made by middle leaders. However, comments about their motivating and leadership role are implicit in the case of the latter; for example: "the positive effect is that it gives me chance to see my colleagues in practice and where things are going well to praise them and also to show them how to improve if there is a problem" (X5). For another middle leader, lesson observation supported the monitoring and evaluation process in setting expectations - "it sets out the department's expectations" - and through observation: "you expect them to have high expectations of their pupils … I think that lesson observation is part of the management process" (X8). For senior leaders lesson observation ensured that policy was implemented: "it gives you a clarity of thought about what is going on in the classroom. …. It has a positive impact for us because we get to see all of the things that we have on paper actually implemented" (X11).

Two middle leaders and one senior leader thought that lesson observation positively impacted on leadership and management by helping to share good practice. One, typically, commented:

> it gives me an idea of what is going on in my department. …. I think it would be really invaluable, not just for me but for other teachers to go around and see how things are going on in different areas. How things are going well, what things work in different areas, why things work in different areas, the impact it has on the department. (X9)

One main scale teacher commented on how lesson observation helped prioritise the allocation of resources, particularly staff. He made the comment, "groups that I was teaching would be appropriate to my strengths and therefore what groups I would be appropriate for." Similarly, "if there were concerns or positives from observations, then that would be fed back and developed on" (X2).

Finally, one less experienced teacher was unable to form an opinion on the impact of lesson observation on management because he thought it had not been properly or "formally" introduced (X4).

In summary, the use of lesson observation was perceived to have a positive impact on leadership practices. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which it was reported to improve leading and leadership.

To conclude, the use of lesson observation was reported to have a positive effect on teaching, learning and leadership practices at School X. The full range of perceptions of the processes reported by which it improved teaching, learning and leadership were incorporated by the themes discussed above. It is possible that these teacher perceptions of the processes generating improvement may be connected to their organisational role. The perceptions of leaders, including middle leaders, would appear to reflect their more evaluative and whole-school role. In addition, they reflected an underlying vision that implied a commitment to independent learning.

The Impact of Target Setting on Teaching, Learning and Leadership processes

On Teaching

Teachers generally perceive target setting to improve teaching skills. There were two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms reported by which target setting improved teaching. These were the development of teaching strategies (X2, X3, X4, X5, X7, X9 and X11) and the enhancement of expectations (X1, X6, X8 and X10).

Considering the impact of target setting on teaching and the comments made by those who thought that it helped develop teaching strategies, main scale teachers said it affected what and how they taught. One teacher referred to "a lot of impact" and "I have to differentiate massively" in illustrating the impact on strategy. For example, in an English lesson, "there was a lot more modelling with the target C groups, where I was showing them how to get a C grade, whereas with the A*-C group there was more of an independence". Conversely, she went on to say that whereas "I would do more modelling with my target C group I would do a lot more scaffolding with my target E group" (X4). Middle leaders similarly discussed how to focus teaching on a particular type of learner: "it helps you to crystallise

very clear bullet points of how a student could improve an aspect of their work" (X7). However, one senior leader emphasised the management implications related to the use of target setting in saying that:

> it focuses teachers in terms of their schemes of work, and pupils in terms of where they are going and what they have to do; it also makes teachers more explicit in giving the pupils the information they need to move on from level to level. (X11)

Another effect that target setting was perceived to have on teaching is raised expectations. A main scale teacher commented, "it gives them [teachers] an awareness of the potential of a student and can bring grades up because teachers are aware of what the child should achieve" (X1). Middle leaders made similar comments but they also emphasised the motivational effects of target setting: "if you know what you are aiming for and what your goal is, then you will try by whatever means you can by varying teaching skills to try and reach that goal" (X6). A senior leader was similarly aware of the motivational consequences in saying "I think it gives you something to aim at" but also to do with efficiency and value for money in making related comments like "you can focus energy on where it has to go, to make sure you achieve it [the aim]" (X10).

In summary, target setting was perceived to have a positive impact on teaching practices. There were two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which it was reported to improve teaching.

On Learning

Teachers generally perceive target setting to improve learning or achievement. There were two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms reported by which target setting affected learning. These were motivating learners (X1, X2, X3, X6, X7 and X9) and enabling learning to take place through a clearly identified route to achievement (X4, X5, X8, X10 and X11).

In addressing the impact of target setting on learning and the comments made by those who thought that it helped motivate learners, one main scale teachers said:

> target setting does help children to be aware of what they can achieve, it can be quite surprising for children to know that the level they are working at is far below what their potential is [so that] at parents evening, informing parents and students of this can produce a marked increase in the child's efforts. (X1)

However, while the general consensus of opinion is positive, one main scale teacher acknowledged that a small minority of students could be de-motivated by target setting (X2). Middle leaders demonstrated a broader understanding of this. In the first place, they identified where target setting works best: for example, "younger students seem to respond favourably to achievable short term targets" (X9).

According to another group of interviewees, target setting implicitly offered an identified route to a learning outcome. The impact this was perceived to have on standards was generally positive. A main scale teacher explained this very simply by saying to students "in order to be successful on this piece of coursework [to achieve a particular target] you need to do this". However, she also made a quite sweeping generalisation: "I don't think that students are aware enough of their targets with regard to learning" (X4). Middle leaders generally agreed with the view that target setting offered a clearly identified pathway to achievement but tended to be more analytical about attempting to identify when this was most effective and why it was effective. One middle leader emphasised the importance of smart targets and explained outcomes in terms of engagement and independence in the learning process (X5). In attempting to explain the effects of target setting, the middle leader commented:

> it empowers them, they understand what they can achieve, passing them the responsibility. It improves their learning because it allows them to take control and take responsibility for what they achieve. (X5)

This perception was also symptomatic of that of a senior leader who attempted to explain why learners achieved more through target setting by referring to greater independence and therefore engagement in learning. She did this by linking target setting "to other initiatives like Assessment for Learning" (X10). Interestingly she explained why target setting enhanced learning by engaging students, placing this in context she gave a possible mechanism for its motivating effects (X10). Comments like these demonstrated an understanding of why target setting works thus: "we set specific targets and give them the vehicles to reach those targets, learning then followed where they [pupils] felt able to reach those goals" (X11).

Briefly, target setting was perceived to have a positive impact on learning in its various forms. There were two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which it was reported to improve learning.

On Leading

Teachers generally perceived target setting to support leadership. However, one main scale teacher and one middle leader thought that target setting was not properly embedded in the departments in which they worked. Apart from these, there were two distinct themes of perceptions and potential mechanisms reported by which target setting improved leadership processes. These were the support of monitoring and evaluation (X1, X2, X3, X5, X6, X7 and X11) and planning for improvement (X9 and X10). Other perceptions were considered ambiguous (X4, X8,).

Considering the impact of target setting on leading and the comments made by those who thought that it helped monitoring and evaluation. These were made partly because they thought that one of the aims of monitoring and evaluation would be to ensure that the learners' rate of progress was appropriate. In this context, one main scale teacher said:

> in our meetings, we review where groups are and how they are achieving compared to their targets, whether they are moving forward or not. If a group was not moving forward, then additional support would be given. (X2)

Middle leaders were more concerned with the bigger picture, across and within departments, and to some extent the systems and procedures generated in response to the monitoring requirements of the process of target setting (X5). In this context, one middle leader commented:

> [it is the role] of the faculty leader to monitor the quality of the targets set and whether they are achieved, and what procedures are put into place to monitor whether they are achieved. (X6)

For one senior leader it provided a means by which monitoring and evaluation could be carried out in a collaborative and open fashion:

> It makes it [monitoring and evaluation] a more cohesive responsibility. [So that] in an ideal environment people will be able to say their class are not hitting the targets and can be advised about what they should be doing. (X11)

One middle and one senior leader thought that one effect of target setting was to set expectations about planning. As they put it, "target setting clarifies the achievement agenda" and "supports action planning" (X9). "It is about focusing the leadership … planning ahead" (X10), particularly in terms of the curriculum of what learners need to do to achieve (X10).

Finally, one main scale teacher and one middle leader, both teachers of English, thought that there were ambiguities in the way that target setting had been implemented in the school. The main scale teacher thought that it was not explicit and therefore not reliable enough, and so she would use it with more extreme cases where specific targets could be used effectively (X4). The middle leader thought that the systems used were complicated and insufficiently robust and so would not base managerial decisions on target setting, but would use it to some extent for monitoring purposes, e.g. monitoring lesson plans (X8).

To summarize, target setting was perceived to have a positive impact on leading and leadership practices. There were two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which target setting was reported to improve leading and leadership.

In conclusion, target setting was reported to have a positive effect on teaching, learning and leadership practices at School X. The full range of perceptions of the processes reported by which the use of target setting improved teaching, learning and leadership were incorporated by the themes discussed above. It is possible that these teacher perceptions of the processes generating improvement may be connected to their organisational role. The perception of leaders, including middle leaders, generally reflects a more strategic and whole-school role

The Impact of the Use of Baseline Data on Teaching, Learning and Leadership processes

On Teaching

Teachers generally perceived the use of baseline data to improve teaching skills. There were three types of themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms reported through which the use of baseline data was perceived to affect teaching. These were changes to teaching strategy (X1, X2, X5, X6 and X10), more effective planning and target setting (X3, X4, X7, X8 and X9) and raised expectations of teachers (X11).

Focussing on the impact of the use of baseline data on teaching and the comments made by those who thought that it helped select more effective teaching strategies, a comment made by one main scale teacher is illustrative of this perception. She referred to a profound impact that the use of baseline data had on teaching strategies, saying that as well as differentiating teaching, "it can also affect behaviour management and what strategies you might need to employ" (X1). A middle leader asserted that "target setting was essential to teaching at this school because it helped to direct teaching at the children's needs" (X6). One senior leader was similarly representative of the view about pitching lessons at the right level and employing appropriate teaching strategies:

you have to adapt your teaching skills to the environment that you are in, because different types of teaching will suit different types of pupils and it is very easy to see from the baseline data what you have in front of you, so that you know what techniques are going to be suitable for what types of students. (X10)

However, in this instance there appears not to be a significant link between seniority or organisational structure and the effect of the use of baseline data and teaching strategy.

On the other hand, the use of baseline data had an effect on planning and the perception of this effect may be linked to the role of the interviewee in the organisational structure. In the case of the main scale teacher, it was simply a matter of using the baseline data to more effectively plan for lessons. "National Curriculum levels … give you an idea of how good students are at spoken English, so it helps you with the forward planning of the lesson" (X3). For the middle leader, it was more to do with their managerial role, such as planning how to deploy resources. The following comment is relevant:

It has helped me personally focus on need and to work with other managers in the school to move the agenda forward in terms of how effectively we are targeting resources to those who need them most. (X9)

However, one middle leader refocused discussion around lesson planning in saying "I can pitch my lessons much better when I have a set of baseline data (X8). Establishing a link between the interviewee's role in the organisational structure and their perception of the impact of the use of baseline data on planning was frequently but not always possible.

A main scale teacher and a middle leader perceived the main effect of the use of baseline data to be through setting and forming teaching groups. The middle leader said:

It has a huge impact on how we arrange groups in the department…. All the groups in English are in sets and so it is essential that we try and make the correct choices. It also informs the arrangement of children within a class. (X7)

In this case it was therefore difficult to form conclusions about organisational role and the perceived impact of the use of baseline data.

Raising expectations within a school is usually the role of leadership and management. In this respect, comments about the relevance of the use of baseline data to raising expectations were especially important. One senior leader commented "previously the school had a difficulty with low expectations and that is something that we had to tackle using baseline data as a minimum" (X11). While this comment suggested that there was a link between the interviewees' role and their perception of the effect of the use of baseline data on teaching generally, it was not always possible to demonstrate this link.

In summary, the use of baseline data was perceived to have a positive impact on teaching. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which the use of baseline data was reported to improve teaching.

On Learning

Teachers generally perceived the use of baseline data to improve learning. There were two themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms through which the use of baseline data was reported to affect learning. These were shaping or determining the learning environment, e.g. through planning, grouping, engaging students better (X1, X2, X3, X7, X4, X6, X8, X9 and X10) and motivating students to learn more effectively (X5 and X11).

Looking at the impact of the use of baseline data on learning and the comments made by those who thought that it helped select, shape or determine the learning environment, such as through planning, grouping, engaging students better etc., the comment made by one main scale teacher was illustrative of this perception:

> It tends to help adjust the way I teach them and the tasks I set. There are students in
> my groups who need additional support, and that is part of the influence it brings. I

tend to gear my teaching style; with my bottom set I do more hands-on activities

where we do less talk at the front. (X2)

Such comments were equally representative of both middle and senior leaders. One middle leader asserted, "when I am talking about learning, I am talking about the materials that are appropriate for individual children, categorised by their baseline data" (X8). Similarly, a senior leader thought that learning improved because "teaching strategy is much better informed by data on levels of learning and this has had a big impact on planning lessons" (X10). The implication of these statements is that they potentially question the connection between a teacher's perception and their role within the organisation.

Next I consider the perceived motivational effects of the use of baseline data. Teachers who acknowledged the motivational effects on students of the use of baseline data did in fact have a leadership role. One middle leader illustrated this point in saying that knowledge of attainment levels "usually spurs them on to achieve better things and therefore it does impact on their learning [as a self esteem thing]" (X5). A senior leader took this a step further, emphasising the motivational effects of the use of baseline data as a part of a deliberate, contrived or planned managerial process. She commented, "it is very powerful when it is shared with students in a positive and constructive way, showing students what they have achieved so far and what they can achieve if they do such and such" (X11). In other words, when baseline data is used in a constructive way "students find it very positive and motivating" (X11).

In summary, the use of baseline data was perceived to have a positive impact on learning and there were two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which it was reported to improve the way pupils learned.

On Leading

Teachers generally perceived the use of baseline data to support leadership and leading. There were three themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which the use of baseline data was reported to affect leading. These were enhancing monitoring and

evaluation processes (X1, X5, X7 and X10); planning teaching groups (including staffing allocation) and strategies to address teaching and learning needs (X2, X3, X4, X6, X8 and X11) and raising expectations (X9).

Considering the impact of the use of baseline data on leadership and management, the significance of the effect of monitoring and evaluation was found to be a quite commonly held perception. One main scale teacher felt "it can help inform your monitoring of teachers by looking at what students are achieving" relative to baseline data (X1). A middle leader commented "schools are held accountable …. and there will be a requirement that a certain number of students of a certain level are part of the focus of the leadership group" (X5). A senior leader perceived the monitoring role to be linked to matching teachers with learners: "as a leadership tool I think you can say look at the class and match the way you are going to deliver the teaching to the profile of students" (X10). The generalised perception was one in which main scale teachers anticipate being more effectively monitored and those with leadership responsibilities doing the monitoring more effectively.

Another commonly held perception was that it helped planning. Main scale teachers referred to the planning of lessons and the formation of teaching groups. The comment "it helps forward planning of the lesson and meeting the needs of individual pupils" (X3) is illustrative. Those with a leadership role were inclined to make a more whole school related comment: for example, the use of baseline data enables "the right mixture of support of people and support in class, they can achieve so much" (X6). One senior leader suggests "I think it focuses leaders on what pupils can achieve; it helps us plan the way we implement whole-school matters like revision programmes, target setting pupils" (X11).

Surprisingly, staff allocation was identified by both main scale teachers and those with a leadership responsibility. Statements like "we take it [baseline data] into account when we are looking at how to structure the groups" (X2) and "it is about equipping the groups to suit the teachers and the groups' best interests" (X2) that were made by a main scale

teacher were representative of the perceptions of both leaders and led. This perception therefore appeared to be unrelated to the role of the teacher in the organisation.

One middle leader referred to the effect of the use of baseline data on teacher expectations. Expectation here was not restricted to student achievement. He made the comment, "it has had a powerful impact on …. the field of the management of student achievement" (X9). This applied "particularly in relation to challenging student behaviour, which is now informed by the data" (X9).

In summary, the use of baseline data was perceived to have a positive impact on leadership practices. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which it was reported to improve leading and leadership.

To conclude, the use of baseline data was reported to have a positive effect on teaching, learning and leadership practices at School X. The full range of perceptions of the processes reported by which the use of baseline data improved teaching, learning and leadership was incorporated by the themes outlined above. Teacher perceptions of the processes generating improvement generally reflected their organisational role. The perceptions of leaders, including middle leaders, appeared to be more evaluative and whole-school oriented.

The Impact of the Use of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) on Teaching, Learning and Leadership processes

On Teaching

Teachers generally perceive CPD to impact positively on teaching. There were four themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms through which CPD was reported to affect teaching. These were enhancing teaching (X1, X3, X4, X5, X6, X7, X8 and X10), the development of professional practice (X9), only when school-focused (X11) and according to one perception, very little effect (X2).

Addressing the effect of CPD on teaching generally and teaching strategies more specifically, one main scale teacher commented that CPD "refreshes your teaching …. makes you look anew at your teaching …. and you are able to see how your teaching can improve" (X1). According to middle leaders, it was important in the development of the skills required to use particular resources: "help us to teach better the skills they [students] need to learn using a particular package …. helping to raise levels of learning"(X5). This was a view that was also shared by a senior leader in talking about whiteboard technology: "if it is good CPD …. you will learn from it, sharing and developing your practice accordingly" (X10). In the case of those teachers who referred to the effect CPD had on the development of teaching strategies, one main scale teacher's comment was illustrative: "courses have helped me in the classroom to deliver lessons" using changed strategies and resources (X3). Senior leaders' comments were more to do with the development and sharing of strategies. "CPD helps people to reflect on their teaching practices…areas that they could develop. [It] helps them to become better teachers … and is an opportunity to share in good practice" (X10).

CPD affected the development of professional practice, including that of teaching. However, a middle leader made the point that training can make teachers "reflective and dynamic in their practice" (X9): this would not only affect teaching but other areas too. This is "because of the ability to constantly improve your own practice through the outcomes of objective setting" (X9). It's possible "that I seek training on a particular issue, I gain that experience and my practice improved [on that issue and more widely]" (X9).

One senior leader recognised the positive effect that CPD had on teaching and made a stronger evaluative, management, point "in-house developing has a much bigger impact on the staff and therefore the children later" (X11). This was particularly relevant to the comment made by one main scale teacher from an underachieving department, which I understood, from the head of department, was restricted to specific types of CPD because of its relatively inexperienced, poorly qualified personnel.

In summary, the perceptions reported were generally positive. Those that were positive formed three types of theme.

On Learning

Teachers generally perceive CPD to improve learning. There were three types of themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which CPD was reported to affect learning. They included the view that it improved teaching and therefore learning improved (X1, X3, X4, X7, X8, X9, X10 and X11), that it enabled teachers to more easily identify learning needs (X5, X6 and X9) and that it had little or no effect. (X2).

Focussing on the impact of the use of CPD on learning perceived to arise directly from an improvement in teaching, one main scale teacher made a representative comment in saying "the more strategies, teaching styles and different aspects of teaching teachers are exposed to, then the better the lesson" (X1), and by implication, the better the learning. One middle leader was explicit about the use of different teaching media, suggesting that teaching through "the new software options to include in the curriculum will lead to a more enjoyable learning experience" (X7), while another talked about such changes in the context of the development of the whole school (X8). A senior leader talked about "good teachers sharing good practice, everybody's teaching is going to be better and if the teaching is better the learning for the students would be better also" (X10). This last, more holistic comment about teaching was fairly representative of those made by senior managers; another being "we introduced the concept of three-part lessons and it revolutionised many people's teaching" (X11).

One middle leader perceived the main effect of CPD as being to encourage a better understanding of students' needs. You return "to the classroom being more reflective and with a better understanding [of] where the pupils are coming from more" (X6). However, the impact of CPD could be influenced by the learning potential and capacity of the personnel who are the subject of this and it might explain why sometimes "the outcome is not always significant" (X2).

In summary, perceptions of the effects of CPD on students' learning were generally positive even where the circumstances were exceptional. Positive interviewee perceptions were incorporated into two types of theme.

On Leading

Teachers generally perceived CPD to support leading and leadership processes. There were two types of themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which CPD was reported to affect leadership. These were planning (X7, X8 and X9), and enhanced training and development, including leadership skills (X1, X3, X5, X6, X10 and X11). Two teachers reported little or no effect (X2 and X4).

Considering improved planning as an effect of CPD on leadership and management middle leaders referred to CPD and "its effect on planning to raise achievement" (X7), as well as improved planning to "support teaching to meet the needs of learners" (X8). The following comment is illustrative: "dialogue between team members and leaders are more focused on the achievement agenda [and plans]. [So that] relationships are more professional [and focused] because of CPD" (X9).

CPD was reported to promote improvement as it brought "a fresh approach and thinking about new developments and the work that we do has to have a good effect on the department" (X1). The comment made by a middle leader appears to be significant here, in saying that the most effective training was "when staff critically look at themselves and set themselves targets for development" (X5). Synchronising professional and career development is symptomatic of the view held by senior leaders and is also relevant to whole-school planning. As one senior leader said, "it (CPD) can be a very useful tool for focusing on areas that you want to develop as a whole school" (X10).

That CPD can affect an improvement on leadership skills directly was not forgotten by one main scale teacher when she cited LfM training and the positive impact that it had (X3). A middle leader supported this statement and took it one step beyond training in management in saying:

overall, as long as the whole faculty is getting more CPD that makes for a more skilled team [whether management skills are enhanced or not], this makes the leadership of it easier. (X6)

Two main scale teachers were uncertain about the overall impact of CPD on leadership in raising standards. One said leadership was limited in that outcomes were not clearly defined "as far as objectives in terms of specific teaching of students" (X2). This was a comment illustrative of the perceptions of two main scale teachers from two distinct curriculum areas. However, this is not to undermine the effect of CPD on leadership and management: it is only to indicate its limits in School X.

The impact of CPD on leadership at School X was reported to have a positive effect on it. There were two themes or potential mechanisms identified, arising from the analysis of the perceptions reported.

To conclude, CPD was reported to have a positive effect on teaching, learning and leadership practices at School X. The full range of perceptions of the processes reported by which it improved teaching, learning and leadership was incorporated by the themes discussed above. Teacher perceptions of the processes generating improvement were generally representative of their organisational role. The perceptions of leaders, including middle leaders, were reflective of a more strategic and whole school role.

The Impact of Objective Setting (Appraisal) on Teaching, Learning and Leadership processes

On Teaching

Teachers generally perceived the use of objective setting to improve teaching skills. There were two themes of perceptions by which objective setting was reported to affect teaching . These were improvement or development in teaching (X1, X3, X4, X5, X6, X7, X9, X10

and X11) and a better focus on student groups (X8). In one instance teaching objectives were not set: therefore no impact on teaching (X2).

For main scale teachers, there were varying effects, including improved focus of effort and motivation. One main scale teacher commented, "we are continually using different strategies, different methods of teaching and objective setting [appraisal] aids that …. it can be encouraging" (X3). In the case of middle leaders, there was a general feeling of improved purpose that would impact on teaching provided the objective set was linked to learning outcomes. One middle leader's comments were illustrative of this point: "it could have a positive impact on teaching [provided it] is directly related to learning outcomes" (X5). In the case of a senior leader, as well as purpose and direction, partnership and collaboration were also emphasised:

> [Objectives] should be agreed and have to be for purposes of development. If not agreed by the teacher who is going to accept those objectives, then it is an imposition and would not lead to development. (X11)

If there were a significance about a link between interviewee perception and role in the organisational structure, it would be that comments are more evaluative when linked to a leadership role. Comments by the same senior leader supported this. She said:

> individual review meetings give the teacher time to reflect on their practice …. and turn it into a strength. [Related to this] whole-school objectives set by the Headteacher each year, have less impact [compared to individual ones]. (X11)

One middle leader perceived the main effect to be on "identifying student groups to target in raising achievement" (X8). It would seem that as long as teachers were set pupil progress objectives, then there was unanimous agreement that objective setting would have an effect. However, there was one main scale teacher who had been set tasks, unrelated to pupil progress, rather than objectives. He made the comment, "I would say that I haven't been set true objectives" (X2).

In summary, the use of objective setting was perceived to have a positive impact on teaching practices. There were two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which it was reported to improve teaching where objectives were set.

On Learning

Teachers generally perceived objective setting to improve learning. There were two themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms through which objective setting was reported to affect learning. These were the perception that it improves teaching and so therefore learning improves (X1, X3, X5, X7, X9, X10 and X11) and that it had positive effects on learning when linked to pupil progress, as this enabled teachers to more easily identify learning needs (X6 and X8). It was not applicable in two cases (X2 and X4).

Looking at the impact of the use of objective setting on learning perceived to arise directly from improved teaching, there were a number of views. They included improving the effectiveness of a given teaching strategy, as illustrated by the comment of one main scale teacher, "because it focuses on the things they need to develop [in their teaching], it will then impact on the learning in the classroom" (X1). Another main scale teacher suggested that it made the teacher consider a range of strategies to improve learning: she said objective setting "can give you ideas and different strategies to encourage more learning to go on in the classroom" (X3). One middle leader said "it helps you to develop as a teacher so that you can engage learners more effectively and so raise their levels of learning" (X7). These views are illustrative of main scale teachers, middle leaders and senior leaders. However, both senior leaders referred to the impact of objective setting on teachers, teaching and therefore learning throughout the school. In addition, one senior leader made the point that it was the concerted effort of teachers through a common objective that had the most significant impact. She said, "I think it is a whole school objective that really impacts across the board on student learning" (X11). The suggestion is that there is a link between organisational position and perception of the effect of objective setting on student learning.

Positive effects were reported when the objective set was about student progress or more tenuously linked to learning. One middle leader commented: "where an objective is directly related to specific issues [learning outcomes] then it can have a positive effect on both teaching and learning" (X6). For example, attainment improved in a particular student group "when [the teacher] was given strategies on how to motivate GCSE Science students" (X6). Another middle leader interpreted this as improvement by developing students' learning: "it gave me reason to look for weaknesses in my pupils and try to address those weaknesses" (X8).

Finally, two main scale teachers perceived that objective setting had little effect on their teaching and therefore little effect on learning. They made the point that this was because specific objectives to do with student learning or progress had not been set: "it is not made clear what we are going to do in terms of pupil progress" (X4).

In summary, objective setting generally has a positive effect on student learning. The themes identified arising from an analysis of reported perceptions fell into two broad categories

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On Leading

Teachers generally perceive objective setting to support leading and leadership processes. There were two types of themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which objective setting was reported to improve leading and leadership processes, namely improved coordination and development of performance (X1, X5, X6, X7, X8, X9, X10 and X11) and improved motivation (X3). Two main scale teachers reported that it had little or no effect (X2 and X4).

The theme of improved coordination and sense of purpose as a potential mechanism for improvement is one that is common to all middle leaders. One commented, "as a leader of the department I know what is going on and I can have a dialogue with my teachers based on the objectives set" (X8). "It gives more coherence to what we are doing" (X8).

Comments about coordinating teams and departments were symptomatic of the leadership role, particularly middle leaders. Perceptions held by senior leaders were generally more concerned with development, particularly the longer-term personal development of teams of staff, linked to expectations and career. One senior leader's comments were representative and refer to discussions held "with each individual in [their] team, [their] expectations" (X11) for and of them. The same senior leader said "you recognise the fact that everybody can develop and you involve yourself in people's development" (X11). One main scale teacher also recognised that the effect of objective setting was to support personal development, deemed a leadership function, saying:

> it makes a department more vibrant because people are made to think about personal development and then look to be supported in what training courses they want to go on to help them achieve their objectives. (X1)

However, senior leaders in this instance talked about setting expectations whereas the main scale teacher explained how objective setting helped leaders help them to do their work. The link of the practitioner's perception with their organisational role has some significance.

One main scale teacher perceived that the mechanism by which objective setting might support leadership was by motivating teachers. She made the comment that it "really gave me inspiration and encouraged me, whereas [without it] sometimes you can just get caught up in teaching" (X3). The perception here relates to how objective setting helped leadership to help teachers do their job more effectively.

Two main scale teachers were unable to evaluate the impact of objective setting on leadership practices because the policy was not implemented properly. One main scale teacher said, "I have not been set proper objectives" (X1).

To summarize, objective setting generally had a positive effect on leading and leadership practices. There were two themes of perceptions that reported an improvement.

In conclusion, the use of objective setting was reported to have a positive effect on teaching, learning and leadership practices at School X. The full range of perceptions of the processes reported by which the use of objective setting improved teaching, learning and leadership were incorporated by the themes discussed above, except where perceptions were not properly formed. Teacher perceptions of the processes generating improvement may be connected to their organisational role. For example, the perceptions of leaders, including middle leaders, were generally more evaluative and whole-school oriented.

Themes Identified for Case Study School Y

The Impact of Lesson Observation on Teaching, Learning and Leadership processes

On Teaching

Teachers taking part in lesson observation generally perceived it to improve their teaching practices and skills. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms reported by which lesson observation affected teaching. These were the identification of strengths and weaknesses and therefore review of teaching skills (Y3, Y4, Y5, Y7, Y8, Y9 and Y11), sharing practice (Y2, Y6 and Y10) and motivating both teachers and learners (Y1).

One main scale teacher who perceived lesson observation to promote the identification of strengths and weaknesses and review of teaching commented, "you need someone to look at your teaching and tell you what you can do to develop further …. There is always something you can improve and learn as a result" (Y3). In contrast, middle leaders were inclined to make less personal and more whole-school comments, like:

> lesson observation enables you to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the staff. You are then able to identify areas of in-service training…. It provides a base for dialogue between the [middle leader] and the teacher for a number of areas: short-term planning, delivery pace of a lesson, opportunity for reflection and evaluation and professional development needs. (Y5)

Senior leader comments put more emphasis on how a structure (lesson observation) could be more effectively used to bring about the effect or outcome, i.e. improvement in teaching. This comment was representative: "it is all very well to go in to someone's lesson and say this is good and this is your target, you need to have a developmental approach. The feedback should be quick, detailed and evidence based" (Y11).

Sharing practice at this school was a theme or potential mechanism perceived by both a middle leader and two main scale teachers. Comments about the effects of lesson observation were very positive, particularly in terms of sharing practice: both middle leaders and main scale teachers were approving of "informal lesson observation in terms of shared practice and identification of best practice" (Y6). However, comments about lesson observation through PM were interestingly evaluative for a main scale teacher, such as:

> to be observed once specifically for the benefits of PM seems ….. a woefully inadequate token gesture [and] is not necessarily going to give you the information you need unless shared through other observations. (Y2)

A senior leader was supportive of this but also commented on the management aspects of it and the requirement of sensitive handling to make it work, as well as the requirement that it should be a regular occurrence. She made the comment, "as long as it is done in a positive way….. I think it has to be something that other teachers are not worried about" (Y10). She also said "we do it as a round robin, so that I'll observe, another person in my department will observe another and then someone will observe me" (Y10), the implication being that it works.

One main scale teacher found lesson observation to be motivating and said: "I love having people in my lesson because of the act of talking it through with someone else. [When] somebody comes in and does a positive observation, that is very motivating" (Y1).

In summary, the use of lesson observation was perceived to have a positive impact on teaching practices. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which lesson observation was reported to improve teaching.

On Learning

Teachers who took part in lesson observation generally perceived it to improve their teaching. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms through which lesson observation was reported to affect learning. These were that learning improves because teaching improves (Y1, Y5, Y6, Y10 and Y11); improvement in learning

through the review of learning (Y2, Y3, Y4, Y8 and Y9) and according to one middle leader, the effect was slow (Y7).

Looking at the impact of lesson observation on student learning, when improved teaching improved learning, one teacher commented "improving strategies for learning [happen] because you share ideas and thinking" (Y1) about teaching the lesson "in the best way" (Y1). One middle leader said teaching has improved learning because "differentiation has been better and the level of questions and answers has improved. The impact on learning is … improvements can be seen in students' books and their response to the style of question" (Y6). Comments made by senior leaders implied better planning and therefore development for improved learning. Lesson observation enabled teachers "to see other things that are happening within the classroom that can't always be seen by the teacher" (Y11). The net effect reported was "improved lesson planning that should in turn lead to enhanced learning outcomes for the students" (Y10).

Another group of teachers suggested that lesson observation had a more significant impact on learning directly through a mechanism of review. One main scale teacher made the comment that, "it helps identify students who are not meeting their full potential" (Y3), for example, and "it makes you plan your lesson and ensure differentiation" (Y3). The broader consequences of lesson observation were identified by two middle leaders. They identified the effects of lesson observation in the wider sense of the lesson, which included work/book scrutiny and homework and also student behaviour. So "having another pair of eyes … seeing how students respond to teaching, looking at students' books and homework" (Y8) was reported to generate a process of review and evaluation of learning.

Finally, one middle leader drew attention to the delayed effect of lesson observation on learning compared to the prompt initiation of planning to improve by those observed. "I think it is slower sometimes to get the evidence that it has an impact and will take longer to see the effects on the teaching." (Y7).

Briefly, the impact of lesson observation on learning, while varying in perceived effect on learning, was generally reported to be positive. There were three distinct of themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which the use of lesson observation was reported to improve learning.

On Leadership

Teachers taking part in lesson observation generally perceived it to enhance leadership in a variety of different ways. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which lesson observation was reported to affect teaching. These were through monitoring and evaluation (Y1, Y2, Y3, Y6, Y8, Y9, Y10 and Y11); reviewing practice (Y4 and Y5) and sharing of practice (Y7).

Focusing on the theme of monitoring and evaluation, one middle leader commented:

> it [lesson observation] informs whole-school professional development in the sense that it identifies needs for professional development. It identifies areas [in discussion with other leaders] that need to be addressed as a whole. So you get a corporate overview, which then results in action. (Y9)

Another commented, "senior management can be aware of what is going on around the school" (Y8). In the case of the senior leaders, monitoring and evaluation was reported to be enhanced because:

> it is another way of gathering evidence about what is going on in the department. It is not the only means, but it is one of the means to see how progress is being made in teaching and learning, and developing the targets and the curriculum. (Y11)

"It supports it [leadership], it is important that you know what is going on in the classroom, whether there is learning happening" (Y10).

In the case of the effect of reviewing practice generated by lesson observation, one middle leader said, "we are aware of what the gaps are in the department and what we can do" (Y5). Similarly, another said lesson observation helps as a "kind of self review, not only on the individual that is being observed, but you observing as a line manager to see what progress is being made by the teacher" (Y4). A middle leader referred to expected improvements that arise from lesson observation; thus, one commented, "to improve practice we set targets for teachers that set them to run better lessons" (Y9).

Sharing practice was another perceived theme or potential mechanism, arising from lesson observations, that supported leadership. One middle leader said, "in terms of how people would use different sorts of activities, some may be more practical based whereas others may have different strengths and styles of teaching" (Y7). This perception was reinforced by the comment:

> lesson observations lead to a concentration of ideas: better ideas of how teachers can teach and children can learn. [As a leader] you will either see things in common that are working well or areas of weakness that are not. (Y7)

The implication of this perception is that the sharing of practice was reported to be coordinated by leadership.

Lesson observation was perceived to have a positive impact on leadership practices. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms through which lesson observation was reported to improve leading and leadership.

In conclusion, lesson observation was reported to have a positive effect on teaching, learning and leadership practices at School Y. The full range of perceptions of the processes reported by which the use of lesson observation improved teaching, learning and leadership were incorporated by the themes discussed above. It is possible that these teacher perceptions of the processes generating improvement may be connected to their

organisational role. The perceptions of leaders, including middle leaders, would appear to reflect their more strategic and whole-school role

The Impact of Target Setting on Teaching, Learning and Leadership processes

On Teaching

Teachers taking part in target setting generally perceived it to improve their teaching practices and or skills. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which target setting was reported to affect teaching. These were the appropriate identification of teaching level (Y1, Y2, Y3, Y6, Y7, Y8 and Y9); positive effect on expectations (Y4, Y5 and Y10) and review of strengths and weakness of teaching practices (Y11).

In considering the theme of improved identification of teaching level, one main scale teacher made a representative comment: "it impacts on my teaching in that I am constantly reminded of their [the group's] targets and so I adapt" (Y3). Similarly, another said: "in terms of affecting classroom teaching, I use it for post-event analysis to ensure the teaching is appropriate" (Y2). This teacher also commented that target setting "can be quite a good motivator" (Y2). A middle leader concluded that target setting

> makes it [teaching] more focused because the kids have to achieve the targets and you have to, as a teacher, enable them to do that, there is no point having a target if you don't do the teaching activities that enable them to achieve [their targets]. (Y6)

This view was articulated by another middle leader, who commented:

> we level the classes according to SATs, CATs and EAL ……. from that we try to put them into a reasonable number of cohorts and match the curriculum to needs levels or ability. So I think there is quite a direct connection between target setting

and teaching .... [in that you are made to] think about how you can adapt materials [to teach the groups formed]. (Y7)

In the case of affecting expectations, one main scale teacher said "the only way that our teaching changes by setting targets is if we have a large number of students who are borderline. Your teaching changes towards those students" (Y4). Similarly, a middle leader commented, "it informs your expectations for a particular group and this means that you actually teach to the expectation of what the group can actually do and what the group are actually capable of doing" (Y5). A senior leader linked individual students' targets to group targets and finally cohort targets in putting the effect of target setting on teaching in context. He said, "being aware of the potential of classes [from baseline data], it is important to know what the previous attainment is and being able to focus your teaching at the right level, knowing what the target is" (Y10).

Finally, one senior leader perceived this to impact directly on standards through promotion of review. She said "it [target setting] sets a way forward to raise levels and look at weaknesses and improve them" (Y11).

In summary, the impact of target setting on teaching, while varying in theme and/or the mechanism by which it was reported to operate, was generally positive. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which target setting was reported to improve teaching.

On Learning

Teachers taking part in target setting generally perceived it to improve student learning and/or skills. There were two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms through which target setting was reported to improve learning. These were the enhanced motivation of students (Y1, Y2, Y5, Y7) and improved planning based on levels of learning (Y3, Y4, Y6, Y8, Y9, Y10 and Y11).

Looking at the theme of enhanced motivation perceived, by which target setting was reported to improve learning, one main scale teacher said "it gives them something to work

toward: if they have a target, then they know what they are aiming for and it gives them a long-term focus" (Y2). The significance of this was such that she also said "you can use it to modify their behaviour as well" (Y2). A middle leader held a representative and similar perception, as demonstrated by her comment "it gives the child a motivational focus and that is why it impacts on learning" (Y7). Another middle leader's perception, of the effect on motivation was more explicitly whole-school focused, as in his view, "it gives students a clear idea of where they are and most subject areas are fairly good at communicating the current level [of their work] and the steps towards the next level" (Y5).

Another reported theme was that target setting affected learning through improved planning based on levels of learning and progress through these levels. One middle leader commented:

> it makes it [learning] much more focused: they know and are aware of what they want to achieve, and I think it gives them a chance to really consider what they need to do to improve. (Y3)

Another typically said "we have next steps for all the kids at KS3 and KS4, so [the] teacher will be continuously looking at their work and assessing where they are, and then give them the next steps" (Y6). In this respect, a senior leader maintained that target setting should be student specific: "it has to be personal to the level or sub-level of the child or there is no point in setting it" (Y10).

In summary, the impact of target setting on learning, while varying in theme and/or the mechanism by which it was reported to operate, was generally positive.

On Leading

Teachers taking part in target setting generally perceived it to improve leading and leadership processes. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which target setting was reported to improve leading and leadership. These were enhanced monitoring and evaluation (Y5, Y6, Y8 and Y10); improved management of

progress in learning (Y1, Y3, Y7 and Y9); planning (Y11) and expectations about standards (Y4). However, one main scale teacher thought that it could also have a negative effect (Y2).

Addressing the theme and potential mechanism of enhanced monitoring and evaluation, one middle leader said:

> I'm looking to make sure that departments are setting targets and are assessing kids against these targets, that there are subject targets and heads of subject are setting objectives with staff and looking at things like department development plans. (Y5)

A senior leader took a broader view in commenting that "it makes us more aware of the data that we can acquire from individual targets that have been set for students and about the sorts of issues coming up about their levels of learning" (Y10).

In the case of managing progress in learning, one main scale teacher said "ultimately you could say that target setting would help in terms of managing a group of staff or the learning of [a cohort of] 240 students" (Y3). The argument was based on making students and teachers accountable for meeting performance targets, whether these are targets for students or results of teaching groups for teachers. Similarly, a middle leader said:

> I think it concentrates the mind, and encourages you to work as a department, to pool your talents and work in harness, not just as an individual teacher….so that you are all working in the same direction [in managing pupil progress]. (Y7)

Finally, one middle leader highlighted implementing "special revision classes and support" (Y9) when students are not meeting attainment targets.

The effect that target setting had on leadership through the potential mechanism of improved planning is relevant at this point. A senior leader referred to planning for the more effective use of resources. He said: "it might require looking at the time allocated to a

subject, or staffing to reach a target. That would involve management looking at other aspects beyond department control" (Y11).

Target setting was also perceived to affect expectations by one main scale teacher, who said, "it does have an impact, because there are certain expectations and certain standards that we are looking for" (Y4) and target setting maintains these.

Finally, one main scale teacher perceived target setting to potentially have a negative effect on leadership because of the resistance it could invoke among teachers. She said:

> target setting can be seen as a negative thing because we have all the problems of an inner city school in terms of behaviour……….. so someone higher up [management] telling you that SATs should be a certain percentage level 4 when student behaviour is prohibitive, can build opposition among teachers. (Y2)

However, the overall effect was generally perceived to be positive.

To summarize, target setting was perceived to have a positive impact on leadership practices. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms through which it was reported to improve leading and leadership.

In conclusion, target setting was reported to have a positive effect on teaching, learning and leadership practices at School Y. The full range of perceptions of the processes reported by which it improved teaching, learning and leadership were incorporated by the themes discussed above. It is possible that these teacher perceptions of the processes generating improvement may be connected to their organisational role. The perception of leaders, including middle leaders, would appear to reflect their more whole-school role

The Impact of the Use of Baseline Data on Teaching, Learning and Leadership Processes

On Teaching

Teachers generally perceive the use of baseline data to improve teaching skills. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which the use of baseline data was reported to affect teaching. These were the raising of expectations (Y3, Y5, Y6, Y9 and Y11); improvement of planning (Y1, Y4, Y8 and 10) and enhanced review of levels of learning (Y2 and Y7).

Looking at the theme or potential mechanism of raising expectations, one middle leader commented:

> it allows you to target specific groups of students to see whether they are measuring up to what they should be doing and comparing it to what they are doing, and it enables you to set targets with those kids to see [what they need to do] to achieve those targets. It is a tool to prevent complacency [and raise expectations]. (Y5)

This perception of the use of data having an affect on expectations in this way was reinforced by a senior leader who said, "it [data] provides a foundation to tell you what a student is capable of" (Y11). Both of these comments and those made by others interviewed, all holding leadership responsibilities, presupposed a whole-school perspective that was not demonstrated in the views of the main scale teachers.

A number of main scale teachers perceived the use of baseline data to have a significant effect on planning, particularly in the classroom context. One of the main scale teachers made a representative comment that baseline data:

> is quite a good starting point, it tells you some kind of background about where to begin, as an individual teacher, in pitching your lesson. There are some pupils who manage to hide their light under a bushel, are a lot more able from baseline testing

than would first appear and you start to interact with them. It enables you to plan

from the outset [and plan more effectively]. (Y4)

A senior leader put this perception into a whole school context in saying "every member of staff has access to the data and that certainly helps to inform their planning" (Y10). Finally, one middle leader perceived the effect on planning not to be uncomplicated. She commented on the baseline data from KS2:

baseline data is used to check whether new pupils are underachieving. [Provided the data is accurate this is fine]. When the data is reliable [students have settled at the school] it is also used to target groups of students. (Y8)

In this context, baseline data was considered to be very useful in planning.

Baseline data was also perceived to affect standards by enabling a review of the levels at which pupils learned and the progress they made. It "can be helpful in identifying the next level of learning" (Y7) and so promote progress in that way. It was also perceived to be helpful in "reviewing the levels of teaching to see if this is a proper match with pupil levels" (Y2).

In summary, the use of baseline data was perceived to have a positive impact on teaching practices. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which the use of baseline data was reported to improve teaching.

On Learning

Teachers using baseline data generally perceived that it had a positive effect on student learning and/or skills. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which the use of baseline data was reported to affect learning. These were improved motivation (Y6, Y7 and Y9); setting more realistic expectations (Y2 and Y4) and more effective planning, (Y3, Y5, Y8, Y10 and Y11).

Considering the theme or potential mechanism of improved motivation, a main scale teacher implied that you can instil self-belief in students when she said "on some [students] it can have a positive effect because it shows that somebody has a high opinion of them, that they are intelligent, that they can achieve" (Y6). However, a comment by one of the middle leaders indicated a more strategic view. She made a representative comment in saying:

> I think kids [learners] are varied: for some it will be a positive motivating factor, they will want to get to the next level, for some it will be a more negative impact. I think teachers have to be psychologically attuned to the child, to know when it is appropriate to use it and when it is appropriate to go in another direction and use other methods to spur them on [or motivate learners]. (Y7)

Such comments are characteristic of the broad vision and generally more holistic whole-school orientation of those taking a leadership role in the organisations of this Case Study.

Looking at the theme or potential mechanism of maintaining and raising expectations of students, one main scale teacher commented:

> I think students need to be aware of where they stand, based upon their baseline data. If there is a student who can achieve a higher grade than he is showing at the present time, then you can tell students by looking at the data what they are capable of [and so prioritise support]. (Y4)

Improved planning was another theme reported and a potential mechanism for improvement. One main scale teacher said:

> you can target support for learners in need and those not making suitable progress. It [baseline data] is also important to planning the pitch of the lesson because when this is not right it could lead to disaffection, boredom and underachievement. (Y3)

A middle leader generalised from her own experience in asserting that it enabled her to plan lessons that were more conducive to individual need: in other words, to plan student learning more effectively.   She said:

> It informs the way that you plan your lessons, it tells you how you are going to plan both your pitch and delivery of your lesson and it also informs what you expect from the child. …. With my Year 10 group, where I have a child with Downs Syndrome, as well as an extremely bright child with EBD, the baseline data I get on these students is very different indeed. So it informs their learning in the way that I deliver the lesson. …. It makes their learning more individualised. (Y5)

A senior leader, who reinforced all of this, tackled the question directly as a whole-school issue. The Deputy said:

> Short-term planning is an area which the school needs to develop.   ….   I think that it [the use of baseline data] helps in the short term planning that you can move students forward if you know where they can get to, better than if you don't know. I think that staff here are very much aware of that and I think it also helps with preparing the types of lesson that require knowledge of different learning styles. (Y10)

In summary, there were three themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which the use of baseline data was reported to improve learning.

On Leading

Teachers using baseline data generally perceived it to improve leading and leadership processes. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which the use of baseline data was reported to affect leading and leadership, namely. They included enhanced monitoring and evaluation (Y5, Y6, Y7 and Y8); improved planning (Y1, Y2, Y3, Y9, Y10 and Y11) and raised expectations (Y4).

Considering the theme and potential mechanism of enhanced monitoring and evaluation, one middle leader said, for example:

> when you set baseline data against your mock grades that come through at the end of the term, you can see who is performing and under-performing. …. You can then target [groups of students accordingly]. (Y7)

This perception was reinforced by another middle leader, who said "data helps us monitor more effectively and differentiate learners to target support" (Y8).

Baseline data was also perceived to improve leadership through enhanced planning, particularly within the classroom context. One main scale teacher commented:

> we [each] set target grades early in Year 10 and we think carefully about how to tailor support for each kid [as a result]. [In other words in planning lessons] writing schemes of work we tend to differentiate our work [accordingly]. (Y2)

Consistent with these findings, one middle leader made the more holistic comment "we are differentiating all of our schemes of work to ensure that we are providing appropriate work for students" (Y9). A senior leader took this to a more strategic level when she commented:

> it [the use of baseline data] could have a large impact on the allocation of resources, knowing where to prioritise. …. It would be useful for the head of department to know where they are supposed to be focusing. …. It would also help to be able to predict where you are going to be in five years time in terms of GCSE results. (Y10)

Similarly, another senior leader reflected his wider whole-school brief when he said:

> I think that the senior and middle managers having access to this data is extremely useful …. The role of the assistant head who would have responsibility for a year

group will know [because of information supplied] how far the students in their year group have progressed and therefore about their potential [and will be able to plan interventions accordingly]. (Y11)

Leadership and leading was also perceived to improve through expectations being enhanced by the use of baseline data, according to the perceptions of one main scale teacher. She quite simply said, "data tells management what the school is capable of achieving" (Y4).

In summary, the use of baseline data was perceived to have a positive impact on leadership practices. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which the use of baseline data was reported to improve leading and leadership.

To conclude, the use of baseline data was reported to have a positive effect on teaching, learning and leadership practices at School Y. The full range of perceptions of the processes reported by which the use of baseline data improved teaching, learning and leadership were incorporated by the themes discussed above. It is possible that these teacher perceptions of the processes generating improvement may be connected to their organisational role. The perception of leaders, including middle leaders, would appear to reflect their more evaluative and whole-school role.

The Impact of CPD on Teaching, Learning and Leadership processes

On Teaching

Teachers generally perceive CPD to improve teaching. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which CPD was reported to affect teaching. These were the improvement of teaching skills (Y1, Y2, Y4, Y5, Y8, Y9, Y10); helping to share practice (Y7 and Y11) and encouragement of self-review (Y3 and Y6).

Addressing the theme or potential mechanism of the enhancement of teaching skills, one main scale teacher typically commented "going on a course reawakens you to look for new ways of delivery or different skills you can use" (Y2). A middle leader typically related

this to a management context in saying "in performance management, colleagues attend INSET to have training to meet related targets and if these are teaching related there is a definite improvement" (Y8). A senior leader perceived this, unequivocally, in a whole school and evaluative context in saying:

> the better developed and trained the teacher is, the better the delivery in the classroom, the better the learning. Making sure a teacher's training is ongoing and within a structure is more likely to have an impact than if training was isolated. (Y10)

Teaching was also reported to improve through the sharing of good practice, according to the perceptions of one middle leader, who made the evaluative comment "the in-service training that a colleague attended was worthwhile because it feeds back into everyone's teaching [and helped identify priorities for development]" (Y7). A senior leader drew a similar conclusion in saying that when a teacher shares experience of CPD, "it gives the manager a better idea of how that person is working and where they are going" (Y11).

Teaching was also reported to improve as a result of CPD through self-review, according to a number of perceptions. A main scale teacher said "I have totally changed the way I assess students and do a lot more speaking for learning and this is a direct result of [extended reflection] what I have picked up on my masters" (Y3). The comments made throughout this part of the interview were noticeably deficient of any wider school impact. Finally, one middle leader highlighted the effect on teacher motivation arising from attendance at INSET and experience of CPD as well as self-review. She said:

> I think it motivates you as a practicing teacher. If you have a good experience of professional development it encourages you to reflect and develop something in the school: a scheme of work for example. So I think it has a positive effect. (Y6)

The comment is evaluative and has wider school implications.

In summary, there were three themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which CPD was reported to improve teaching.

On Learning

Teachers generally perceive CPD to improve learning. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which CPD was reported to affect learning. These were improvement in teaching, implying that development in learning follows (Y1, Y2, Y4, Y5, Y6, Y7 and Y9); planning for learning (Y10) and training in learning development (Y8 and Y11). Finally, one main scale teacher thought that CPD had little effect on learning (Y3).

Looking at the theme of improved teaching skills precipitating improved learning, one main scale teacher typically commented:

> I went on training in literacy across the curriculum and literacy in Science and now I include a lot of literacy-based activities. ….   If I do comprehension now I do text marking, so actually getting kids to interact with the text rather than just answering questions on it, which they might otherwise answer without properly understanding it. (Y1)

One middle leader linked training directly to learning. She said:

> if as a school and as a department we are improving our teachers and give our teachers objectives to improve teaching and the pupils learning then it is going to have a positive impact. (Y5)

The message was classroom-focused and very simple: improve teaching, improve learning. Another middle leader's answer was equally simple but framed within a whole school and strategic context in saying:

It [the impact of CPD on learning] underpins the improvement of the whole
organisation, if you are going to have school improvement in an institution like this
with over 120 staff all of differing levels of experience, expertise and awareness.
…. As a result of [CPD on the use of baseline data] teachers set up mentoring
interviews with pupils and parents [to address underachievement] those children
significantly improved the quality of their GCSE coursework. (Y8)

Similarly, a senior leader commented, "CPD has helped put more focus on learner needs
and development, as we have seen, for example, in the Schemes of Work and also the
School Development Plan" (Y11). Such a contextual and strategic comment on CPD and
learning was more typical of those who took a leadership role at School Y.

CPD was also reported to improve learning through enhanced planning. One senior
leader's comments were clearly holistic and strategic as well as representative in this
context. He said:

what we are doing is identifying individual teachers' needs within a framework that
you take from the school development plan by identifying specific areas for
development: [teachers that I line manage] looked at their own personal targets as
part of an institutional one, so that there is some sort of continuity, whole school to
individual, which should have an impact on learning of students. (Y10)

Such comments also imply a whole school focus as well as a strategic awareness.

Finally, one main scale teacher did not share the same positive perception of the impact of
CPD on learning as her colleagues. She commented "I am constantly evaluating and
reviewing my teaching" which is what she perceived to impact positively on her students.
Her comment implied some whole-school awareness, "I think it [CPD] is ad hoc here, and I
don't think it is tailored to the needs of the students or the teachers or their career
objectives" (Y3). However, it was not possible to confirm this particular perception.

In summary, there were three themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which CPD was reported to improve learning.

On Leading

Teachers generally perceived CPD to improve leading and leadership processes. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which CPD was reported to affect leading and leadership processes. These were the review of INSET needs (Y4, Y5, Y7, Y9 and Y11); management processes (Y1, Y2, Y3, Y8 and Y10) and sharing practice (Y6).

Addressing the effect of CPD on leading through the review of INSET needs, one main scale teacher commented on the advantages of CPD in saying:

> I think a lot [about teaching] and my head of department is very keen that I move forward professionally. I trained here and was a NQT here, and she has always asked me what I wanted to do [improve on for career purposes] and given me opportunities to get it. (Y4)

A middle leader typically reinforced this perception but within a whole-school and more evaluative context in saying:

> at a management level, as long as your professional development is targeted at something appropriate that needs addressing in the school, then it is going to feed down. For example, a member of SMT has been working on formative assessment and assessment for learning, and that filtered down to a whole-school INSET day. (Y5)

So in undergoing INSET, the manager's performance was enhanced. Another said:

> it keeps you abreast of your subject, and there have been massive changes to GCSEs over the last two years. It enables you to identify those areas that you need to address in order that you deliver a more meaningful education. (Y9)

A particularly strategic comment was made by a senior leader who said:

> it helps with targeting INSET to individuals, and planning for the future, to know where your weaknesses and strengths are within the curriculum and with your staff. It is not just about the curriculum but the delivery of the curriculum and by whom. (Y11)

Management processes were also perceived to have the potential to develop. One main scale teacher perceived this to be an inevitable consequence of "sensible" CPD: "anyone making the step from the classroom into management needs to have some CPD to get started and take the qualities they had as a teacher and refocus them as a manager" (Y2). A middle leader said, "it helps with departmental routines like the importance of regular line management meetings, coordination of training and the importance of valuing quality processes" (Y8). This was reinforced by a senior leader, who also said, "I think it sharpens the awareness of team leaders to the needs of those whom they line manage" (Y10). Both of these comments were underpinned by an awareness of whole-school developments. However, the former was aspirant and general, whereas the latter was more precisely about doing the job of management.

Finally, CPD was reported to enhance leadership and leading through the process of sharing or reviewing practice. One middle leader said that through CPD, teachers "can observe and share strategies and techniques and bring it to their lessons. It might be to do with discipline or the way they challenge or speak to students" (Y6). Such a comment implies a whole-school awareness.

In summary, CPD was perceived to have a positive impact on leadership practices. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which it was reported to improve leading and leadership.

To conclude, CPD was reported to have a positive effect on teaching, learning and leadership practices at School Y. The full range of perceptions of the processes reported by which it improved teaching, learning and leadership were incorporated by the themes discussed above. Teacher perceptions of the processes generating improvement seem to be connected to their organisational role. The perceptions of leaders, including middle leaders, would appear to reflect their whole-school priorities.

The Impact of Objective Setting (Appraisal) on Teaching, Learning and Leadership processes

On Teaching

Teachers had completed their third cycle of objective setting and generally perceived that it would improve teaching. There were two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which objective setting was reported to affect teaching. These were directly focusing on improved teaching practices (Y1, Y2, Y6, Y8, Y9 and Y10) and enhancing review processes (Y3, Y4, Y5, Y7 and Y11).

Looking at the effect of objective setting on teaching through directly focusing on improved teaching practices, one main scale teacher commented, "I think it certainly has had an impact on my department" (Y2). The main focus had been "areas that need to be developed in the teacher in a classroom situation" (Y2), with the expectation that teaching would improve. One middle leader suggested that this would be a planned improvement: "it focuses on areas of weakness or areas that need to be improved. It makes you consider it and take action to improve it, so that it is better" (Y8). A senior leader, who was similarly positive about the potential impact on teaching, more explicitly stressed the necessity of an objective setting structure to plan a time for appraisal to take place. He said, "it encourages reflection and teachers to think about their methodology and teaching style. I think often it is a good way to do something which often as teachers we do not have time for" (Y10).

Objective setting was also reported to improve teaching through enhanced review. One main scale teacher referred to objectives set as an NQT in stating "they focus my mind on

my weaknesses and finding a clear strategy to which I had to commit, but it only has an impact if you are willing to make it happen" (Y3). A middle leader placed this in a more strategic and evaluative context in saying that she thought the impact was "massive, because it identifies the key focus within the school development plan and school improvement plan and you use those key foci to inform the school objective setting" (Y5). A senior leader's comments were similarly strategic and evaluative. She said:

> we can't really see it in isolation: the objectives should be part of the department development plan, so they should be SMART. I think that the impact of objective setting depends on the person. (Y11)

The implications of this statement became clearer when she suggested that there would be a better chance that as a result, "they will in some way have changed the way they are working within the classroom" (Y11).

In summary, objective setting was perceived to have a positive impact on teaching practices. There were two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which objective setting was reported to improve leading and leadership.

On Learning

Teachers were on the whole positive in their comments on the potential impact of objective setting on learning. There were two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which objective setting was reported to affect learning. These were improved teaching, in that it generated improved learning (Y3, Y6, Y8 and Y9) and an increased focus on learning (Y1, Y4, Y5, Y7 and Y11). However, there were teachers who were less certain (Y2 and Y10).

Considering the potentially positive effect of objective setting on learning as perceived by those who thought this arose from improved teaching, one main scale teacher focused on her class room practice in saying "we deliberately targeted students who struggled with literacy. It had a positive impact on student learning because I was managing my classes

better, so more learning took place" (Y3). A middle leader put this in a management context, necessarily more evaluative and demonstrating a broader vision than her main scale teacher colleague. She said:

> the other man I am working with (and manage) needs to look at his classroom discipline more, and I think that when that improves, then his teaching is going to allow students to learn more, because he is going to be able to use different techniques and interact with other students more than he is currently. (Y6)

Objective setting was also reported to work through a process in which there was a sharper focus on learning development. One main scale teacher anticipated an impact on rising attainment in saying:

> because it is a set pupil progress objective which is going to be reviewed at the end of the year and hence it will have an impact in the classroom. …. At the end of that period you will be asked to give evidence. (Y1)

She anticipated indicators such as the following: "exams improve, responses of students improve and discipline improves as a result" (Y1). Those who take a leadership role in the organisation made comments that were more evaluative and whole school based. One middle leader commented on a whole cohort, in setting objectives:

> when we worked on discursive writing there was a big impact immediately. …. If it is well directed and well focused then it can have quite a deep impact on kids' [learning outcomes] attainment. (Y7)

A comment made by a senior leader was similarly whole-school focused and evaluative: "so it is developing literacy skills which will have a benefit across the curriculum" (Y11).

Teachers had some doubt about reporting and anticipating the impact on learning. Generally this was because of the lack of available information, knowledge and experience, as this was only the third time they had used objective setting in the school.

In summary, objective setting was perceived to have a positive impact on learning. There were two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which objective setting was reported to improve learning.

On Leading

Teachers were on the whole positive about the impact of objective setting on leadership processes. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which objective setting was reported to affect leading and leadership. These were the enhancement of management processes (Y1, Y5, Y6, Y7 and Y8); the review of performance generally (Y2, Y9 and Y10); monitoring and evaluation (Y11) and CPD (Y4). One main scale teacher perceived little impact based on limited experience (Y3).

Addressing the positive effect of objective setting on leadership as perceived by those who thought this would be supported by improved management and communication, one main scale teacher said, "I think it gives a focus for some kind of summary of information" (Y1). Once again, middle leaders took a broader and more inclusive, if not whole-school, view in that one commented:

> it creates dialogue between me and different members of staff, and it is written down, and so easy to remind people of their objectives and encourage them to try different things like, for example, create a new seating plan. (Y5)

Improving the review of performance is another of the processes and potential mechanisms by which objective setting was reported to enhance leadership. A main scale teacher said:

> I imagine that objective setting gives a focus for clarifying a leader's vision; it
> makes us review and reflect on what we have achieved over the past year and I
> suppose it must help managers access and share information sometimes too. (Y2)

One middle leader suggested that the effect was more fundamental than just ensuring job responsibilities: "it has gone much wider and deeper into the content of the curriculum, reviewing it to see if it is matching the needs of the children, including teaching and learning techniques" (Y9). A senior leader implied that improved communication resulted in improved performance: "you are building a dialogue with staff and hopefully the end result of that is an identification of ways in which you can improve a member of staff's performance" (Y10).

Monitoring and evaluation was another process by which objective setting was reported to improve leadership. One senior leader typically commented that "a well run department would have always had objectives and targets set" (Y11). There are two important issues here. First, the perception illustrated the evaluative and strategic nature of those in a leadership role. Second and perhaps more importantly, while this school had introduced objective setting more recently than the others in the Case Study, it was implemented in a more structured context. Target setting was well embedded and therefore the need for objective setting, while it enhanced the leadership role, would not have been as distinct. The value added of the school was positive even though objective setting had only been introduced three years earlier.

Objective setting also enhanced leadership through facilitating a focus on CPD and self-review. One main scale teacher said:

> it is a self review, it's documented evidence, there if you are looking for promotion.
> I think it develops the area that teachers want to improve and maybe look for future
> promotion and career development. (Y4)

Such comments are particularly relevant to establishing the 'thinking and doing' link and theory building in Parts 2 and 4.

In summary, objective setting was perceived to have a positive impact on leadership practices. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which objective setting was reported to improve leading and leadership.

To conclude, objective setting was reported to have a positive effect on teaching, learning and leadership practices at School Y. The full range of perceptions of the processes reported by which objective setting improved teaching, learning and leadership were incorporated by all of the themes discussed above. These teachers' perceptions of the processes generating improvement may be connected to their organisational role. The perception of leaders, including middle leaders, would appear to be more evaluative and strategic.

Themes Identified for Case Study School Z

The Impact of the Use of Lesson Observation on Teaching, Learning and Leadership Processes

On Teaching

Teachers taking part in lesson observation generally perceived it to improve their teaching practices and skills. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which lesson observation was reported to affect teaching. These were: the promotion of review (Z2, Z3, Z4, Z5 and Z6); improvement in teaching, although the mechanism was rarely specified (Z8, Z9, Z10 and Z11); the motivation of teachers (Z1). However, one middle leader reported no effect (Z7).

Looking at the theme of perceptions that lesson observation improved teaching through the promotion of review, one main scale teacher commented:

> without lesson observation I wouldn't have been able to teach in the way I am able to and so I have to rely on honest constructive feedback. I have then spent a lot of time reflecting on how I am going to use the feedback in order to make myself a better, more effective teacher. (Z3)

A middle leader's comments were more evaluative and whole-school oriented:

> some thing[s] that we are trying to address, such as oracy, more role play, more aesthetic learning as it were, bringing more fun into the lesson rather than just writing frames and literacy and the curriculum of course. I have found that quite useful; having said that, it's been very difficult then to go away and change the scheme of work, unit of work and build in those different elements because there just doesn't seem to be enough [time]. (Z5)

Two middle leaders and two senior leaders perceived improvements in teaching without identifying the mechanism or strategy that propagated these improvements. One middle leader took a typically evaluative and critical view in saying "lesson observation is problematic [in relation to PM] because it's a one-off … I do think lesson observation is superficial if it is completed only once a year" (Z8). One senior leader was typically emphatic, holistic and evaluative in her comment:

> I think that lesson observations have two sorts of impact: one is on the individual teacher who is being observed, because they get detailed feedback about how a lesson went and they usually develop the points made. So if it is a good lesson, then they would get praise for that and it might be some practice that we want to spread further. If it is not such a good lesson, then there are points to improve for that particular teacher. (Z11)

One main scale teacher commented on the fact that lesson observation can improve teaching through motivating the teacher. She said, "when someone feels that they are doing a good job, it does make a difference" (Z1). On the other hand, one middle leader thought that lesson observation through the PM programme had little impact, if any at all. He noted the biggest impact to be that on the behaviour of students who were being observed: "students behave 100% better when there is someone new, especially if it is, in my case, say, the line manager, like the deputy head or the headteacher" (Z7). His comment was evaluative in that he considered a more informal approach to lesson observation, unconnected to PM, to be far more effective. He said, "more common informal observations work a lot better: you pick up more" (Z7).

In summary, the impact of lesson observation on teaching, while to some extent varying in perceived effect, was reported to be positive. There were three distinct themes of perceptions of processes or potential mechanisms by which lesson observation was reported to improve teaching.

On Learning

Teachers taking part in lesson observation generally perceived it to improve their teaching. There were three distinct themes of perceptions of processes or potential mechanisms through which lesson observation was reported to affect learning. These were improved teaching, as it improved learning (Z2, Z4 and Z7); improvement in learning techniques and strategies (Z3, Z5 and Z9); improved planning arising out of findings from lesson observation (Z1, Z6, Z10 and Z11), and one middle leader's claim that the effect was insignificant (Z8).

Lesson observation was found to improve learning through improved teaching. One main scale teacher commented:

> as long as there is feedback given to the person who is being observed, so, for example, if you have a lesson observation and one of the comments is about trying to encourage more participation from some quieter students and then you are able to discuss with the person who is doing your lesson observation strategies for doing that, then it would enable me to build in the teaching strategies to enable the students to [participate and learn more]. (Z4)

A middle leader, on the other hand, makes the more evaluative whole school comment

> lesson observation of the least experienced teachers in my team was informative for them in improving their teaching practice and students' learning [but] for the most experienced teachers in my team it was not as illuminating. Maybe PM needs to take on teachers of one to five years experience in a different way [to the more experienced teachers]. (Z7)

Lesson observation was reported to improve learning through the development of approaches to learning. "Lesson observations enabled me to identify student learning needs as part of the following review" (Z3). Similar comments were made by a middle leader

who said that following one observation, "we reviewed a Year 9 unit of work to make it more interactive. We used the interactive whiteboard a lot more and got students doing Power Point presentations: everybody had to take part. In the past, we have done that in a very teacher-led way" (Z5). However, another middle leader's comments were more whole-school oriented and evaluative in saying that review has resulted in:

> thinking about the less able kids or kids that aren't so strong when it came to writing, so in that sense it enables them to access the curriculum more in lessons. We need to build that into the schemes of work. (Z9)

Lesson observation was also found to generate improved learning through more effective planning. A very experienced main scale teacher said that "if there were any areas that I had been asked to improve" with regard to learning, then "I would definitely plan and do something the next time" (Z1). A middle leader's comments were noticeably more evaluative in saying "lesson observation has affected planning by shifting the focus from teacher-led to learner-focused lessons" (Z6). "We did this a lot in the sixth form whereby we tried to give students independence in learning and that came from lesson observations" (Z6). A senior leader maintained that lesson observation "helped teachers focus more on students' learning and as a result they are spending more time in planning how they make good progress" (Z10).

Finally, one middle leader made an evaluative comment in saying that "lesson observations are not repeated often enough throughout the year as part of PM to have any noticeable effect" (Z8).

In summary, the effect of lesson observation on learning, although there was some variation, was perceived to be positive. There were three distinct themes of perceptions of processes or potential mechanisms by which lesson observation was reported to improve learning.

On Leadership

Teachers taking part in lesson observation generally perceived it to enhance leadership in a variety of different ways. There were two distinct themes of perceptions of processes or potential mechanisms through which lesson observation was reported to affect leading and leadership. These were the enhancement of monitoring and evaluation (Z1, Z2, Z3, Z4, Z5, Z8, Z9, Z10 and Z11) and sharing of practice (Z6).

A main scale teacher said, "it gives my head of department a better picture of what I am doing. It helps them monitor and evaluate my teaching and if they find something wrong it helps me deliver better lessons" (Z3). One middle leader claimed that it helped monitoring and evaluation because it helped:

> target groups within the cohort and that this is one important element that has come through, where you are now looking at individualised learning more and you are targeting certain groups and building in strategies to try and help those specific groups … which is very useful. (Z5)

He also took a whole-school and evaluative view in saying "it's great for identifying targets but there isn't enough time in the year to consolidate all of the changes that have to be made" (Z5). One senior leader said:

> [it] enhances monitoring because managers and leaders can see patterns emerging that they can take action on, and they can also perhaps see if an individual needs to improve in certain areas or would want to develop in a certain area so they can then follow that up. (Z10)

Another gave a similar comment:

> …when we do a set of lesson observations we can generalise from them if there are particular strengths or weaknesses or something missing: that helps us as a senior management team, think about how we want to move on from that. So I know, for

instance, that from a recent set of lesson observations there wasn't much differentiation, so that would be something for us to put on the agenda and try to develop further. (Z11)

Such comments also reflect the leadership role of the interviewee within the organisation.

Finally, one middle leader maintained that lesson observation encouraged the sharing of practice:

we get to see things like teachers' presentational skills, rapport, behaviour management and how the learning is actually presented to the students. It might affect how I would approach someone in the department if there was some aspect of their teaching that I wanted to address, how I manage staff. (Z6)

The impact of lesson observation on leadership was perceived to be operating through a number of themes of processes or potential mechanisms. The overall effect was reported to be positive.

In conclusion, the variation in the themes and/or the range of potential mechanisms reported by which lesson observation improved teaching, learning and leadership were representative of all of the interviews completed. It would also seem that the perceptions reported were connected to the organisational role of the interviewee. However, while the perception of leaders, including middle leaders, would appear to be connected with their more evaluative and whole-school role, main scale teachers sometimes held similar perceptions, as in the case of objectively identifying students' needs.

The Impact of Target Setting on Teaching, Learning and Leadership processes

On Teaching

Teachers generally perceive target setting to improve teaching skills. There were two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which target setting was reported

to affect teaching. These were that it helps to develop planning (Z1, Z2, Z3, Z4, Z5, Z10 and Z11) and to set more realistic expectations about levels of learning (Z6, Z7, Z8 and Z9).

Addressing the effect of target setting on teaching through the development of planning, one main scale teacher said that it has a positive impact on lesson preparation because you "let your plan revolve around a teaching scheme linked to what you want them to achieve, which is the target you have set them. So it does help you to focus your plan and your teaching" (Z3). A middle leader's comment was more evaluative, as well as holistic, in saying:

> it has been quite useful, as it gives a clearer sense of purpose to lesson planning, but it can be burdensome because I think there is an overload in targets set, you know you put the kids in the right direction in what they need to address but it needs to be more constructive. At the moment I feel there are too many targets over the year [and across the curriculum]. (Z5)

A senior leader's comment was similarly evaluative and holistic. She said:

> I think it has improved teacher planning, because having data on the students and knowing their targets has made them focus more on the performance of individual students, so it has led to better differentiation, better feedback to individual students. It has led to an improvement in marking and feedback in terms of students actually being able to reach those targets. (Z10)

In the case of the effect of target setting on teaching through more realistic expectations, middle leaders were of the view that the impact of target setting on teaching was not uncomplicated. However, as one middle leader said:

> I think the impact of target setting is that it raises awareness amongst the teaching staff. It raises the awareness that there are certain expectations of student

performance, which therefore necessitates expectations of the teacher and the level at which they teach, as teaching and learning go together. (Z9)

This comment was representative of the more evaluative and holistic stance taken by middle leaders in this study.

The overall impact of target setting on teaching was positive. There were two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which target setting was reported to improve teaching.

On Learning

Teachers taking part in target setting generally perceived it to improve student learning and/or skills. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which target setting was reported to affect learning. These were that it enhanced the motivation of students (Z2, Z5, Z6 and Z11); improved planning based on levels of learning (Z3, Z7, Z8, Z9 and Z10) and acted through the improvement of teaching, which a group of interviewees also said influenced learning (Z1 and Z4) .

Considering first the improvement in learning through enhanced motivation of students, a main scale teacher said:

> it helps students focus their thoughts and motivate them. When they know they are working toward a particular target, it is a focus. They keep on referring back to it. … I have had students in my classes who have said to me 'Miss, I am giving answers more because I am really trying to work on my target' and so that student has that target in mind as a focus to move them toward. (Z2)

Middle and senior leaders took a broader, more evaluative view. One middle leader said, "I think it has a motivation impact. We make students aware of where they should be and what their target level is so that you and they know what the lesson is about. So it has a motivational impact and raises expectations of teachers and students" (Z6). Similarly, a senior leader commented:

it's motivating for the children to have a target in sight and to know how they are progressing toward that. It is important as they wouldn't really know what to do to get a particular level or grade unless they are given more information which might involve a syllabus in 'child speak' or National Curriculum levels in 'child speak'. So they can self assess their progress; and I think when they get feedback from their teacher about what specific things they have to do to reach their target that is very helpful for them. I have seen in book reviews good practice of this kind of thing taking place, for example in RE and History. (Z11)

Looking at the improvement of learning generated through improved planning based on levels of learning, one main scale teacher said, "you plan your learning around what you want the students to achieve, which is the target you have set them. So planning does help improve your teaching and their learning" (Z3). A middle leader made this planning aspect more explicit as well as evaluative:

> planning and setting targets can be very effective because targets explicitly state what the student needs to do to get to the next level and therefore a student has a very clear idea and presumably, their learning will be more successful if they're aiming for a specific target. (Z7)

Planning and its influence on pupil learning is demonstrated by a senior leader's comments:

> In order for students to achieve targets, it has made teachers more specific in how they move the students on to the next level, so it is no good, say, writing on students' work 'work harder' or 'make more effort'. Teachers have been far more specific in terms of what specific things they need to do to improve, whether it is essay construction, more detail in their answers, and that I think has helped raise student attainment because it has given students a shot at targets that are more specific and relevant. (Z10)

Finally, a main scale teacher emphasised a direct link between the improved teaching that results from target setting and pupils' learning: "I prepare my lessons according to the target I have set for students. I can say that learning has significantly improved because they know what their goal is" (Z1).

In summary, target setting was perceived to have a positive effect on learning. The full range of perceptions reported was incorporated by the themes outlined above. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which target setting was reported to improve learning.

On Leading

Teachers taking part in target setting generally perceived it to improve leading and leadership processes. There were two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which target setting was reported to affect leading. These were that it enhanced monitoring and evaluation (Z1, Z2, Z4, Z6, Z7, Z8, Z9, Z10 and Z11) and improved management and coordination of learning (Z3 and Z5).

Focussing on the improvement in leading and leadership generated by target setting through enhanced monitoring and evaluation, a main scale teacher thought that it helped managers when they "checked books every day, frequently they look at the targets and they can match those targets with the results of unit attainment tests" (Z2). A middle leader commented that while target setting definitely reinforced the leadership process and supported the role of managers, it was:

> not as much as it should perhaps have done, but I think we are getting to a situation where it's happening more, whereby I think target setting has been a little bit random within some departments [and not synchronised properly with other systems]. (Z7)

However, a senior leader, similarly evaluative, was more emphatic and positive about the impact of target setting within PM in enhancing monitoring and evaluation; she said:

it has made team leaders, particularly middle managers, realise that they are more accountable for the performance of their staff and of groups of students within their departments, particularly if they are a head of department. So there are examples of good practices where heads of departments look at all of the targets, that are set, and check them, and on things like work reviews and book reviews, actually checking, particularly looking at marking, whether the students are maintaining that and also where heads of department have done some analysis of trends over time themselves. (Z10)

A middle leader thought that target setting helped heads of department to manage learning more effectively and this was illustrated by her comment: "where the more precise targets are used by staff, it depends on what their background is, but then I think that it does have an impact on leadership" (Z3) in a positive way. However, once again the more evaluative comment comes from the leader/manager in the comment:

[target setting] helps you to reflect on short-term aims, long-term aims as well, and I have found that quite useful: particularly where you have leadership, management and teaching and learning objectives to consider, target setting gives an overview of the different strands throughout the year. (Z5)

In summary, target setting was perceived to have a positive effect on leading and leadership. The full range of processes reported in generating the improvements in leadership are incorporated by the themes referred to above.

To conclude, target setting was reported to have a positive effect on teaching, learning and leadership practices at School Z. The full range of perceptions of the processes reported by which target setting improved teaching, learning and leadership were incorporated by the themes identified above. There were a variety of themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which target setting was reported to improve teaching, learning and leadership. It would seem that these perceptions may be connected to the organisational

role of the interviewee. The perceptions of leaders, including middle leaders, appeared to be connected with their more evaluative and whole-school role.

The Impact of the Use of Baseline Data on Teaching, Learning and Leadership Processes

On Teaching

Teachers generally perceive the use of baseline data to improve teaching skills. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which the use of baseline data was reported to affect teaching. These were that it helps to identify learning needs and levels (Z2, Z3, Z4, Z5, Z7, Z8, Z9 and Z11); it helps to set more realistic expectations (Z6) and it improves lesson planning (Z1 and Z10).

Considering first the improvement in teaching generated by the use of baseline data through the enhanced identification of learning needs and levels, one main scale teacher said, "I can see from the performance of the students in a year the need to adapt my teaching according to [student need] the data. I know which students need what" (Z3). A middle leader took a similar position in saying:

> I think baseline data gives teachers a starting point from which to judge pupils'
> abilities and performance: it allows teachers to know where students are and then it
> also gives them an idea of where they want to take those students. (Z9)

A senior leader commented:

> I think that the use of data at the end of a key stage, where you have, say, formal
> tests or assessments, has had some long-term effect on teaching, because I think that
> people identify when groups have been, say, under-performing or whether there
> were particular groups within a cohort that have under-performed and they have
> tried to take action to remedy that over the following year. But I think there is more
> we could do. (Z11)

Such critical evaluative and holistic comments are more typical of those who have a significant leadership function within the organisation.

The use of baseline data helped to improve teaching through setting more realistic expectations. A middle leader said that it had changed teaching to enhance students' progress, particularly "raising the expectations of students who had been flat lining at a certain [national curriculum] level" (Z6).

A senior leader reported that baseline data improved teaching through a process of improved planning and delivery of lessons taught. Her comments were noticeably underpinned by the strategic and evaluative character of her leadership role. She said:

> it has made people include data for planning at one level right through to the delivery of the lesson and assessment of students at the other, because having the data, the staff can't actually say anything or blame the student, because if there is prior data that the student is capable of achieving a good grade then it is up to the teacher to ensure that and if you look at assessments at the end of a tracking period, or results, you can very clearly see whether teachers have quote, unquote "added value" in terms of the impact [effect] they have had. (Z10)

A comment like this contrasts well with the perception reported by a main scale teacher who said "student data helps me plan and give more focus to my lessons" (Z1).

The impact of the use of baseline data on teaching, while to some extent variable in terms of the processes it was reported to generate, was consistently positive. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which the use of baseline data was reported to improve teaching.

On Learning

Teachers using baseline data generally perceived its effects as being propitious to student learning and/or skills. There were two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which the use of baseline data was reported to affect learning. These were

that it better informed learning (Z7 and Z10) and enabled more effective planning, which was by far the most significant process or mechanism through which the use of baseline data affected learning (Z1, Z2, Z3, Z4, Z5, Z6, Z8, Z9 and Z11).

First there is a need to address the effect that the use of baseline data has by providing more information about learning, one middle leader thought that it helped inform pupils' learning and that it did result in improved standards. She said:

> students are aware and think of their own baseline levels for themselves: it gives them a goal. So let's say a student is working at level 3 in Year 7 and they know that, they are given a goal to get to Level 5 by the time they reach the end of Year 9. It gives the student an internal idea of where they are, and then with the teacher's guidance it gives them an idea of what they should aim at to get to the next Level. (Z7)

A senior leader's comments were similarly positive about the emphasis that baseline data brought to learning, but she was evaluative about this as well.

> Linked with target setting, students are more aware of what grade they are working at, what their aspirational grade is, so that has given them a focus and again, I think if teachers are trying to get students to the next level there has got to be a focus on learning because again [a teacher] just being 'a song and dance performer' in the classroom is not necessarily going to get students up to the next level. They have got to check that students are learning and understanding and then demonstrate that learning in assessments. (Z10)

A main scale teacher thought that planning was more effective using baseline data, saying, "I know the level of where the students are and that helps me to prepare and plan my work to a level that is able to move them forward" (Z3). A middle leader's comments were more evaluative but the essential message was much the same as the main scale teacher's. She said that baseline data

[had] an impact because it enables teachers to actually plan and teach more
effectively and then that leads students to learn more effectively by themselves.
The teacher uses the baseline data, the impact it has on the students is that they get a
better experience of learning and are actually able to learn more effectively. (Z6)

A senior leader was more critical but also evaluative again reaching the same conclusion.
She indicated that it did have an impact and illustrated this in saying:

where we have been able to give teachers, particularly at the beginning of Year 7,
good information about the makeup of their teaching group, be it CAT scores, Key
Stage 2 results and reading levels and I think that has had an impact on learning
because the teachers have to be able to differentiate learning and know how to target
lessons. (Z11)

To recap, the use of baseline data in PM was perceived to have a positive impact on
learning. There were two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which
the use of baseline data was reported to improve learning.

On Leading

Teachers using baseline data generally perceived it to improve leading and leadership
processes. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by
which the use of baseline data was reported to affect leading and leadership. These were
enhanced monitoring and evaluation (Z1, Z2, Z4, Z5, Z6, Z9, Z10 and Z11); improved
planning (Z7 and Z8); and one main scale teacher was unclear about the perceived
mechanism but indicated that both planning and more realistic expectations made a
contribution to improved learning (Z3).

Looking first at how baseline data enhanced leadership through enhanced monitoring and
evaluation, one main scale teacher said:

> Baseline-data enhances the monitoring because if you are observing lessons you will know the level of the kids that you are observing and want to know that the lessons are at the right level and that the person who is teaching has that in mind. You will want to know that students have made progress. (Z4)

A middle leader was more circumspect and evaluative:

> It is very useful for monitoring my cohort in particular because they are quite a low attaining group in terms of the baseline data, one of the lowest year groups in the last 4 or 5 years. So in that sense, at KS4 it has been very useful to try and target certain subjects that are discrepant. (Z5)

On the other hand, a senior leader was much more emphatic, and also evaluative:

> I think the effect is quite considerable, because so much data is available, and it's made middle managers and senior managers take a more monitoring role. Students' data when they start courses, the data at the end, the residuals and very clearly being able to pick up where students are achieving or under-performing and being expected [and able] to take appropriate action [are particularly useful]. (Z10)

The planning aspect of the leadership role was also perceived to be enhanced. One middle leader reported interventions made with a low ability Year Eight group:

> we have agreed to do a kind of intervention strategy with that class and teach a writing unit of work to improve their writing skills. So the data helps teachers to plan interventions with their classes [and managers to be more effective in their planning]. (Z7)

All of this presupposes an emphasis on whole school/cohort evaluation.

To summarize, the use of baseline data was perceived to have a positive impact on leadership practices. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which the use of baseline data was reported to improve leading and leadership.

In conclusion, the use of baseline data was reported to have a positive effect on teaching, learning and leadership practices at School Z. The full range of perceptions of the processes reported by which the use of baseline data improved teaching, learning and leadership were incorporated by the themes discussed above. It is possible that these teachers' perceptions of the processes generating improvement may be connected to their organisational role. The perception of leaders, including middle leaders, would appear to reflect their more evaluative and whole-school role.

The Impact of CPD on Teaching, Learning and Leadership processes

On Teaching

Teachers generally perceived CPD to improve teaching. There were two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which CPD was reported to affect teaching. These were that it improved teaching skill (Z2, Z3, Z4, Z5, Z6, Z7, Z8, Z9, Z10 and Z11); and to a far lesser extent, that it helped motivate teachers (Z1).

Looking first at the effect of CPD on teaching and the development of teaching skills, one main scale teacher, a reflective practitioner, commented:

> I felt that the training that I had as a teacher was vital to my being qualified but I felt that it was slightly too heavily weighted on the side of teaching me how to teach, which I obviously need to know how to do. I also wanted to know how to promote effective learning, as you can teach but not necessarily promote learning. (Z2)

A middle leader made a similarly reflective comment:

earlier on in my career it had a great impact: we had the opportunity to go on a few insets that had a direct impact on our teaching. I took part in a teaching and learning initiative, Curriculum 2000, which also had an impact on my teaching. (Z6)

Both of these comments are evaluative. However, the latter suggests whole-school awareness. The comment by a senior leader was distinctly and critically evaluative and strategic. She said:

CPD has some impact on teaching, I think there is more we could do in terms of making sure when people have been on courses, that they feed back properly. Sometimes the impact has dissipated a bit but it helps when they feed back to the department. CPD is linked to PM targets and the SDP but there is a need to ensure that it is integral to the whole school's development. (Z11)

Finally, one main scale teacher alluded to the effect that CPD had through the enhanced motivation of teaching staff. She said "I have gone on one or two courses and felt like taking on the whole world when I returned…except that when you come back to school, time constraints and other matters hold you back" (Z1). Such comments allude to personal development, rather than whole-school effects, but are evaluative because they imply a judgement about the limits of the effects of CPD.

The impact of the use of CPD on teaching was reported to be positive. The improvement in teaching was reported to take place through a number of processes and these are incorporated by the two themes outlined above.

On Learning

All of the teachers at School Z perceived CPD improved learning. There were two distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which CPD was reported to affect learning. These were that it improved teaching, and development in learning followed (Z1, Z2, Z3, Z4, Z5, Z6, Z7, Z8, Z9 and Z11), and according to one senior leader, that it helped put the focus on learning development (Z10).

Considering first the improvement in learning affected by CPD through improved teaching, a main scale teacher based her whole practice on the link between teaching and learning. Her comments were very relevant in this context:

> I wanted and am passionate about wanting to teach and promote learning and so for me the MA in Effective Learning (studied) was to try to get to the other side of it, to make sure that as much as possible and as often as possible, to the greatest extent possible, my teaching leads to learning. (Z2)

A middle leader's comments were more circumspect and evaluative:

> I think CPD has a strong impact on student learning because CPD addresses specific needs of the teacher and when those are addressed in a well-designed course or useful INSET, it feeds directly back into the teaching and therefore the learning in the classroom. (Z7)

A senior leader was particularly emphatic and evaluative: "I think that CPD does have an impact on student learning because it affects how the teachers teach and how they set up their lessons to enable the children to learn" (Z11).

Another senior leader acknowledged a direct link between CPD and learning development:

> I think [it affects learning development], because there has been a lot of external INSET, with a focus on student learning and, because some of the INSET that people do is internal, it is action-based research. Thinking, for example, about colleagues that have been working on assessment for learning strategies and then feeding back to other colleagues, I say that exactly the same has applied, where it has been relevant, and there have been examples of people coming back and cascading ideas to enhance student learning, independent learning skills, learning styles, thinking skills: all of the sorts of things that would give the focus to the students themselves. (Z10)

CPD was reported to impact positively on learning. The perceptions of the processes through which learning improved can be incorporated into the two themes or potential mechanisms outlined and discussed above.

On Leading

All of the teachers at School Z perceived CPD to improve leading and leadership processes. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which CPD was reported to affect leading and leadership processes. These were through the development of professional practices and skills (Z2, Z3, Z4, Z5, Z6, Z7, Z9, Z10 and Z11); sharing practice (Z1) and enhancing motivation through career development (Z8).

Addressing first the improvement in leadership affected by CPD through the development of professional practices and skills, one middle leader was particularly enthusiastic in saying:

> yes it does affect leadership because, for example, I have done a number of courses and seen other people doing courses, leadership, management, middle management courses etc on topics like how to be an effective team leader and various others to do with planning. I have been on courses like these and it has helped me in working with others in raising standards in my classes. (Z4)

A middle manager's perceptions were more evaluative:

> I think it's very useful to learn new techniques and new ideas of good practice and that has helped me because it makes you reflect on how you manage people or lead your tutor group, for example. So yes, I have found CPD in this context very useful and positive in working with and also managing others to improve students' learning. (Z6)

This evaluative emphasis was especially true of the comments made by senior leaders. One said:

it has a two fold impact on leadership practices, I think one is the kind of professional development that middle leaders and senior leaders go on, which are connected with their job descriptions and the ways the school is changing and looking far ahead and not just looking at what goes on in the classroom. This has an impact on how well we do our jobs and that is very important, so that we are well informed, we get ideas, we have a chance to talk to our colleagues and again look at what practice is going on elsewhere. I think it also has an impact on the fact that we as managers can slightly direct what CPD goes on in the rest of the school so that it can fit in with school targets and raise attainment levels. (Z11)

One main scale teacher thought that CPD enhanced leadership through the sharing of good practice.

I mean the sharing of good practice when you attend INSET, for example. Often at these events you exchange ideas about good practice in your own schools. Then when you get back you share with people (teachers) that you work with. It can be in the school but it does help with sharing in the department. (Z1)

CPD was also perceived to improve leadership and leading through its impact on career development and motivation of staff, especially teachers. One middle leader commented:

I think it has a strong impact on leadership because with the emphasis on CPD in PM and that initial interview with each member of the department, I think it establishes between myself and that teacher a real sense of interest in their teaching practice and their role in the classroom and a real sense of importance to them in developing their career as a teacher. I think it puts me in a stronger position of supporting that teacher in improving, developing and growing and helps motivate them as teachers. (Z8)

To summarize, CPD was perceived to have a positive impact on leadership processes. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which CPD was reported to improve leading and leadership.

In conclusion, CPD was reported to have a positive effect on teaching, learning and leadership practices at School Z. The full range of perceptions of the processes reported through which CPD improved teaching, learning and leadership were incorporated by the themes discussed above. Teacher perceptions of the processes generating improvement could be linked to their organisational role. The perception of leaders, including middle leaders, would appear to reflect their more strategic and whole-school role.

The Impact of Objective Setting (Appraisal) on Teaching, Learning and Leadership processes

On Teaching

All of the teachers at School Z perceived that objective setting had improved teaching. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which lesson observation was reported to affect teaching. These were improved teaching practices (Z2, Z6, Z8 and Z9); better planning for support of those in need (Z3, Z7, Z10 and Z11) and enhanced motivation (Z1, Z4 and Z5).

Considering first the effect that objective setting had on teaching through improved and more appropriate practices, one main scale teacher said that it only had a minor effect, while another commented, "it is very important. We considered my lessons and saw weaknesses. We agreed certain points for development in my teaching and set objectives for review after four months" (Z2). A middle leader thought "that it had a very large impact" (Z6). He had become aware of this "to a certain extent as part of the teaching and learning initiative where teachers were encouraged to share learning objectives with the students" (Z6). In the case of appraisal, he realised that "when you set an objective or even a couple of objectives it focuses you on what you are teaching and as a result students benefit from this" (Z6).

In the case of those who thought that objective setting improved teaching through better planning, one main scale teacher said: "this [planning] is very important because we agree exactly what support is needed for students to make [the desired] progress" (Z3). A middle

leader made a wider claim in saying that "objective setting improved teaching because it helped prepare and plan for managing any changes needed" (Z7). This more evaluative and strategic approach was illustrative of the thinking of senior leaders as well, but even more so. One senior leader explained: "I think there is a potential for a review period because sometimes it [objective setting] has an impact for a few weeks and it is in the back of teachers' minds, but it can fade a bit as we get through the year "(Z11).

Enhanced motivation was another process or mechanism through which objective setting was perceived to improve teaching. One main scale teacher suggested this in the comment, "it revolves around learning so it helps me to know to focus my planning and my teaching so, for example, I set all the kids in Year 11 to get at least a grade D. So obviously I worked my guts out so that they would get that" (Z1). A middle leader explained it simply as "you're teaching for a purpose rather than for the sake of it for national curriculum levels. There is an incentive there" (Z5). However, he showed awareness of the whole-school context in acknowledging that the school "has targeted exam groups so it has made me more aware of where the class is and what I should be getting out of them" (Z5).

The impact of the use of objective setting on teaching was reported to be consistently positive. The perceptions of the processes through which teaching improved were incorporated into three themes of potential mechanisms as explained above.

On Learning

All of the teachers at School Z were positive in their comments on the impact of objective setting on learning. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms by which lesson observation was reported to affect learning. These were that it improved teaching, which resulted in improved learning (Z1, Z2, Z6, Z7, Z8 and Z9) and that it created an increased focus on learning (Z3, Z10 and Z11). Two teachers explained that learning improved because objective setting enhanced pupils' motivation (Z4 and Z5).

One main scale teacher was in no doubt that objective setting had improved learning by enhancing teaching. The teacher said: "it has made me work much harder and made me

focus on students' learning and they have worked harder too. They have made more progress and their results are better" (Z2). A middle leader's comments were more evaluative

> I think that objective setting has had a big impact because I think teachers are thinking a lot more about what they are teaching. Lessons have dedicated learning outcomes and teachers focus on these as this is what the students are going to learn and at the end of the lesson they are concerned about whether they have learned the outcomes planned. So there's a lot more targeted learning going on and I think it's a lot more skills-based learning in History. (Z6)

Teachers thought that there had been an increased focus on learning and this had led to an increase in attainment. However, one main scale teacher thought that this was not particularly substantial: "objective setting has brought a focus on learning by helping to review pupil progress but this can also be a little intimidating and it has had a restraining effect on teachers, I think" (Z3). A senior leader's comments were much more positive and also evaluative about the effect of objective setting on learning and therefore attainment:

> It has raised achievement and I think students are learning a lot more because teachers are setting much more ambitious learning targets for their students. So, I think we have seen this impact in a number of areas where achievement has gone up and this is generally the case. They [students] are being set more challenging work, more is expected of them and there is more focus on their learning. (Z11)

There was a strong feeling that objective setting had improved learning through enhanced pupil motivation. One main scale teacher said following his meeting with his line manager "I make sure that my students know what level they are working at and what they are trying to achieve and I encourage them in this" (Z4). A middle leader held a similar view:

> The kids are more aware of what we expect from them and that helps to motivate
> the majority because they are more aware of the levels they are working at, what
> they need to do as individuals and as a class to improve. (Z5)

The effect of objective setting on learning was generally perceived to be positive. There were a range of perceptions of the processes through which objective setting improved learning and they have been incorporated into three distinct themes as explained.

On Leading

All of the teachers from School Z were positive about the impact of objective setting on leadership processes. There were three distinct themes of perceptions or potential mechanisms through which objective setting was reported to affect leading and leadership processes. These were that it enhanced the planning and management of performance including pupils' (Z3, Z5, Z6, Z10 and Z11); enhanced monitoring and evaluation (Z2, Z7, Z8 and Z9) and motivated teachers (Z1 and Z4).

Objective setting enhanced leading and leadership in planning and managing pupil progress and performance. One main scale teacher said: "it helped discussions with line managers to plan pupils' targets. This is mainly about pupil progress and this is what makes the main difference" (Z3).

The comments of a middle leader implied a higher level of analysis and evaluation:

> I have become more conscious of my role as a leader and a manager as a result of
> the whole process but through objective setting particularly. Before this, I suppose,
> in many senses I just got on with my work without really reflecting on events but
> really with this [OS] you are made to plan and manage pupils' progress and
> consider this in more detail. (Z6)

A senior leader's comments were similarly evaluative:

> I think it [OS] has given us a focus on particular groups of students and sorts of departments we line manage, or year groups that we line manage and the objectives we plan with them give you something measurable to evaluate and how the strategies agreed are working. So the impact has resulted from the focus it gives us as managers. (Z11)

Another senior leader referred to the leadership objective required in PM policy in explaining the impact objective setting has. She said that it was:

> because every middle manager is expected to have a leadership objective, quite a lot of those in the past have taken, certainly in some of the departments I have line managed, something that would benefit the whole school in terms of teaching and learning. (Z10)

Objective setting was reported to have improved leadership and leading through enhanced monitoring and evaluation. One main scale teacher pointed out that "management monitor the overall performance of my and others' teaching by looking at the objectives, whether these are fulfilled at the end of the year" (Z2). A middle leader's comments were more evaluative in that they implied a judgement about how well it enhanced monitoring and evaluation. He commented:

> I think it has very much tightened up the work of my department. We have been able to tighten up and focus on schemes of work so that the objectives of units and each individual lesson are very clear. It means you can give a big focus on success criteria and monitor progress against these. (Z7)

Finally, objective setting was perceived to improve leadership by motivating teachers. One main scale teacher said:

it has affected management because we are all aware of the targets we are set and we have to meet them. It [OS] does motivate hard work. It does encourage hard work and of course the support needed for targets to be achieved. (Z4)

The significance of the perceptions formed was that a substantial majority of interviewees were positive about the effect of objective setting on leadership. The range of processes reported by which objective setting improved leadership have been incorporated into the three distinct themes outlined above.

To conclude, objective setting generally has a positive effect on teaching, learning and leadership practices at School Z. The full range of perceptions of the processes reported through which objective setting improved teaching, learning and leadership were incorporated by the themes outlined above. Teacher perceptions of the processes generating improvement seemed to be linked to their organisational role. In this respect, the perception of leaders, including middle leaders would appear to reflect their more evaluative and whole-school role.

Themes Identified from Interviews with Policy Makers at the DfES

The rationale of PM and its impact over the past four years

One civil servant (CS) talked about the importance of lesson observation, target setting and data analysis and the use of baseline data at the core of PM policy that was aimed at bringing about school improvement:

> There have been numerous developments nationally that have enabled children to achieve more. PM has brought increased focus on improvement because of lesson observation, data analysis and target setting. (CS1)

She emphasised the non-threatening nature of the policy in stressing that:

> PM functions to illuminate the work of teachers, not to control them or make them accountable. The aim is improvement. A coherence has developed between lesson observation, target setting, data analysis, CPD and objective setting in the context of school development planning. The continuity between them [the five dimensions of policy] has become embedded and normal practice. (CS1)

In considering this comment, what is particularly important to the thesis is the reference to the importance of the coherence between the five dimensions of the PM policy. This not only reinforced the focus of the study but also supported the approach of conceptual abstraction from the object of study, namely PM.

It is most important to realise that this is not a conceptualisation on the part of the policymaker. It is her perception of what had evolved in schools over the past four to five years. She went on to say:

> Teachers now need more feedback because of the use of baseline data and its integration with lesson observation and target setting. So PM requires on-going dialogue throughout the year. The implementation of the policy depends upon how

it is used by the headteacher and the attitude to it in the school. It is very much in the hands of the teachers. (CS1)

It remains to consider policymakers' perceptions of the impact of the five dimensions of PM policy. However, before considering these, it would be appropriate to consider policymakers' views of the initial development of the model policy.

The development of the "Model Policy"

One policymaker briefly explained the thinking behind the development of the model policy:

> There was full consultation with teachers associations in the preparation of the "Guidance" and the Model Policy including amendments. The main purpose of producing a model policy was to avoid starting with a blank piece of paper. (CS1)

She said that:

> The essence of the model policy is a two-way cyclical process. The aim was to generate a transparent process for everyone. [This is] because potentially information could be used for appraisal, pay and dismissal. While it is very much a management tool, it is also seen as a protective device, clearly setting out responsibilities and rights. (CS1)

The impact of lesson observation and target setting

The same policy maker said:

> The purpose of PM was to focus and prioritise and the various dimensions of the system served to provide the "glue" for the various management strategies directed at raising standards. Thus lesson observation and target setting should fit into a cohesive and coherent structure. All as part of "one conversation" that would build on lesson observation, would feed into target setting for pupils, draw on data analysis and result in objectives set for teachers, including one for pupil progress

that would also be supported by CPD. These objectives are linked to the school improvement plan. (CS1)

Most interesting and relevant to the thesis, she qualified this in saying:

In schools where the policy is properly implemented and therefore works well, it is a part of open and transparent management processes. As a result, learning, teaching and leading are synchronised. (CS1)

This is corroborated by another policy maker's comments:

PM is about looking at what they need to do to bring about improvement. It is fundamentally linked to the school improvement process and rising standards. The new terminology includes teaching and learning review rather than appraisal or even objective setting. PM is line management in approach but with an emphasis on professional development to improve learning. (CS2)

The contribution of baseline data to teaching

Policymakers made curious reference to assessment in the context of value added. One said that "assessment for learning" is about "knowing where the pupils are and where the teacher would hope to move them on to" (CS1). This was seen to be about pupil progress and value added. School improvement was thus seen to be essentially about pupil progress, which they perceived to be directly related to value added. The more effective the teaching, the more progress made in pupils' learning and the greater the value added. "The intended impact of using data was to improve teaching to improve pupil progress" (CS2).

The contribution of baseline data to learning

The intended impact of the use of baseline data on PM was: "to set individual learning targets for students, so producing appropriate progress" and to provide the "best educational fit for the child" (CS1)

The contribution of baseline data to leading

In this context, the policymaker tended to focus mainly on the leadership of headteachers. She referred to:

> the use of an external adviser to formally review the performance of the headteacher makes the process [of PM] more objective through the use of baseline data and data analysis. Headteachers are used as External Advisers in providing a more professional and business dimension. Ofsted inspections have observed that this strengthens the overall process. PM is seen more as a line management structure and management development tool, which reinforces managerial processes and is a minimalist system that is flexible to afford a range of contexts. (CS1)

The contribution made by CPD and objective setting to school improvement

In understanding the rationale of policy makers and the embedded coherence between the five dimensions of PM as explained above, it is also relevant to appreciate policymakers' perceptions of the part played by professional development in its implementation:

> The impact of PM to date generally is that it has brought more focus to CPD. [It marks] a shift from predominantly individual wants to predominantly professional needs. (CS1)

The focus on CPD in PM policy was perceived to be a key structure in bringing about school improvement. The impact that objective setting was intended to have was as a structure in setting objectives for CPD and pupil progress by which standards are raised.

In conclusion, policy makers perceived PM to be comprised of five fundamental dimensions or parts that were key to bringing about school improvement. In short, the DfES anticipated a clearly defined "link role for PM with school improvement" (CS2). PM "is about improving the practice of teachers and heads, to improve pupil attainment" (CS2).

Appendix C

Summary of Telephone Interviews with the Headteachers from Some of the Highest and Lowest Value Added Schools

Summary of the Telephone Interviews with the Headteachers of Thirty of the Highest and Lowest Value Added Schools

In January of 2006, the Department of Data and Statistics at Ofsted, at my request, sent me a list of the names of all of the schools that were in the top 10% and bottom 10% of schools ranked according to their VA. I completed telephone interviews with the headteachers of thirty of these schools. Fifteen were taken from the top 10% and fifteen from the bottom 10% of VA schools.

The main purpose of the interviews was to investigate the extent of the effect of the national policy for PM on standards in secondary schools that were at the extremes of VA performance. At the time, very few of these schools were familiar with their national ranking in relation to their VA scores. I explained the nature of my research funded by the National College for School Leadership and said that I wanted to know whether PM had had any impact on raising attainment at their schools. I held a short telephone conversation with each of the headteachers from the thirty schools, lasting on average about fifteen minutes. A summary of the conversations is included in Table C1 below.

Two questions were put to them. First, I asked "what were the key influences in raising attainment in their schools over the past five years?" Second, I asked "what effect, if any, did the PM national policy have on attainment?"

It is very apparent from the data below that headteachers reported that PM was not a key lever in raising attainment in their schools. However, almost without exception, they reported it to have had some positive effect. The effect was variable across these schools in that it added more to the attainment in some than in others. It is true to say that in these thirty schools at the extremes of VA performance, it was reported by their headteachers that PM had helped raise attainment.

As far as possible, I chose mixed community schools and coded each type of school including their names and contact numbers as one of the following:

Grammar Boys n; Grammar Girls n; Voluntary Aided n; Community n; Non-Selective n.

Headteachers' names and e mail addresses were correspondingly coded as n, where n is an arbitrary number from 1 to 30.

Summary of Telephone Survey about the Impact of PM on Attainment

Top Band of Value Added Schools

Code for: Name of School & Telephone No.	Code for: Head's Name & Email	Impact of PM
Voluntary Aided 1	1	PM was one among a number of strategies. CPD was the most important.
Girls' Grammar 2	2	This was an IiP school. The Head reported that it was "difficult to judge" the size of the impact of PM, although the cycle was now annual instead of every two years.
Voluntary Aided 3	3	PM was reported to be important in emphasising support of staff teaching GNVQs. This was also significant for the pass rate. Target setting, data analysis, lesson observation and assessment were similarly important.
Girls' Grammar 4	4	The headteacher reported that it was difficult to judge the impact of PM. There were too many other significant factors, including the use of mentors and curriculum development. However, the perception was positive.

Top Band of Value Added Schools Continued

Code for: Name of School & Telephone No.	Code for: Head's Name & Email	Impact of PM
Community 5	5	Curriculum change and vocational courses were reported to have had an effect as well as PM.
Community 6	6	This was an IiP School. Results were reported to improve because of: Specialist School status; curriculum development for Visual Arts, ICT and Science; the use of CAT tests; new policy on learning styles; use of smart boards; use of vocational courses and to some extent PM.
Community 7	7	PM was well embedded and this was an IiP school, but PM was reported to have had only a small impact on attainment. The use of data analysis and target setting were reported to be most influential. There were also curriculum changes like vocational courses that were reported to increase attainment. Focused support for GCSE using mentors was also reported to be significant.

Top Band of Value Added Schools Continued

Code for: Name of School & Telephone No.	Code for: Head's Name & Email	Impact of PM
Community 8	8	As an IIP School, transition to PM had been smooth and it had improved attainment. The use of self-review and management objectives in PM were reported to help the school's self evaluation system. There had been improvements in Maths, English and GNVQ reported but PM was considered to be one element among many, including improvements in leadership and management.
Community 9	9	The general culture of the school had been IiP focused. There were no sudden rises in attainment. The main impact on attainment was through a focus on assessment and target setting, but improvements through PM were also reported.
Community 10	10	The main contribution to standards was reported to come from improved quality of teaching and the introduction of Assessment for Learning (AFL). PM was reported to be well embedded and very strong. The main impact in this respect was reported to be from target setting, data analysis and lesson observation.

Top Band of Value Added Schools Continued

Code for: Name of School & Telephone No.	Code for: Head's Name & Email	Impact of PM
Community 11	11	The head reported that PM was embedded and had some impact. Curriculum changes involving GNVQ had the most impact on pass rate. PM had some effect through the pupil progress objectives for Year 11 students. It was reported to be not inclusive enough to substantially affect achievement.
Voluntary Aided 12	12	PM had been important but other factors were considered to be more important. The main impact was reported to be through a focus on assessment and related changes such as Assessment for Learning.
Boys' Grammar 13	13	This was an IiP school and PM was strong but it had made only a small impact. The main influences reported were through restructuring and professional development of staff and Specialist School status. The use of CPD and training was reported to be especially important.
Community 14*	14*	This school was not particularly committed to PM. A new head had raised expectations, targeted pupils and led a more focused agenda for improvement. The priorities were teaching and accountability, which were reported to have had more impact than PM*.

Top Band of Value Added Schools Continued

Code for: Name of School & Telephone No.	Code for: Head's Name & Email	Impact of PM
Community 15	15	PM was reported to have some effect but the main ones were considered to be through the curriculum, including vocational courses and assessment.

Bottom Band of Value Added Schools

Code for: Name of School & Telephone No.	Code for: Head's Name & Email	Impact of PM
Community 16	16	The most important factor in raising standards was reported to be through the extra resources acquired from achieving specialist school status.
Community 17	17	The headteacher considered PM important in building staff capacity and improving the quality of teaching. However, GNVQs in Media, Production, Drama and Performing Arts and IT were reported to have a greater effect. Building the capacity of staff, especially teaching, through PM had also been important but not key.
Community 18	18	PM had helped raise attainment but was not reported to be as important as curriculum changes.

Bottom Band Value Added Schools Continued

Code for: Name of School & Telephone No.	Code for: Head's Name & Email	Impact of PM
Community 19	19	This was an IiP school, and while PM was reported to have had a positive effect, there were other more important influences. For example, specialist school status; the use of learning mentors, targeting students within cohorts, a younger and more energetic teaching staff; the introduction of GNVQs and a focus on Maths and ICT were reported to be more significant.
Community 20	20	PM was reported to be a factor in raising attainment but mainly through data analysis, target setting and lesson observation. PM helped staff focus but the main impact had been through many other factors, including assessment.
Community 21	21	This was an IiP school with specialist school status since 2001. The new curriculum, focused on vocational courses in Visual Arts (BTEC), ICT and Science (both GNVQ), was reported to be more influential. The focus on learning styles with the use of smart boards had also been important.

Bottom Band Value Added Schools Continued

Code for: Name of School & Telephone No.	Code for: Head's Name & Email	Impact of PM
Non Selective 22	22	PM was fully implemented. It helped give a focus and priority to the work of teachers. However, there were many other factors that were also reported to be more influential in raising student achievement.
Community 23	23	IiP had been influential and PM was also reported to have had a small effect at KS4.
Community 24	24	Changes to the curriculum were reported to be more important, especially in the case of vocational courses, but PM was also reported to have had some positive effect.
Community 25	25	PM was reported to have been implemented but not particularly well. The main influences were reported to be: vocational courses e.g. GNVQ IT; curriculum review; targeting students at the C/D boundary; the use of learning mentors for homework support; interviewing students with potential and gaining parental support.

Bottom Band Value Added Schools Continued

Code for: Name of School & Telephone No.	Code for: Head's Name & Email	Impact of PM
Community 26	26	This was an IiP school. PM was embedded but not challenging: it was reported to be "too cosy". Changes to monitoring and evaluation were reported to have more impact. Curriculum change in, for example, the dis-application of certain subjects in this specialist school, was also reported to be important.
Community 27	27	This was an "IiP champion school". Target setting, data analysis and lesson observation were reported to be most influential. Collaboration as part of a federation of schools was considered a significant influence. There was a focus on learning embodied within the PM umbrella, leadership at all levels and the use of target minimum grades. PM was reported to have some impact but not the most significant.

Bottom Band Value Added Schools Continued

Code for: Name of School & Telephone No.	Code for: Head's Name & Email	Impact of PM
Community 28	28	PM was reported to be well embedded. There was effective teaching and staffing across subjects. PM was considered to be excellent for CPD. Monitoring and evaluation was also supported by PM. However, curriculum change was reported to have the most impact and mainly through vocational courses like GNVQ.
Community 29	29	Both IiP and PM were very well embedded in the school. However, the impact of PM, although positive, was reported to be too difficult to quantify.
Community 30	30	PM was reported to have limitations because of the insufficient number of meetings linked to it. However, although the head thought it could work better, it was reported to have had some impact. The main reasons reported for the increases in attainment were GNVQ through ICT, Health and Social Care, Leisure and Tourism and Art and Design. Other reported influences included staff, setting and literacy developments.

14* An acting headteacher was interviewed