UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Faculty of Education

Faculty of Education

Thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Education

More than the sum of its parts: practitioner perspectives on the characteristics, affordances and challenges of all-through schools in the English state system.

April 2020

Words: 79,985

Helen Elizabeth Price
Fitzwilliam College

Supervisor: Dr Sue Swaffield

Preface

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or is being concurrently submitted, for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

Abstract

Helen Price

More than the sum of its parts: practitioner perspectives on the characteristics, affordances and challenges of all-through schools

This research focuses on the small but growing number of English all-through state schools. In the wider school system hundreds of thousands of children transfer schools for their secondary education each year. The social challenges faced at transfer and the curricular and pedagogical disconnects between primary and secondary education are well documented in the literature. This thesis explores the opportunities provided by the all-through configuration to ease these difficulties and create a cohesive approach across all educational phases.

This is a sequential mixed methods study. At stage one a research questionnaire was sent to school leaders in all-through schools. Stage two consisted of field work in three case study schools, where data were gathered through interviews, focus groups and observations. Stage one uses quantitative data to create a contextual narrative about all-through schools. The larger qualitative dataset explores emergent themes in depth. The overall research philosophy is phenomenological, meaning that an emphasis is placed upon narrating research participants' lived experiences.

The study considered the blend of specialist and generalist teaching at all-through schools and found that all schools surveyed deployed some specialist teaching at KS2 and that half adopted some generalist practices at lower KS3, showing a blurring of the boundaries between primary and secondary practice. Drawing on the work of Etienne Wenger, primary and secondary practitioners are conceptualised in the thesis as separate communities of practice. The research found that all-through schools can counter the separatist mindsets of primary and secondary practitioners and that there was evidence of emergent boundary practice in curriculum development and pedagogy.

All-through pupils reported that their social transition to secondary education is more comfortable than that experienced by their non all-through peers. Practitioners valued the ability to build strong relationships with families over the years of a child's all-through schooling. However, all-through schools also face significant challenges: leaders perceived the pressures of performativity and accountability and the particular financial disadvantages faced by all-through schools as threats to establishing effective cross-phase working.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Sue Swaffield, for her tremendous support during this doctoral research project. We have worked together for nearly a decade on my journey from M.Ed to EdD completion. Without her guidance, I could never have reached this point. I would also like to thank all at the Faculty of Education and particularly Dr Tatjana Dragovic, Dr Elaine Wilson and Professor Pamela Burnard for their unstinting support, creativity and enthusiasm. My fellow part-time doctoral students have been an inspiration and their critical friendship throughout this process has been appreciated.

I am also extremely grateful to the leaders and trustees within my multi-academy trust. Without their support, I would not have been able to complete this research alongside my professional duties.

Thank you to my amazing friends and family, especially Mum, Dad, Linda, Chris, Matthew and Barney. You believed I could do this and your support and encouragement have been invaluable.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the extraordinary times in which this thesis is being submitted. I dedicate this work to the school leaders and staff, who are keeping open our schools at a time of global crisis. Your service to your communities is truly inspiring.

Table of Contents

List of tables and figures

List of abbreviations

AfL	Assessment for Learning
BERA	British Education Research Association
CAT	Cognitive Abilities Test
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPR	Cambridge Primary Review
CTC	City Technology College
DH	Department for Health
DfE	Department for Education
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
DT	Design Technology
EdD	Doctor of Education
EHCP	Education and Health Care Plan
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
GB	Governing Body
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GIAS	Get Information About Schools (UK Government website)
HR	Human Resources
INSET	In-service Training
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
KS1	Key Stage One (ages 5-7)
KS2	Key Stage Two (ages 7-11)
KS3	Key Stage Three (ages 11-14)
KS4	Key Stage Four (ages 14-16)
KS5	Key Stage Five (ages 16-19)

LA	Local Authority
LBG	Local Governing Body
MAT	Multi Academy Trust
MMPR	Mixed Methods Phenomenological Research
NC	National Curriculum
NCSL	National College for School Leadership
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
ORACLE	Observational Research and Classroom Learning Evaluation
PA	Personal Assistant
PE	Physical Education
PFI	Public Finance Initiative
PiXL	Partners in Excellence
RE	Religious Education
RSC	Regional Schools Commissioner
SAT	Standard Assessment Test
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SMSC	Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education
SRL	Self Regulated Learning
SSAT	The Schools, Students and Teacher Network (formerly Specialist Schools and Academies Trust)
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
TUPE	Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)

List of appendices

1.Introduction

1.1 All-through schools in the English state system

All-through schools have learners in both the primary and secondary age ranges on their rolls. In the English state system they are single institutions and legal entities, which is denoted by the all-through school being allocated a single DfE number. As a consequence, all-through schools in England are funded and inspected as one institution. Whilst all-through configurations are common in other educational jurisdictions, for example across Scandinavia, state all-through schools remain a very small part of the educational landscape in England. However, the configuration has been gaining in popularity in the last decade, particularly within the academy and free school sector. In September 2019, there were 166 all-through state schools in England (source GIAS 2019). When I started to formulate a research proposal in 2014, there were 87 English all-through schools in the state sector, meaning their numbers have nearly doubled in the last six years.

In this thesis I consider all-through schools as an alternative to the largely unchallenged orthodoxy of separate primary and secondary schools. The schools' census reveals that in the school year 2017-18 there were 16,766 state primary schools and 3,436 state-funded secondary schools in England (DfE, 2018), which operate effectively as 'stand-alone' schools. These figures reveal the near universal division between primary and secondary education in England. In chapter two, I explore why this is the case, by considering the evolution of state secondary education in England in the post-war years.

1.2 My professional context and how it relates to the research focus

At the start of my EdD studies I was the headteacher of an all-through school in the East of England, which was formed when a state secondary school, established as a new school seven years earlier, varied its age-range to take on a primary phase. Although my training, teaching and previous school leadership experience had been solely in secondary education, I found myself planning for, growing and leading the equivalent of a medium sized primary school (two forms of entry), as part of the development of our all-through school. The founding of our primary phase was in

response to an overwhelming demographic demand in our city, which led the local authority (LA) to commission us to be the education provider of urgently needed new primary provision.

My current professional role is as the executive headteacher of a locality based multi-academy trust (MAT). Our MAT has grown from the original all-through school and now comprises: an all-through school, a new secondary school and a primary free school, which opened in September 2019. We have evolved from a single all-through school into an all-through MAT. The principles and practices we developed as an all-through school are now being applied across our all-age, growing MAT. This research focuses specifically on all-through schools (i.e. single all-through schools, with one DfE number) but the proliferation of MATs in the intervening years, and particularly of those working on an all-through basis, means that this research has a potentially greater relevance and reach than I had envisaged at the start of the research time-frame. In the final chapters of this thesis, I also consider the place of English all-through schools in the emerging landscape of new schools and new school groupings.

The link between my own professional experience and the focus of study means that this doctoral research project is, to a great extent, a piece of insider research. In chapter four, I reflect upon the ethical implications of my situatedness within the landscape being studied. As I explain in chapter six, I believe that participants' responses to the research, and other all-through leaders' engagement with dissemination activities, is at least in part a result of my dual role as both researcher and practitioner. It is my hope that part of the legacy of the research will be to create connections between leaders in all-through schools, to enable the sharing of effective practice, and to form a collective lobbying voice in relation to common challenges.

1.3 The need for research focusing on all-through schools

Despite the increasing popularity of the configuration, literature focused specifically on all-through schools in England is sparse. At the beginning of my research process the only published research I could find in relation to English all-through schools was a report of research conducted by the National College for School

Leadership (NCSL, 2011) which considered the challenges and opportunities of leadership in an all-through setting. At that time, NSCL believed there to be 42 all-through schools and up to a total of 60 settings working in an all-through way (through federations or partnership working). The lack of recent and detailed information about all-through schools led me to examine public domain data as part of the first stage of my research, to build up an accurate picture of the numbers, location and characteristics of English all-through schools. A collation of these findings is presented in chapter five.

Part of the motivation for this research has been to understand why schools have chosen this configuration and whether its increasing popularity can be attributed to particular advantages in terms of school organisation, or in cross-phase curricular or pedagogical approaches. The NCSL (2011) report identified potential all-through benefits linked to how children and young people form positive and mutually beneficial relationships, when educated in close proximity. The report also considered that there were emerging potentials for the development of all-through pedagogy and cross-phase teacher professional development.

This research explores the challenges and affordances of the all-through configuration and how these impact upon pedagogy and practice. Through the case study elements of the research the challenges faced by all-through schools are considered in depth, as are the 'lessons learnt' from some of the pioneer all-through state schools. The research also seeks to establish whether aspects of effective practice in all-through schools could be applied on a system-wide basis. To do this, I consider how primary and secondary practitioners currently function as separate professional communities and explore the potentials of all-through working to develop new practice across the primary/secondary divide.

1.4 The research journey and formulation of the research questions

This doctoral research project started in the autumn of 2014 and took over five years of part-time study to complete. In the first two years I undertook research methods training, wrote an initial review of relevant literature and planned my research project. The research itself was undertaken in two stages, adopting a multi-strategy, mixed methods approach (explained in chapter four). Stage one of the research was

undertaken in the spring of 2017, when a research questionnaire was sent to school leaders in all English all-through state schools. Stage two of the research consisted of field work in three case study schools, conducted between December 2017 and March 2019.

Chapters two and three examine literature relevant to the research. Chapter two considers the historic evolution of the current English status quo of separate primary and secondary schools, and also considers the development of the Scandinavian state school systems where all-through configurations are the norm. Chapter three explores a range of literatures from related fields, including in-depth consideration of the literature relating to the primary to secondary transfer in the wider system.

The journey through the early stages of my project, particularly consideration of literature, led me to focus on five main questions as the focus for my research:

- What are the characteristics of all-through schools?
- How do all-through schools plan and teach the curriculum?
- How do all-through schools approach the KS2-3 transition?
- What are emerging as the affordances and opportunities provided by the all-through configuration?
- What are emerging as the main challenges faced by all-through schools?

These questions are presented again at the start of chapter four, where more detailed areas of focus within each question are also given. The research questions are answered in the findings chapters (five and seven) and synthesised findings summaries for each research question, considered across stage and case, are presented in chapter eight.

Chapter 2. How did we get here?

2.1 Post-war educational evolution: a drama in two Acts, a Circular and a White Paper

This chapter examines the formation and evolution of the English state secondary system by considering the intent and impact on school organisation of two education acts, the circular which led to comprehensive reorganisation and *The Schools White Paper* (2010). My EdD research interests focus on all-through schools, which has led me to question how and why English state schools are predominately organised into separate primary and secondary schools. In this chapter I argue that during our journey from 1944 to the present day there have been three major missed opportunities to think holistically about education (1944 Education Act, 1988 Education Reform Act and Circular 10/65), when reforms created and then further cemented an educational divide. I also consider the increase in numbers of all-through schools in the early twenty-first century and how this links to the policy paradigms stemming from *The Schools White Paper* (2010). In addition, this chapter examines how Nordic all-through schools were formed and evolved over the same post-war time-frame.

Since the advent of universal state secondary education in England following the 1944 Education Act, secondary schools in the state sector evolved as entirely separate institutions from primary schools. This divide has largely persisted to the present day, with teachers in initial training focusing only on the age ranges in which they wish to specialise. Indeed, it would not be uncommon for a teacher in either a state primary or secondary school to work their entire career without ever having spent significant time in their primary/secondary counterpart's classroom. Whilst issues such as selection in secondary schools and the comprehensive reorganisation have been at the centre of prominent debates in education over decades (Chitty, 2014; Jones, 2014; McCulloch, 2002), few have stopped to question the near universal primary and secondary divide in the English state system.

2.2 The beginnings of state secondary education: the 1944 Education Act

To understand why schools are configured as they are, we have to remember that there was a time (just over 75 years ago) when the majority of children left education without what we would now term a secondary education. How secondary education was introduced and structured in the post-war years has had a lasting effect on how English schools are organised. Just as the CPR (Alexander, 2010) suggests that the primary education sector is still constrained by ideas and practices which have their roots in the nineteenth century, I would contend, similarly, that the English state secondary sector has never quite shaken off a number of fundamental notions which are grounded in the thinking of war-time Britain. Viewed even at a distance of over 70 years, the optimism, vision and wide-ranging scope of the 'Butler Act' (1944 Education Act) is impressive. It was made law just after allied soldiers had landed on the Normandy beaches and dared to envision a better Britain, with enhanced educational opportunities for all, at a time when the very survival of the country was far from certain (Barber, 1994). It is a piece of legislation which, on the surface, appeared to be a cornerstone of the wider political vision for post-war Britain, largely enacted in tandem with the other great post-war state endeavours: the formation of the NHS and the Welfare State. The Act is seen as a crucial part of the 'New Jerusalem' (Attlee, 1951), a blueprint for a post-war progressive, modern and caring country.

The 1944 Education Act enshrined in law the right of every young person to be educated, free of charge, until the age of 16 (although that part was not finally enacted until the 1970s) and that all should be entitled to a 'secondary education.' To apply this reform universally was a task of great magnitude, requiring complete educational reorganisation and an unprecedented school building and conversion programme. Much of the Act, understandably therefore, was taken up with logistical considerations, looking at how local education authorities (charged with delivering the reform) could and should set about making the vision happen, in very concrete, practical ways.

Of particular relevance to this research is how the Act's establishment of universal free state secondary education was the driving force behind the development in England and Wales of primary and secondary schools as different and distinct types

of school, which were prescribed to be separate organisations. Indeed, in the second section of the Act (2.8.2) it is clearly instructed that:

> 'In fulfilling their duties under this section, a local education authority shall, in particular, have regard-
> (a) to the need for securing that primary and secondary education are provided in separate schools.' (1944 Education Act, 2.8.2)

Thus, the vision for educational advancement became firmly synonymous with the development of secondary schools as stand-alone organisations. The concept of all-age teaching was associated with the pre-war elementary schools, which were viewed as inferior and not fit for purpose for a progressive country needing a better educated population (Jones, 2014). The notion of all-age schools as being a lesser form of education actually pre-dated the Act. In the soul searching that followed in the aftermath of the Great War (1914-1918), there were also a number of reports and committees which had examined the vision for state secondary education. However, the depression put paid to any significant reform in state education in the inter-war years, and, therefore, reformers largely viewed the 1944 Act as a hard won culmination of a long struggle to achieve a better education for the masses (Jones 2014) : 'Many, even on the Left, were happy to settle for universal secondary education, regardless of the form it should take' (Barber, 1994, p 23).

Few would contend that the establishment of universal state funded secondary education in the post-war years was anything other than a great social good. However, from a twenty-first century perspective, we might argue that the Act was flawed in that its reforms did not consider issues of pedagogy or curriculum at all and that its vision was predicated upon assumptions about the organisation of learning and learners, which were taken at the time by many as self-evident, when in actuality they were and remain debatable and unproven. Famously, the Act brought in the tri-partite system of grammar schools, secondary moderns and technical schools, which preserved selection and ultimately failed to address social disadvantage (Jones, 2014). Rab Butler himself was aware that some felt that the Act was not radical enough and that the retention of selection was not universally welcomed. Writing in his autobiography some years later he acknowledged 'it did not, as some would have wished, sweep the board clean of existing institutions in order to start afresh' (Butler, 1971, p123).

Questions about whether this was the best way to establish secondary learning emerged fairly early on (and indeed had been mooted in various guises ahead of the Act), intensifying in the 1960s. McCulloch (1994) asserts that the notion of there being a parity of esteem between three different types of child, who suited different types of secondary school, was never achieved. Batho (1989) considers that by scaling down the vision for education from a national service like health to a local government one, the value placed upon state secondary education had been down-graded at the point of realisation. By making selection at the age of 11 the norm, the Act reinforced 'crass divisions and base prejudices.' (Benn, 2011, p38). The pre-war all-age elementary education received by working class children had been 'wildly uneven' (Benn, 2011, p39), but the post-war vision of secondary education along tri-partite lines, settled into a divided system 'predictably shaped.. along class lines' (Benn, 2011, p38).

The requirement of the Act that secondary schools were to be established as separate institutions created a divide between primary and secondary schools in the English state sector which persists to the present day. In effect, it established two dominant educational paradigms in England, which set the pattern for the next 75 years: the single generalist primary teacher of a class of children up to the age of 11 (Alexander, 2010), and the multiple subject specialist teachers per class in secondary schools, following the blueprint of the grammar schools (Wrigley, 2006). I would contend that this divide, established by the Act, has not worked in the favour of the learner. It is not just that there is not always effective communication at the point of the primary to secondary transfer (considered in chapter three), but that the separate practice of primary and secondary teachers means they do not have a good enough understanding of the what the other does (Evangelou et al 2008).

2.3. Comprehensive reorganisation

By the early 1960s, the post-war political consensus, which had allowed the formation of the Welfare State and the NHS, was substantially broken (Chitty, 2014). In education, the movement against selection at 11 was gaining considerable traction and the relatively young state secondary education sector was again ready for reform. Grammar school places were allocated based on a child's performance

in an entrance test, known as the 11 Plus, although there was not a national pass mark or a common proportion of students to be offered places. One of the key drivers for change was that there had emerged a perception that how pupils were allocated secondary school places was unfair and that a social injustice was being perpetrated. The statistics would seem to support the notion of unfairness, in that a child's chance of gaining a grammar school place varied considerably depending upon where they lived. Benn (2011) points to the strong correlation between deprivation and being excluded from the opportunity to attend a Grammar school: in the working class area of St Anne's in Nottingham only 1.5% of the population attended a grammar school, compared to up to 40% in some affluent rural areas (Benn, 2011).

During the 1960s the calls for change grew ever more intense. Whilst views about selection in education 'did not divide neatly along party-political lines.'(Fogelman, 2006, p33), the catalyst for system-wide comprehensive reorganisation in England was the Labour Party's commitment to the policy in the run up to the 1964 election. Just over a year into the Wilson administration Circular 10/65 was issued to local education authorities, which 'requested' that they submit plans for reorganisation. Thus a request, with none of the statutory powers of an Act of Parliament, set in train changes which were to transform English education. In 1963 there were 748 state comprehensive schools in England, educating a fifth of the secondary school population, and despite a change of government and subsequent circulars advising that local education authorities could abandon the change if they wanted to, by 1974, there were 2,677 comprehensives, serving 62 percent of children (Fogelman, 2006).

Circular 10/65 also removed the requirement for children to transfer from primary school at the age of 11. As local education authorities were free to submit their own plans for reorganisation, some areas opted for the establishment of middle and upper schools, with transfers at the ages of nine and 13. The model favoured by the then Department for Education and Science, and the one most widely adopted in England, retained transfer at 11, but to a comprehensive school which had its own Sixth Form. This dominant model was referred to at the time as the 'all-through school.' (Fogelman, 2006; Jones, 2014), meaning an 11 to18 comprehensive school. Viewed through the lens of my research interests, over 50 years on, the

comprehensive reorganisation appears as a missed opportunity, as the chance to consider a wider vision of what 'all-through' education might mean was never acted upon. While the spread of comprehensive education reflected a wider progressive movement across Europe (Jones 2014), with school reform along similar lines happening in Scandinavia and elsewhere, there was no vision to establish state cross-phase/age education in England.

2.4 A glance down the road not taken: Nordic schooling models

The successes of the Finnish education system have received international attention over the last ten years, particularly in the UK and North America. Whilst some may consider these successes have been over-stated or not considered with sufficient criticality (Simola, 2015), the claims of high performance are evidenced, to a convincing extent, through the country's rankings in international comparison studies such as the OECD's PISA tests. Finland is also proud (Sahlberg, 2015) that it has a relatively small achievement gap between children and young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds and the levels achieved by the school population as a whole. Sahlberg (2015) also claims that teacher morale is high in Finland and that the country boasts some of the most highly qualified teachers in the world (mandatory masters level qualification for all teachers), who enjoy high social status (Simola, 2015).

Examining Finland's 'PISA miracle' Simola (2015) warns of a superficial admiration for the system's outcomes, without a proper understanding of its egalitarian aims. She feels many aspects of the Finnish educational approaches (such as elimination of high stakes testing) are over-looked. School reorganisation is an aspect of the Finnish educational 'transformation', which is not generally talked about in the UK, but was crucial to how Finland was able to move its system forward. A decisive development in the Finnish system was the establishment of the universal Peruskoulu (comprehensive school); conceived in the 1960s, Finland's version of comprehensive reorganisation was rolled out across the country between 1972 and 1978 (Sahlberg, 2015). Up until this point, the evolution of Finnish schools had been comparable to that in England. However, the Finnish model of reorganisation in the 1970s saw the creation of the Peruskoulu as nine year all-through comprehensive schools. At that point, all state primaries were merged with the grammar schools and

civic schools (Finland's equivalent of the secondary moderns) to make one school to deliver the nine years of mandatory education (covering the ages of seven to 16).

The Peruskoulu have had to evolve to cater for the needs of a diverse range of students of all ages and also require generalist and specialist teachers to work effectively and innovatively with each other. The standard pattern of teaching in a Peruskoulu would be a primary trained generalist teacher leading learning in the younger years and a changing blend of generalists and specialist teachers as students move through the school. Sahlberg (2015) states that the success of Finland is that it has evolved from a country with an inefficient and elitist educational system, to one with a high performing and egalitarian system. What has evolved across Scandinavia (the all-through model is the default school configuration in all Nordic state education systems) is a wider definition of the comprehensive school, which encompasses *both* the primary and secondary age ranges.

School organisation in Sweden provides another interesting point of comparison to the English system. During the 1990s Sweden underwent a radical de-centralisation and de-regulation of its educational system, which has some parallels with decentralisation and privatisation seen in the English education system (Simkins, Coldron, Crawford and Maxwell, 2019). Where schools had previously been run by municipal authorities, new legislation in the 1990s allowed parents, charities or other interested parties to open free schools (Friskolor). The expansion of the free schools programme was fairly rapid, as by the mid-2000s 12 to 13 percent of all schools in the compulsory (seven to 16 age range) and upper secondary (16 to 18 year olds) sectors in Sweden were Friskolor (Cowen, 2008). As is the case with US charter schools, this is not without controversy, in that some Friskolor are operated by companies able to run schools on a for profit basis. What is interesting from the point of view of this research, is that despite a fairly high degree of change and privatisation in the system, Sweden has not deviated from the main school configuration being a seven to 16 comprehensive all-through school.

In Denmark, the Folkeskole is the default state school configuration: a 7-16 all-through comprehensive school, similar to those seen in other Nordic countries (Undervisnings Ministeriat, 2008). As is the case with the Finnish Peruskoula, the

history and evolution of the Folkeskole represents the path not taken by the English system: in the 1930s the Folkeskolan were the direct equivalent of our elementary schools. However, as the school leaving age was raised during the 1930s and 1950s, the Danish approach was to extend the age of the Folkeskolan, rather than create secondary schools as separate institutions. In contrast, the English state secondary sector, it could be argued, initially grew out of the academic and pastoral stuctures of the Grammar schools (Wrigley, 2006, p 68). A system which worked on a smaller scale for very able learners, is not always fit for purpose in, for example, a large urban comprehensive.

As I will consider when examining school transfers in chapter three, some learners experience a sense of bewilderment and alienation after the transfer to secondary school. Wrigley (2006) sees this as a by-product of children having up to 12 different teachers in year seven and therefore having fragmented relationships with the adults in the organization and experiencing their secondary schools 'rather like drifting around a major airport' (Wrigley, 2006, p 68). He points to Scandinavian models up to the age of 16 as being more humane, where teachers qualify in a number of subjects, allowing a continuity of contact time, with longer lessons and much less movement around the building. He cites the example of Norway, where even at 14 and 15, learners are served by a core team of five or six teachers (per 100 studens) attached to their year group. This helps to anchor education around strong interpersonal relationships and fosters positive student behaviour.

2.5 The 1988 Education Reform Act: the age of the 'Key Stage'

By the 1980s, the pattern of separate secondary and primary schools was near universal in the English state education sector. The majority of state secondary schools were comprehensives, but there remained some parts of the country where the 11 Plus and grammar schools had survived. When the Thatcher administration turned its full attention to education in the 1988 Education Reform Act there were key strands of the reform, which were to shape much of what followed in the next quarter of a century. The Act introduced a National Curriculum (NC) (DES, 1987), with prescribed content and skills in each subject and which divided the curriculum into core and foundation subjects. With the NC came a rigorous testing regime and

fixed notions about the standards children and young people should attain by set milestones (or at the end of each 'Key Stage', in the jargon of the Act).

Where the 1944 Act had been preoccupied with the logistics of school reorganisation, the 1988 Act is as significant for its reform of school financial control, the introduction of the grant maintained schools and the birth of the city technology colleges (CTCs) (the fore-runners of today's academies and free schools). Whilst there was no attempt at that point to reinstate the grammar schools, some felt that the formation of grant maintained and specialist schools and a strengthening of parental preference would unleash market forces upon education, with schools falling out of favour and being 'put out of business.' (Clough, Lee, Menter, Trodd, & Whitty, 1989). Bash (1989, p19) goes further, seeing the 1988 Education Reform Act as a complete transposition of 'classical free market economics' to the realms of state education. Following the Act, there was to be a new universality and a new orthodoxy, delivered through the statutory NC and monitored through an unprecedented nation-wide testing regime (Jones, 1989) and an extensive school inspection structure.

The Act established a level of consistency of content across the whole school system and across all age ranges up to 16. From the perspective of my all-through research interests, it is important to note that the Act sought to envisage a coherent cross-phase curriculum, which built upon the pupils' prior learning as they progressed through the years and the key stages of the NC. Crucially, it also established a child's right to a balanced curriculum and prevented crude gender and class stereotyping, which could still be seen being played out in English state schools well into the 1980s (Jones, 2014). Aldrich (2006) underlines a key advantage of the principle of a common curriculum is that all learners have access to prized knowledge, rather than a separate prestigious curriculum being taught to some. Whilst the NC's testing and assessment regime was not without controversy, it did also provide teachers and school leaders across the statutory age ranges with a common assessment currency: the NC level.

The intentions of the Act and the NC can be viewed as an attempt to bring coherence to a fragmented and inconsistent system. Pring (1989) describes the mixed

landscape of schools in the 1980s (primaries, sometimes separate infants and juniors, middle schools, 11-16 schools, 11-18s, comprehensives, grammars, secondary moderns etc.) as a 'rather messy organisation of education' (p30). He concludes that 'it is partly in answer to this problem that the government has proposed a National Curriculum from 5 to 16." (Pring, 1989, p30). It is, therefore, ironic that a well intentioned attempt to establish system-wide consistency and continuity across the whole of compulsory school age provision did not overtly promote cross-phase working and was perhaps our greatest missed opportunity to have had a re-examination of the relationship between primary and secondary education in the last 35 years. In reality, the advent of key stages further divided the teaching profession and widened the gap between colleagues working with children of different ages.

In primary schools, the end of KS2 outcomes are still so crucial, in terms of the high stakes accountability regimes within which schools operate, that the tests have become an end in themselves (Alexander, 2010; Galton, Hargreaves and Pell, 2003). At the very time when energy could be being put into transition support and bridging projects, all efforts are focused on securing year six results. Some educationalists view SATs as a blight on the final year of primary schooling, making it 'the wrong kind of educational culmination: a year of cramming and testing' (Alexander, 2010, p 317). I would argue, therefore, that an unintended consequence of the 1988 Education Reform Act, was to further cement the primary/secondary divide. For over three decades schools and teachers have been too pre-occupied with end of phase and key stage outcomes, to be able to think holistically about the individual learner. The impact of performativity upon schools is considered further in chapters three and nine.

2.6 The Schools White Paper (2010): the rise of the new all-through school

The status quo established by the 1988 Education Reform Act stayed in place largely undisturbed by major school reforms until the mid-2000s and the introduction of academies. The academies programme has become so closely associated with Michael Gove (Secretary of State for Education 2010-2014), that one might forget that the first academies were introduced during the Blair administration. At the birth of the academies programme, considerations of the primary-secondary divide did

not appear to feature in the rationale for academies at all, but stemmed more from New Labour's disenchantment with the 'bog standard comprehensive' school. The coinage of 'bog standard' in connection with comprehensive schools is attributed to Alastair Campbell (Clare and Jones, 2001), was certainly used by Tony Blair's speech writers and did little to win over the teaching profession or ideological opponents of the programme. Nonetheless, the notion of the shiny Academy (often in a brand new building) as a new alternative to a perhaps now tired looking comprehensive school system, was an idea which was to be exploited further after the 2010 General Election.

Key aspects of the Conservation-led coalition government's educational policies are set out in *The Schools White Paper* (2010). Of greatest relevance to this thesis is section five of the White Paper, entitled 'New Schools System'. Here the ambition to expand the academies and free schools programme on a system-wide scale is unveiled. *The Schools White Paper* (2010) also launched the free schools programme, which enabled the establishment of free schools by groups of parents, teachers or charities. As Woods and Simkins (2014) observe, the Conservative-led coalition built on the New Labour policy of academisation, but also 'took it in new directions,' (p 326) by visioning implementation across the whole system. Whilst the proposals themselves are not revolutionary, 'what is new is the scale of change required... It's a system shift' (Parker, cited in Ball 2013, p105).

This 'system shift' has also led to a de-regulation in school settings and configurations, which has enabled new possibilities. It could be argued that access to these new opportunites has not been not equitable across the system, as only 'well positioned' headeachers and institiutions (Coldron, Crawford, Jones and Simkins, 2014) have been able to take a lead in the formation of MATs and in free school applications. Nonetheless, if the 1944 Education Act marks the moment when the primary/secondary divide became cemented in statute, then, I would contend, the publication of the *Schools White Paper* (2010) provided the critical impetus for those boundaries to start to become eroded. The White Paper confirms that primary schools would be able to become academies for the first time, but also points to innovative and bespoke educational configurations arising from new freedoms. On page 63 of the White Paper (2010) an example is given of an all-age academy in

Enfield in North London, which came into being when a local authority approached an academy chain to help them meet the rising demand for primary places.

Despite changes of government, from 1988 to the present there is a startlingly strong continuity in the direction of travel with regard to the move to ever greater de-regulation and forms of privatisation in English state schools (Woods and Simkins, 2014). The New Labour administration (1997-2010) built upon the 1988 Education Refrom Act. In turn, Ball sees a signficant strand of the Coalition government's educational policy (2010-2015) as having come into being more as a extension of, or as a 'radicalisation' (Ball, 2013, p106) of the existing New Labour polices (1997-2010) than as a totally new policy paradigm. Nonetheless, this 'system shift' of the expansion of the academies and free schools programme, appears to have been the catalyst for the expansion of all-through schooling in the English state sector.

2.7 Where are we now ?

At the time of writing, the outcome of the December 2019 General Election would suggest that the current development of new schools and new school groupings will continue. In September 2019 the DfE invited applications for Wave 14 (DfE, 2019a) of the free schools programme, signalling the intention to continue with the free school and academies agenda. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that the trend for the establishment of all-through schools is likely to continue into the 2020s. Indeed, the option of applying to open an all-through school is explictly covered in the most recent free school aplication guidance (DfE, 2019a).

All-through schools are currently a small but growing proportion of the state schools in England. The establishment of free schools has increased the number of all-through schools, with 15 percent of all free schools adopting an all-through configuration in the first few years of the programme (Evans, 2014) and with further new all-through free schools in the pipeline in the latest free school rounds (schools due to open in 2020 and 2021). Whilst the promotion of all-through schools may not have been an intention of the *Schools White Paper* (2010), the scale and pace of expansion of this configuration in the years since 2010 seems unlikey to be purely coincidental. Indeed, when writing about the popularity of all-through schools as a feature of the free schools programme, Natalie Evans of the New Schools Network

observed that they were 'not explicitly planned for…or indeed necessarily anticipated' (Evans, 2014). This resonates with the observation in Simkins et al (2019) that national policy does not always remain 'intact' at the point of realisation: many factors will influence the local and regional reaction to national policy and its implementation.

The DfE statistical releases provide further useful data to help track the expansion of academies and free schools and gauge the impact of the *Schools White Paper* (2010) on school configurations. In January 2011 there had been just 371 secondary academies, representing approximately 10 percent of state schools in England (DfE, 2011, table 2b). The June 2019 statistical release reveals that by January 2019 4.1 million children were being educated in academies and free schools, representing well over 40 percent of the current school population and 75 percent of all secondary age students (DfE 2019b). The rise of all-through schools, which has happened in tandem with academy expansion, is remarked upon on page four of the statistical release: ' schools which teach both primary and secondary year groups are growing in number.' This underlines that at governmental level the increase in the numbers of all-through schools is seen as noteworthy. In January 2017 there were 150 such schools, but this figure had increased to 167 state funded schools by January 2019 (DfE, 2019b, p4).

2.8 Why how we got here is important

The need and urgency to establish state secondary education for older children meant that in the post-war years the considerations of exactly what form that education should take were not sufficiently theorised and debated (Barber, 1994; Chitty, 2014; McCulloch, 2002). This meant that there was not a lasting consensus about the best approach, which in turn led to calls for the end of selective education and further wide-scale school reorganisation, when English state secondary education was still in its infancy. Amidst this quick succession of school establishment and reform there was never a consideration of the merits and possibilities of all-through education, as had been established in other jurisdictions around the world. The brief consideration of the evolution of the Nordic school systems in this chapter, reminds us that all-through configurations are a viable and

established alternative to the phase divided system which has become the English state education norm.

At the beginning of my EdD studies I had wanted to understand the rationale for the status quo of English state schools being overwhelmingly organised into separate primary and secondary schools. What has emerged is a story of the historic establishment and evolution of state secondary schools, which is completely intertwined with the political ideologies and policy paradigms of the governments of the day (Chitty, 2014; Jones, 2014; McCulloch, 2002). What is a startling is the paucity of educational research and theory (considered further in chapter three) to support some of the key decisions which have been taken about school organisation in the last 75 years. As I will explore in chapter three, organisational structures can impact greatly upon pedagogy and practice in the classroom and, therefore, on pupils' real, lived experience of their education. Given that in January 2019 the English state education system had over 8.8 million learners (DfE, 2019b), the majority of whom have or will have to move schools at the age of 11, a closer examination of alternative ways of working across the primary and secondary phases of education is warranted.

Chapter 3: Transitions and transfers, borders and boundaries.

3.1 The current status quo: school transfer to a separate secondary school

In the current English state system around 700,000 children transfer to a new school each year, for no reason other than that they are 11 years old. This chapter explores the literature which examines this mass transfer to secondary schooling, the challenges it presents and the measures which have been developed and become common practice in English schools to support the move from year six into year seven. I also explore the notion that where there are transfers and transitions, there are also professional, institutional and jurisdictional borders and boundaries, and consider literature from education and other social science fields that help to build a theoretical framework for my research in relation to all-through schools.

Some educational researchers (for example Galton, Hargreaves and Pell, 2003) differentiate between school *transfer* (i.e. the pupil moves to a completely new school) and *transition* (the pupil moves to a new year group or key stage within the same school at the start of the school year). This is a clear distinction, which has a compelling logic. However, for those moving within all-through schools, there are no transfers, only transitions, as the child moves within the same school. During my field work, participants talked about transition to KS3, even if that involves the child moving to a separate secondary campus. I also found that when considering the move from primary to secondary education the majority of the literature, including publications from the DfE, use *transition,* or use *transfer* and *transition* completely interchangeably. In this thesis, I use *transition* to mean the move between KS2 and KS3 in the all-through context, but endeavour to make the distinction of *transfer*, when I mean movement to a completely different institution, as happens in the wider school system and when new students join an all-through school at year seven.

3.2. School transfer considered through the lens of the bridge model

In the early twenty-first century, the metaphor most commonly used in the literature to describe effective primary to secondary transfer is that of 'the bridge' (Barber, 1999; Galton, Gray and Ruddock 1999 and 2003; Sutton, 2001). More specifically, sources describe there being up to five bridges, which key professionals help the

child and family to cross, in order for the move into year seven to be successful and not impinge upon the child's educational progress and/or social development. Exact terminology varies between sources, but there is a broad consensus about what is required. Barber (1999) suggests the following, which are also explored in these terms in Sutton (2001) and cited in Howe (2011):

- The bureaucratic bridge
- The social bridge
- The curriculum bridge
- The pedagogical bridge
- The management of learning bridge

The bureaucratic bridge

The vast majority of primary and secondary settings in the English state system are separate institutions. This adds an additional dimension to the transfer into year seven, compared with other transition points during a child's educational journey through the school system, as pupils are usually also passing from one institutional jurisdiction to another. The difference between what happens in all-through schools and the situation in the wider school system is that for the all-through cohort there is no bureaucratic or jurisdictional border to cross, as the school is one legal institution. Where this difference is manifest most clearly is in the area of school admissions. In the vast majority of cases, parents of year six pupils in England will have to make an online application for a school place in year seven as part of their LA's co-ordinated admissions process. Therefore, the first hurdle in crossing the bureaucratic bridge is obtaining the school place itself. Parents are then informed on National Offer Day, which (if any) of their preferred choices of secondary schools their child has been allocated. In contrast, a child in year six in an all-through school will receive a place in year seven *by right*, as they are already on roll at the school and parents will not need to make an application.

Principles of social justice do not always sit comfortably with how places at secondary schools are allocated in England (West 2006), despite there being a statutory school admissions code to which all admission authorities must adhere (DfE, 2014). Often admission criteria relate to a catchment areas and the families

that can afford housing in the catchment of high performing schools are more likely to gain admission for their children to those schools (Burgess, Greaves and Vignoles, 2020). A report commissioned by the Sutton Trust (2013) reveals the sobering fact that the link between educational underperformance and social disadvantage widens during a child/young person's time in the state school system, partly because parents in the lowest socio-economic groups are much less likely than wealthier parents to be able to navigate the year seven admissions' maze and secure a place at a high-performing secondary school for their child. This topic has been revisited by the Sutton Trust in the last couple of years and a recent report concludes that access to high performing schools is still loaded in favour of more affluent families (Van der Brande, Hillary and Cullinane, 2019). In the 2018 report *Parent Power,* the Sutton Trust explores the advantages that wealthier and better informed parents are able to secure for their own children: again, the conclusion is drawn that school admissions systems tend to disadvantage the poorest and most vulnerable families (Montacute and Cullinane, 2018).

Therefore, it is not only what happens in the transfer between primary and secondary school, but the very process of gaining a secondary school place in the first instance, which can compound social disadvantage. Rayner (2017) examines the 'risks to equity' inherent in the current admissions system, concluding that it is 'marginalising some of the most vulnerable groups of young people and their families, by placing good schools even further out of their reach' (Rayner, 2017, p32). West (2006) views this as a kind of social 'selecting out' of certain children and families. We know that the overall effect is to widen the educational gap between disadvantaged children and their peers (Social Mobility Commission, 2017). Recent research indicates that this disadvantage is not a result of parents in lower socio-economic groups not trying to exercise their parental choice in the admissions system, but that admissions criteria such as catchment and faith are socially selective, leading to social segregation in England's secondary schools (Burgess, Greaves, Vignoles and Wilson, 2014; Burgess, Greaves and Vignoles, 2019; Cullinane, 2020). I would argue, therefore, that the relatively small number of all-through schools are particularly interesting viewed in this wider context, in that the all-through cohort completely bypass the bureaucratic barrier of the admissions system.

The social bridge

In 2018, Galton and McLellan published a review of the literature considering pupils' experiences of the primary to secondary school transfer from the 1970s to the present day. They conclude, rather depressingly, that despite attempts and initiatives designed to ease transition in the intervening years, current practice closely resembles that seen in the 1970s. In their view, the spread of academies and the decline of LAs have resulted in a weakening of the links between secondary schools and feeder primary schools. They argue that as the dominance of the performativity culture in schools intensified in the early 2000s, and the standards agenda heightened further in the Gove era after 2010, considerations of pupil well-being during the transfer to secondary school have been subsumed by a focus on maintaining a pupil's progress trajectory.

Many pupils adjust quickly to their new school and the fears and anxieties associated with transfer can fade, sometimes as swiftly as within the first term at secondary school (Galton and Morrison 2000; Topping, 2011). However, West, Sweeting and Young (2010) conclude that for the small minority of young people who experience a very poor transfer, the impact can be felt throughout the rest of their subsequent secondary schooling. Data was examined from a longitudinal study conducted in the West of Scotland, involving over 2000 pupil participants over eight years. West, Sweeting and Young (2010) considered a variety of factors and pupil characteristics in the data (such as gender and socio-economic status) and conclude that primary pupils of low ability and with low self-esteem were more at risk of a poor transfer experience and that a poor transfer experience, in turn, correlated with low school attainment and incidences of depression at 15: 'the impact of the primary-secondary transition goes beyond immediate post-transfer anxieties to have a much more significant, longer-term effect on pupil well-being and learning' (West, Sweeting and Young, 2010, p46).

The transfer from primary to secondary school can clearly be a major upheaval for students. Some children can feel a real sense of fear and social insolation when anticipating the transfer and then subsequently when starting at secondary school (Wrigley, 2006). For some students, perhaps particularly those with additional needs, very practical difficulties such as getting to school by bus, or finding their way around

a much larger secondary campus, can be daunting endeavours in themselves (Smith, 2000). Indeed, it is recognised that pupils with SEND can be more vulnerable to experiencing transfer difficulties (Scanlon, Barnes-Holmes, McEnteggart, Desmond and Vahey, 2016), even though in England a transition plan must be created for those with an EHCP (DfE/DH, 2014). Topping (2011) also reports that transfer difficulties can be more acutely experienced by those from disadvantaged homes or who are from an ethnic minority group.

Lucey and Reay (2000) examine the anxiety associated with the move to secondary school and how this transfer has become conflated with wider notions of 'growing up' in the perceptions of parents and society. Their research involved working with focus groups of year five and year six children, asking the children to share their thoughts about transferring to secondary school. Lucey and Reay (2000) feel that there are understandable feelings of loss for pupils which are associated with school transfer: loss of the people and place which are very familiar to them; loss of the status of being top of the school and ultimately loss of childhood itself. However, they also conclude that whilst there is an inevitable anxiety surrounding school transfer and change, there is also a positive anticipation and excitement about the more 'grown up' future that is to come.

Over time practice around transfer and induction has become established which aims to allay anxiety and build up the students' social confidence (Howe and Richards, 2011; Wilcox, 2013). Activities such as induction days, school visits, taster lessons, team building tasks and special SEND transfer arrangements have become common practice. However, given that much of the literature suggests certain groups are more vulnerable to a poorer transfer experience (Galton, Gray and Ruddock, 1999; Topping, 2011; West, Sweeting and Young, 2010), additional targeted support for some learners would seem to be an area where current practice could be further enhanced. Zeedyk et al (2003) identified that teachers can concentrate on the institution's overall approach to transfer and that the experiences of individuals can be over-looked. They suggest a much longer period of preparation for transfer should be implemented in the final year of primary education, which they suggest would be more effective for individuals than short, intense induction activity. McLellan and Galton (2015) also conclude that the short-term focus on transfer has

its limits and that a staged, longer term approach would be more beneficial. Extended transition arrangements could also dispel transfer myths. For example, whilst bullying was considered a significant concern of those anticipating a transfer to secondary school (Zeedyk et al, 2003), Pellegrini and Long (2002) found that incidents of victimisation actually declined post transfer to secondary school. Extended transition work could aim to increase pupils' social confidence in approaching the move.

Research conducted by Bloyce and Frederickson (2012) suggests that identifying and working with those pupils particularly vulnerable to a poor transfer experience during the transition period can be effective in alleviating pupil stress. They piloted the use of a 'transfer support team' made up of a teacher, teaching assistants and an educational psychologist, which supported a targeted group of pupils over a six week period. They concluded that this relatively brief intervention impacted positively upon the targeted pupils' levels of school related concerns. Chen and Gregory (2010) consider the notion of 'protective factors' which assist students in coping with the transfer to secondary school. Their research focuses specifically on low achieving adolescents and upon the role of parental involvement. They conclude that parental engagement and encouragement can positively influence students' perceptions of secondary school and particularly how they view their teachers.

Given the weight of research about the impact of transfer to secondary school upon a child's social world and well-being, the possibilities presented by all-through schools seem particularly pertinent. This has led me to examine both pupil and school staff's perceptions of the primary to secondary transition and transfer in all-through schools at both stages of my field work. Vaz et al (2015) consider the notion of 'belongingness' in the context of school transfer; they define belongingness as the psychological sense of school membership. They found that school belongingness is relatively stable between primary and secondary school, but that those students with a higher sense of belongingness at school were more likely to achieve better outcomes in school and beyond. Might an all-through school be able to foster a consistent sense of belongingness across all educational phases? When considering the issues surrounding the move primary to secondary Jindal-Snape and Foggie (2008) suggest future research might focus on settings where primary

and secondary pupils are already at the same school and/or accommodated on the same campus.

The curriculum bridge

Writing in 2003, Galton, Hargreaves and Pell explored what they term in the title of their paper as the 'continuities and discontinuities at transfer'. At that time, they concluded that schools had gone some way to bridging the curricular and pedagogical divide, through activities such as teaching the QCA Transition Units (QCA, 2002) and establishing a meaningful professional dialogue between primary schools and the year seven destination secondary schools. The QCA Transition Units were schemes of work in mathematics and English, produced as part of the National Strategies, and were intended as subject bridging work to ensure a more joined up approach to the cross-phase curriculum and to introduce a wider range of pedagogies into years seven and eight. Indeed, guidance was issued to schools which set out how curriculum continuity might be achieved, with some concrete examples (DfES 2004). However, writing in 2018, Galton and McLellan conclude that much of the collaborative practice championed in the 2000s has declined in the intervening years.

Taking an even longer-term view, surveying the primary to secondary transfer over 50 years, the cycle of identification of curricular discontinuity, followed by efforts to address and improve the situation, followed by a subsequent relapse, seems to have been repeated time and again. Maurice Galton's contribution to the literature in this area is a particularly significant one, as he is a researcher who has been involved in many of the landmark studies considering school transfer since the 1970s and has documented a succession of failed attempts to achieve a more aligned upper primary and lower secondary curriculum. Galton was involved in the original ORACLE Project (Observational Research and Classroom Learning Evaluation) 1975-1980 considered in Galton and Willcocks, 1983; Delamont and Galton, 1986; and Hargreaves and Galton, 2002). ORACLE considered practice in the last years of primary education and in the first year at secondary school and concluded that the transfer to secondary school prompted a decline in student attitudes to learning and caused their progress to stall in the first year at secondary school. At the time the

team attributed this decline to a lack of challenge in the lower secondary curriculum and a failure to take account of what learners had already covered and mastered.

Galton went back into primary and secondary classrooms twenty years later, with Linda Hargreaves, to observe practice and also to look again at the primary to secondary transfer. In the preface to *Transfer from the Primary Classroom, 20 Years on (*Hargreaves and Galton, 2002, p. xv) they relate how part of the intention of the NC had been to address some of the curricular discontinuities observed during ORACLE. 'The National Curriculum was supposed to change all of this'. What they found, however, was a familiar picture of the practitioners teaching in KS2 and KS3 not really taking account of each other's schemes of work. They identified examples from science and history, where secondary teachers 're-taught' some of the work which was now part of KS2, largely because 'they did not see the need to liaise with their primary colleagues' (Hargeaves and Galton, 2002, p191). Schagen and Kerr (1999) visiting schools in the late 1990s, found similarly that teachers did not know the detail of what was taught in different phases, despite the continuity intended by the NC subject orders.

We might be able to explain the lack of direct communication between year six and year seven teachers as understandable, given that in many year six classes in England, children will be bound for a variety of different destination secondary schools. Nonetheless, a school-to-school level of communication about curricular content could be facilitated to avoid the learner experiencing repetition of content. However, it is clear that this does not happen consistently across the system. Braund's (2007) research explored the use of bridging work in science and whilst he found that its implementation posed some challenges, he felt that for the system to 'to do nothing' was not a viable option, if we want to grow motivated students of science. Elsewhere in the literature the notion of the 'blank slate' is questioned (Jindal-Snape, 2008; Evans and Fisher, 2012): the 'blank slate' is the idea that each year some secondary teachers begin teaching their subject without regard to a pupil's prior learning, with the intention of the education at the new school being a fresh start (considered further in section 3.4).

There has been some governmental focus in recent years on mathematics and English at the point of transfer to secondary school. However, rather than this being concerned with curriculum content or pedagaogy, it has largely taken the form of a focus on post-transfer 'catch up' for those chidlren who have not achieved the expected standards in national tests at the end of KS2. Schools receive a modest amount of 'catch up funding' for these pupils and have to evidence both how they have spent this money and record its impact. Gorard, Siddiqui and Huat See (2017) review the effectiveness of a number of commercially produced literacy schemes and approaches adopted by schools (such as transfer summer schools). They concluded that two of the seven commonly used interventions showed some promise in developing literacy skills, but that others were not effective. Whilst the interventions are well intended, Gorard, Siddiqui and Huat See (2017) highlight a variability in effectiveness when individual schools are left to choose how best to deliver their catch-up provision post-transfer. Therefore, whilst there has been an intention to maintain cross-phase progress in mathematics and English, there appears to be a lack of a co-ordinated approach as to how curricular content could be better aligned to support that progress.

Current jurisdictional boundaries and established leadership structures do not lend themselves to curriculum oversight across the primary and secondary divide. Hargreaves and Galton (2002) identified that the leader most involved with transfer in secondary schools is the head of year seven (or a similar role/ title, depending upon individual schools' leadership structures). However, this person largely has a pastoral responsibility. So despite being well placed to co-ordinate and faciliate collaborative practice and a degree of cross-phase subject co-ordination, they generally do not do this because it 'lies outside of their remit.' (Hargreaves and Galton, 2002, p193). More recently, Symonds (2015) also examined the role of transition co-ordinators, who she sees as crucial in helping children and families navigate the transfer to secondary school. Of the six professionals she profiled, four were assistant headteachers whose brief included transition, one a SENCO and one a head of department. The activities which they co-ordinated related largely to the mechanics of transfer, supporting the well-being of the learners and support for children with SEND and vulnerable learners. Interestingly, the only transition co-ordinator profiled by Symonds (2015) who did talk about engaging his secondary

colleagues to help design subject specific bridging units was the person with a subject responsibility (a secondary head of science).

The pedagogical bridge

Sutton (2001) views the final two bridges (pedagogical and the management of learning) as the most difficult to manage and the ones most likely to be simply ignored as children move from one setting to another. She suggests that teachers in primary and secondary settings have adopted different approaches to pedagogy, because the organisation of subject teaching and specialist accommodation mean that teachers in secondary schools see anywhere up to 200 learners in a week. She poses a highly pertinent question 'in what ways does the structure and timetable of the secondary school influence teaching?' (Sutton, 2001, p43). I would agree that the 'how' of pedagogy is inextricably linked to the 'what' of the curriculum and the parcels of time teachers are given to teach parts of the curriculum in the school timetable.

Primary teachers are required to be generalists able to teach all areas of the curriculum. The usual deployment of a primary teacher is to be the main and often sole teacher of one class in a given year group. From the inception of the first state secondary schools in England in the 1940s to the present day, secondary teachers are subject specialists, offering one or two teaching specialisms and are usually graduates in their subjects. Marshall (1988, p46) characterises these two teaching paradigms as 'child-centred vs subject centred approaches.' Another key difference between primary and secondary practice which impacts upon pedagogy, is the time spent with each class and therefore, with each learner. A full-time primary teacher will spend their working week (around 23 contact hours) with their class. In contrast, depending upon the subject taught, a secondary teacher might spend between an hour to four hours per week with each year seven class. Hargeaves and Galton (2002) view the secondary timetable as an inflexible beast, which constrains secondary teachers and their practice and that 'unlike their primary colleagues these teachers do not have the luxury of extending the length of the lesson in order to allow pupils to finish off a particular task' (Hargreaves and Galton, 2002, p192). What is certainly true is that secondary teachers do not have the freedom to plan expansive,

time-flexible, deep learning activities without consideration of how this works within the timetable and certainly not without prior arrangement.

As discussed in chapter two, the founding of state secondary schools as separate and distinct institutions from primary schools has led to a pedagogical, as well as an institutional divide between primary and secondary practitioners. Whilst pedagogical practice ultimately comes down to what happens in an individual classroom, I agree with Alexander (2001), that there is a relationship between the minutiae of pedagogical practice and what happens at a state level: the evolution of pedagogical theory requires 'an understanding of how nation, school and classroom are intertwined' (p6). Alexander has written extensively on the topic of pedagogy, has at times bemoaned its absence in the English system and has considered its place in primary education (Alexander, 2004, 2008, 2010). He notices that 'pedagogy' and 'teaching and learning' are often used interchangeably within the teaching profession, but believes that 'there *is* a difference' (Alexander, 2001, p540). He explains, 'that teaching is an *act*, while pedagogy is both an act and a *discourse.* Pedagogy emcompasses the performance of teaching together with the theories, beliefs, policies and controversies that inform and shape it' (Alexander, 2001, p540).

Alexander is not sure that there is such a thing as a distinct primary pedagogy, but that considerations of pedagogy are 'conceived broadly' (Alexander, 2001, p6) about learners across phases and ages. I tend to agree, although practitioners may still have preconceived ideas about the pedagogy of their counterparts working in the other educational phase. Hargreaves and Galton (2002) reported that in the ORACLE study secondary teachers' perceptions of primary practice were that it was more about 'fun' than serious learning. They further report that with the advent of the NC and where secondary teachers actually spent time in primary classrooms, they recognised the same rigour and pressure to secure outcomes as are evident in secondary classrooms. Hargreaves and Galton (2002) found something very different to the stereotype of a carefree primary approach to pedagogy: what they were seeing 20 years after ORACLE, was an increase in whole class teaching, a 'secondary style' curriculum and that 'the pedagogic diet in year six and year seven is remarkably similar '(Hargreaves and Galton, 2002, p194).

The management of learning bridge

Despite efforts to understand and support children's transition and transfer by the teaching profession and the educational research community in England, the phenomenon of the KS2 to KS3 achievement 'dip' has been well documented and recognised over decades: there is evidence to suggest that learners can regress both in terms of their attainment and in motivation in the early part of KS3 (Galton, Gray and Ruddock, 1999 and 2003; Galton, 2010). Evangelou et al (2008) suggest a number of reasons for this decline, including a fundamental lack of communication between primary and secondary teachers and an underestimation by secondary teachers of year seven students' capabilities.

However, some researchers link pupils' 'cognitive engagement' (Symonds, 2015, p120) in their learning in the years immediately after transfer to secondary school to their ability to rationalise and articulate how they learn. Symonds suggests that some secondary teachers' tendency to 'start from scratch' (Symonds, 2015, p71) in their subjects in year seven, may be because they are mistakenly conflating a lack of independent study techniques and awareness of learning skills, with a knowledge deficit. Whilst this approach may help engage less confident learners, it 'can frustrate more independent and advanced learners' (Symonds, 2015, p121). Symonds considers the effectiveness of learning skills programmes as planned interventions to support the early years of secondary schooling, and cites a study which suggests that some students entering KS3 'lacked the language for discussing learning skills' (Symonds, 2015, p121, drawing on Deakin et al, 2010); and that schemes to develop learner awareness of metacognition can be helpful in assisting cognitive engagement post transfer.

In her book designed to provide a transition programme for secondary teachers to use with pupils following school transfer, Rae (2014) includes a section about teaching and learning styles, which encourages pupils to reflect upon their preferred learning and thinking styles. Her suggestion is that learners should recognise what they are comfortable with and then be supported to expand their preferences and learning style repertoire, in order to be ready for the breadth and demands of the secondary curriculum. Of course, these types of challenges in relation to school transfer and the need to find workable solutions, are not unique to England. In North

America, the transfer to high school raises very similar issues in terms of students' learning skills as the move to secondary school in England. Buzza (2015) identifies a key barrier to success at high school as learners potential failure to develop self regulated learning (SRL). Her suggestion, similarly, is that teachers in the new transfer environment provide explicit instruction in the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies and offer opportunities for stretch and challenge.

The other side of this coin may be that some secondary teachers do not make best use of the reflective skills the pupils already have: Jones (2010) observes that many primary learners are used to considering how to improve their own work as AfL approaches have become embedded. She feels that greater dialogue between pupils and their new teachers could help to speed pupils' progession in year seven. Swaffield, Rawi and O'Shea (2016) consider the cluster working of primary and secondary practitioners in a semi-rural English setting to embed AfL princples across phase, through joint CPD and planning. They conclude that cross-phase collaboration can make AfL 'a pedagogical unifer assisting pupil transfer' (Swaffield, Rawi and O'Shea, 2016, p212). This is an aspect of cross-phase collaboration, intended to benefit the learner, which is currently not being universally utilised in the wider system.

Students' management of their own learning is deeply interwined with their levels of motivation. Researchers have found that students like school less as they get older and move through the school system (Symonds and Galton, 2014; Symonds and Hargreaves, 2016). It is difficult to tease apart the extent to which schools can act to mitigate against this decline in motivation and the extent to which the young people themselves are changing as a result of their progression to adolescence. Lahelma and Gordon (1997) describe the intense period of pupils' first days in seondary education and recount the array of interactional and learning behaviours pupils have to quickly master as 'becoming a professional pupil'. They suggest that pupils are only partially prepared through their primary school experiences and are struck by the 'routinisation' of school and learning at the point of transfer to secondary school. Symonds and Galton (2014) see the learners, even at transfer, as starting to consider their adult identities and careers and that their motivation

levels can decline when they view aspects of their schooling as irrelevant to their future selves.

Gorard and Huat See (2011) suggest greater learner autonomy and warm pupil-teacher rapport as ways to enhance students' enjoyment in the secondary years of schooling. The impact and value of positive interactions between teachers and pupils on learner motivation at the point of transfer is echoed in Symonds and Hargreaves (2016). Therefore, whilst the bridge model is an extremely useful lens through which to view the transfer from primary to secondary schooling, in reality the process is a complex interplay of all five bridges. The interactions of the human actors in each setting add to the complexity and can greatly influence the learner's experiences. A number of the assertions made by Gorard and Huat See (2011) are prefigured in Eccles and Midgely (1989). In their development of 'stage-environment fit' theory Eccles and Midgely (1989) suggest that rigid and competitive achievement oriented structures post transfer can impact negatively upon pupils' view of school. They suggest that more thought is given to making the lower secondary environment more developmentally appropriate. All-through schools are uniquely placed to control a number of the variables which impact upon students' successful transition to year seven. They are also better positioned than stand-alone schools to align the learning environments and teacher approaches across upper KS2 and lower KS3. The extent to which these affordances are utilised is considered in this research.

3.3 The impact of performative pressures upon cross-phase liaison

In concluding that little had changed in relation to school transfer since the days of ORACLE in the 1970s, Galton and McLellan (2018) did, however, observe a notable exception: the pressure of performativitiy. 'In one respect however practice has changed considerbably… the increased emphasis on a strong performativity culture in which the focus is on each pupil's progression along a target-led trail' (Galton and McLellan, 2018, p273). One of the perceived threats to meaningful cross-phase curricular liaison is the year six SATs (Alexander, 2010). In essence, the year six experience is dominated by the need for pupils to be successful in mathematics and English and in many schools there is an inevitable emphasis upon teaching the skills to be successful in the national tests. In 2003 Galton, Hargreaves and Pell reported reluctance on the part of some primary headteachers to dedicate time to cross-phase

projects or indeed any kind of curriculum enrichment or flexibility during the busy, pressurised school year that is year six. Given the high stakes accountability linked to end of KS2 results this caution and narrow focus is perhaps understandable, but it is an approach which impedes cross-phase collaboration and creativity. A valid concern would be that 'we are producing a generation of students who do well academically but are being turned off learning' (Galton, Hargreaves and Pell, 2003, p9).

In order to understand the climate of performativity which persists to this day, it may be helpful to briefly consider educational policy during the New Labour era (1997-2010), which was not covered in chapter two. There had been a sense of optimism in the teaching profession surrounding Labour's election victory in 1997 (Bangs, MacBeath and Galton, 2011), fuelled by Labour's constant re-stating of education as its main priority. However, what actually happened in the 13 years prior to 2010 was a strengthening of the powers of OFSTED, increased prescription in the curriculum and in pedagogy through the National Strategies and a reinforcement of the target and performance table culture. Docking (2000) contends that New Labour's approach to education was somewhat philistine, in that it viewed education as means to upskill the national workforce and, therefore, saw it as a tool to serve the economy, rather than prizing its 'intinsic value' (Docking, 2000, p3). This sentiment is echoed in Ball's (2001) examination of 'performativity' as a 'managerialism and commercialisation of education' (Ball, 2001, p46).

Whilst it could be argued that an increased accountability in state education was necessary to protect the interests of children and young people, the 'target mania' and absolute 'tyranny of targets' (Fielding, 2001, p145) unleashed during the New Labour era caused pressures in schools and on school leadership, which in turn, have led to long term distortions in the points of focus in schools. Year six SATs have evolved into ends in themselves, which dominate a whole year of schooling and diminish the opportunities for learners to prepare for and make links to the next phase of their education (Alexander, 2010). As Ball (2000) observes, it is not just that performativity gets in the way of real eduation, it is that it can alter what education is and aims to do. In the midst of extreme systemic pressures on primary

schools to be seen to be doing well at the end of KS2, unsurprisingly, the need to prepare children for their next phase of schooling has slipped down the agenda.

3.4 Modern Foreign Languages (MFL): cross-phase provision and the specialist/generalist debate

There is not time or space in this thesis to consider every subject of the curriculum and how it is taught and linked across phases. However, I have chosen to consider some of the literature which relates to cross-phase MFL teaching and pedagogy. One reason for the inclusion of this section is because two of my three case study schools chose to showcase their MFL provision as examples of all-through practice during my field visits. Therefore, this is part of an iterative engagement with the literature, arising from findings and observations in the field. MFL is also interesting from a number of other perspectives which relate to the divides in primary/secondary practice. It is a subject(s) which has seen a number of government initiatives to introduce and develop its teaching in English primary schools (DfES, 2002a, 2002b) while at the same time, requiring a reasonably high degree of very specific subject knowledge.

Since the early 2000s, governmental publications have espoused the idea that the early and effective teaching of MFL in primary schools would increase motivation and competency in older learners. In 2002, the DfES published a plan for a National Languages Strategy (DfES, 2002a) and the policy paper *Languages for All: Languages for life. A strategy for England* (DfES, 2002b). The sentiments expressed chimed the view of MFL educationalists: it would seem compellingly logical that starting earlier would 'improve results at the end of the process' (Sharpe, 2001, p36). This direction of travel was reinforced when the requirement of statutory MFL provision in primary schools came into force in 2014, meaning that every child in KS2, from the age of seven, had an entitlement to experience MFL teaching.

Many would and have agreed with the desirability of a high quality primary MFL strategy (Sharpe, 2001; Kirsch, 2008). A major obstacle to its realisation, however, is the competency and confidence to deliver it within the existing primary teacher workforce (Chambers, 2019). Driscoll (1999) explains that the two ways most commonly used to staff MFL teaching in primary schools are either to use peripatetic

specialist teachers (often secondary teachers) or to develop generalist teachers' knowledge of the language and MFL pedagogy sufficiently to be able to teach it. Driscoll (1999) observed both specialist and generalist teachers teaching primary MFL and she noted both pros and cons in each of the approaches. Chambers (2019, p244) frames this as an undesirable choice between children being taught by generalist teachers who may have a lower subject competency, or by specialists who are not part of the regular school community and are operating on the basis of 'Spanish and vanish'.

The debate about whether generalist primary teachers can deliver as rich a language learning experience as specialists is explored in the literature. Sharpe (2001) echoes Driscoll (1999) in that he sees distinct strengths in both sets of practitioners and characterises these thus: specialists have high linguistic knowledge and flexibility, but lower pedagogical expertise and flexibility and the generalists are the reverse, having low linguistic knowledge but a higher pedagogical expertise and flexibility (Sharpe, 2001,p118). Sharpe also believes that there is congruence between the aims of primary language teaching and what we might consider appropriate and effective primary practice in general. For example, he would see the use of songs and games as being well suited to language learning aims, whilst also being an age appropriate pedagogical approach. Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010) advocate for what they term 'content and language intergrated learning'. This approach encourages the teaching of a new language in a way which involves real and authentic content. They suggest that this can be managed well in early years and primary settings because the content and approaches are authentic for the age of the learners (again, learning through play, song and games). By the upper primary years, they envisage that cross-curricular themes can be taught at least partly in the new language, but that careful planning and appropriate materials can assist the non-expert primary language teacher.

Amongst the secondary MFL teacher and MFL educational researcher communities there has been a pedagogical preference for the use of language in the MFL classroom to be predominantly in the target language, i.e. in the language being taught (Littlewood, 1981; Johnstone, 1989; Grenfell and Harris, 1999; Mitchell, 1994). Whilst the exact balance between English and the target language is open

to debate, there is an assumed learning benefit to immersion and indeed a philosophical one: 'in order for childen to come to see the foreign language as a valid and authentic means of communication on a par wih their mother tongue, the teacher will need to immerse the class in the new language at every opportunity' (Satchwell, 1999, p89). Adherence to this preferred pedagogy is a trickier proposition and indeed a potentially daunting one for the non-specialist teacher. The subject knowledge and fluency required means that there could be an under-estimation by policy-makers about the extent and scale of the CPD needed to 'up-skill' the generalist workforce to teach MFL at KS2 and do it well (Chambers, 2019).

Kirsch (2008) considers that despite the growth of MFL provision in English primary schools this century, the gains of starting a language earlier are not being realised or optimised, due to what she terms 'transition issues' (Kirsch, 2008, p197). In synthesising and summarising research in this area, she sees lack of communication between primary and secondary colleagues as a fundamental stumbling block to maintaining pupils' progress in MFL and that there is a 'reluctance in secondary schools to acknowledge and draw on what pupils had learned at primary school' (Kirsch, 2008, p197). Bolster (2009) considers that in many instances pupils' prior MFL learning was 'completely ignored' at the beginning of secondary schooling (Bolster, 2009, p234). This is echoed in Chambers (2014, p228), who notes that after transfer to secondary schools pupils often 'simply start again' in MFL.

Bolster, Balandier-Brown and Rea-Dickins (2004) conducted a study which focused specifically upon the KS2 to KS3 transition for MFL and found that whilst primary language teaching had created 'highly favourable conditions' for future progress and enjoyment of MFL, this was largely 'wasted' at KS3 (Bolster, Balandier and Rea-Dickins, 2004, p39). Evans and Fisher (2012) take this a step further and question the morality of systematically ignoring pupils' prior learning in MFL and the huge waste of effort and motivation this entails: 'it will be increasingly counter-productive to ignore or repress this prior knowledge…in the name of the "blank slate" ' (Evans and Fisher, 2012, p172). In addtition, there is some evidence of secondary specialists being dismissive of the value of primary languages: Bolster, Balandier-Brown and Rea-Dickins (2004) report that some secondary MFL teachers questioned the quality of primary MFL inputs and advocate a 'fresh start' at year

seven. Therefore, there may be attitudinal as well as practical barriers to overcome in optimising cross-phase MFL working.

Hood (2019) acknowledges the particular challenges around the MFL primary to secondary transition, but advocates creative approaches and teacher commitment to cross-phase collaboration as ways of combatting what has been a persistent and thorny issue. All-through schools would seem to be at a potential advantage in terms of primary MFL teaching and in ensuring a smooth transition to KS3, in that they employ their own MFL specialist teachers who work in their own secondary phases. They may even have native speakers, such as language assistants, upon whom they can call to support their primary MFL strategy. All-through schools would seem to have all of the features of the 'highly favourably conditions' described by Bolster, Balandier-Brown and Rea-Dickins (2004), by being in control of how their KS2 and KS3 programmes relate. They are also able to facilitate the regular professional dialogue between the primary and secondary MFL teams which is recommended in Hunt, Barnes, Powell and Martin (2008).

3.5 Conceptualising the primary/secondary divide: all-through working as 'boundary practice'

Still No Theory

I feel that it is important at this juncture to recognise the paucity of theory in relation to school configurations and cross-phase engagement. Creating a theoretical framework in relation to all-through schools has been challenging, because there is not a corpus of literature to draw on about all-through schools specifically. It is likely to be because all-through schools are a relatively new phenomenon, that mentions of all-through schools seem to have been consigned to fairly brief comments about their potential in the more recent transition and transfer literature (e.g. Sutherland, Ching Yee, McNess and Harris, 2010; Howe, 2011). Also, as detailed in chapter two, I contend that the current English status quo is inherited from the post-war structures and has evolved at key points in time in response to the policy paradigms of governments of the day, rather than as the result of informed debate or through engagement with educational theory.

In his article ‘Still no pedagogy?’ Alexander (2004) writes a searing critique of the National Primary Strategy (DfES, 2003a) and of the arrogance of politicians who dismiss and denegrate what has gone immediately before in educational policy. Alexander (2004) contends that what the DfES had called ‘an informed professional judgement’ in the strategy, actually amounts to a call to ‘know and acquiesce to what is provided, expected and/or required by government and its agencies..no less, and especially, no more’ (Alexander, 2004, p17). It is clear that what frustrates Alexander is that a wealth of educational research is simply ignored, if it does not suit the educational agenda of the administration of the day. Alexander‘s (2004) article builds on the work of Simon (1981) who compared practitioners in England to their continental teaching counterparts, who he felt engaged in a professional dialogue about the ‘science of teaching’ or what we might term pedagogy. In contrast, Alexander paraphrases the thrust of Simon’s (1981) argument, that in planning their teaching English teachers are ‘combining pragmatism with ideology, but not much else’ (Alexander, 2004, p80).

I am contending that just as the notion of pedagogy has not flourished in England, there has been a similar failure to conceptualise school organisation or frame it in the context of educational theories. The reason for focusing on ‘How did we get here?’ in chapter two, is because the evolution of English state education has been historic and ideological (Benn, 2011; Chitty, 2014; Jones, 1989; Jones, 2014) rather than theoretical or grounded in pedagogical considerations (Alexander, 2004). As school organisation has not been sufficiently theorised, neither too has the interaction between the actors in the two phases of compulsory education. Therefore, the development of a theoretical framework must also take account and acknowledge what is *not* there. Evans and Fisher (2012) do exactly this when constructing the theoretical basis of their paper relating to cross-phase MFL teaching and acknowledge the lack of an obvious theory to draw upon: ‘in the absence of an existing overarching theory of cross-phase educational interaction’ (Evans and Fisher, 2012, p159). In the development of the theoretical components of my research, I am, similarly, acknowledging the theoretical paucity in the immediate area and am casting the net a little wider, to establish frameworks which might illuminate the area of study.

Boundary practice

Some of the literature hints at a fundamental schism between primary and secondary teachers, which ultimately does children a disservice (Sutton 2001, Sutherland et al 2010). Sutherland et al (2010) suggest that primary and secondary teachers have evolved over time into 'two tribes', where there is 'very little understanding or valuing of the diversity of experience and expertise' between the two groups (p61). Sutton (2001) goes further suggesting that there is a percieved hierarchy and even an intellectual snobbery between the two groups, in that secondary school teachers tend to be subject graduates, which society appears to value above the generalist educational background of some primary teachers. This links to wider perceptions of inequities between educational phases, which Coldron, Crawford, Jones and Simkins (2015) describe as a 'case of durable inequality'. They also see the legacy of generalist and specialist teaching at different educational phases as playing a part in the 'relative prestige' of primary and secondary practitioners (Coldron et al, 2015, p678). Sutton suggests we should 'try to moderate our traditional deference towards specialist subject qualfications.' (Sutton, 2001, p131). Sutherland et al (2010) advocate both groups learning to think beyond their tribal mindset, if they are to work together to do their best for learners going through the primary to secondary school transfer. They also suggest that all-through settings could provide a break-through in terms of establishing effective dialogue and a platform for sharing practice across the primary-secondary divide. Coldron et al (2015) advocate research into all-through schools to see if they are helping to recalibrate the status and prestige differentials between primary and secondary teachers and school leaders.

The notion of primary and secondary practitioners as separate professional communities, with limited interaction, and between whom there is sometimes even an element of mutual tension (Coldron et al, 2015), has been a key concept in building the theoretical framework for my research. Evans and Fisher (2012) draw on Wenger (1998) to create a theoretical framework for their own research which looked at the professional links between primary and secondary schools in the teaching of MFL. Considering Wenger's work further, I am expanding this premise, to examine how educational practice in all-through schools might be theorised in terms of 'boundary practice' (Wenger,1998, p114).

Primary and secondary teachers can be seen as being two distinct 'communities of practice' (CoP) (Wenger, 1998). In 1998 Wenger defined a CoP as sharing a 'joint enterprise' and 'mutual engagement.' By 2016 he had refined this to be a 'domain…in which a community claims to have legitimacy to define competence' (Farnsworth, Kleanthous and Wenger-Trayner, 2016, p6). Whilst primary and secondary teachers have the commonality of being teachers, there are a number of professional boundaries which separate them and arguably they are functioning within different domains, related to their status as generalists and specialists and to the age range of the pupils they teach. These professional boundaries can be partly institutional, as we know that in the wider school system the vast majority of primary and secondary schools operate as separate institutions.

However, tribal identities can go beyond the institutional. Primary and secondary teachers are likely to have been trained specifically for their phase of education and, therefore, their professional identity and affinity to their own 'tribe' (Sutherland et al, 2010) can be set very early in their professional life. Wenger sees identity as a powerful force in the dynamics of a CoP: membership can be a type of recognition of practitioners' competence in their field and may start to constitute part of their identity in their wider life (Farnsworth, Kleanthous and Wenger-Trayner, 2016). Wenger states that a CoP can have boundaries that are denoted and experienced in 'subtle and not so subtle ways' (Wenger, 1998, p104). So whilst teachers from all phases may be a member of the same professional association or union, for example, or even employed by the same all-through school, there may still be 'markers of membership' (Wenger, 1998, p104) of their specific CoP which denote a boundary. For example, different educational phases have a phase specific vocabulary to discuss areas of their professional practice. Wenger states that 'the nuances and the jargon of a professional group distinguish the inside from the outside as much as do certificates' (Wenger, 1998, p104). That primary and secondary teachers are perceived to have their own, separate 'language' emerged in my own research findings and is considered later in this thesis.

Evans and Fisher (2012) theorised the links between secondary MFL teachers and their primary colleagues, in terms of what Wenger (1998) calls 'boundary encounters'. Boundary encounters often take the form of conversations, meetings

and visits between members of one CoP and another. In taking a wider view, looking at the primary and secondary teachers' interactions across the piece, and then extrapolating what that might mean for all-through schools, leads me to consider the detail of 'boundary encounters' and the deeper professional interaction between separate CoPs, which Wenger terms as 'boundary practices.' Boundary encounters can be 'one-on-one', 'immersion' or in the form of 'delegation' (Wenger, 1998, p133). In the case of cross-phase MFL liaison, for example, the typical types of interaction between primary and secondary practitioners would fall into the categories of 'one-on-one' or 'delegation' working, with either single practitioners linking together or a small group of practitioners meeting. 'Immersion' is when the member of one community is hosted by another, allowing a more prolonged exposure to the host community, with the aim of advancing the boundary relation. However, Wenger is clear that 'immersion' has the limit of being a one-sided enterprise and that 'the host practice is unlikely to witness in any significant way how visitors function in their home practice' (Wenger,1998, p112).

'Boundary practice' goes beyond the more superficial nature of 'boundary encounters', in that it is a 'sustained mutual engagement' where 'maintaining connections becomes part of the enterprise' (Wenger, 1998, p114). An interesting facet of all-through schools is that they are single institutions, which employ practitioners from the two distinct teaching CoPs. In chapter nine I reflect upon whether the all-through schools in this research are establishing meaningful 'boundary practice' by facilitating and maintaining professional connections between primary and secondary teachers. I also consider the extent to which this emerging practice is evident and can be defined. Wenger (1998) is clear that there can be boundaries even within institutions, so it is possible that the traditional tribal mindsets could be just as evident in all-through schools, as they are in the wider school system. I reflect upon the extent to which tribal mindsets persist in the case study schools in chapters seven and nine.

Wenger (1998) also describes a danger of boundary working, which could simultaneously be viewed as an opportunity. There is a risk that those spending a great deal of time developing 'boundary practice' actually form an entirely new CoP and that 'they become insulated from the practices they are supposed to connect'

(Wenger, 1998, p115). This is a danger, because instead of engaging and communicating with their original CoP, the new work of the group becomes an end in itself. This danger may be very real in all-through schools, where the practitioners' shared insitutional loyalities might result in the evolution of practices which work well for that institution, but do not impact upon educational practice beyond it. However, the potential to develop into something new, is an exciting prospect in itself, particularly in a professional world which has been dominated by the binary system of primary and secondary education. Wenger (1998) uses the example of scientific development, where colleagues collaborating from different disciplines have forged an entirely new branch of science (e.g. biochemistry). It is difficult during the evolution of a new CoP to judge how valuable its work might be, because ' the burgeoning of promising new practices is not always easy to recognise because they do not fit well within existing regimes of accountabilty' (Wenger, 1998, p115).

I am certainly not alone in using Wenger's communities of practice as a theoretical lens for my research. Farnsworth, Kleanthous and Wenger-Trayner (2016) reveal that a JSTOR search produces over 3,500 journal articles linked to CoP in social science fields. In my own reading I found Wenger drawn upon in the field of medicine, particularly practitioner education (Andrew, Tolson and Ferguson, 2008; Morley, 2016), in education and teacher professional learning (Buysee, Sparkman and Wesley, 2003; Cuddapah and Clayton, 2011) in research related to public service workplaces (Gau, 2011) and in the consideration of students of architecture at university (Morton, 2012). The Farnsworth, Kleanthous and Wenger-Trayner (2016) article included a transcript of a conversation with Wenger (now known as Wenger-Trayner) about his theory of CoP, its applications since 1998 and the critiques of the theory. In this interview Wenger responds to the suggestion by Jewson (2007) that developments in network analysis could provide a more sophisticated and detailed view of group interactions than CoP. Wenger's view is that whilst network analysis is a useful tool, the intention of CoP is different: its aim is to provide a framework and language for reseachers to use to consider the human experience of (professional) learning. This stance resonates with my own phenomenological standpoint (considered in chapter four) and underlines the appropriateness of the 'fit' in applying CoP to my own research.

In using Wenger's theory of CoP I am aware that I am firstly theorising at a system-wide level: that primary and secondary teachers are separate professional groups and typically in separate CoPs. At a system level, this may actually be akin to what Bourdieu (1980) terms a 'field'. Wenger sees his theory as 'occupying a mid level between moments of individual experience and broad social structure' (Farnsworth, Kleanthous and Wenger-Trayner, 2016, p11). However, I think that in my research the value of this lens is at its most useful at an institutional level. Indeed, Wenger's examples are also often at a specific institutional level (Wenger,1998, Wenger, McDermott and Synder, 2002) where he looks at how CoPs function within the context of professional or business organisations (e.g. an individual insurance company). Indeed, it is important to remember that the theory of CoPs grew from Wenger's earlier work wth Jean Lave, where learning was theorised as a social and situated activity (Lave and Wenger, 1991). I think this is particularly helpful in this research, where I consider specific case study all-through schools and have the opportunity to interview and observe leaders and teachers from both primary and secondary phases of the schools. Whilst at the end of my research I consider generalised implications for the education system, the findings of the case studies are specific and situated within a particular all-through school.

3.6 Cross-boundary working: practices from healthcare

Throughout this thesis I refer to 'cross-phase' working and teaching in the context of all-through schools. However, the notion of cross-boundary working is more established in other professional fields, such as healthcare. These practices are worthy of brief consideration, as there are some clear parallels with school settings and it could be argued that the field of healthcare has travelled further down the road of developing new ways of working and establishing new professional teams than is the currently the case in education. It is also an area where Wenger's theory of CoP has been used extensively as a theoretical framework to examine professional learning and the interaction of professional teams (Morley, 2016; Gonzalo et al, 2017; Andrew, Tolson and Ferguson, 2008). Since the early 2000s the NHS has been implementing new roles and requiring healthcare professionals to innovate new ways of working (DH, 2000).

Scholes and Vaughan (2002) differentiate between different types of cross-boundary working, such as 'multi-professional teams' where practitioners are working with professionals from completely different areas, such as colleagues from social care and 'multi-disciplinary teams', made up of 'practitioners who share the same professional background, but practise within different specialties or branches'' (Scholes and Vaughan, 2002, p400). In the context of research about all-through schools we might equate cross-phase teaching to the work of a healthcare 'multi-disciplinary team', given that primary and secondary teachers have the overarching commonality of their profession, but have traditionally concentrated on their own branch of teaching.

Bartunek (2011) draws on Wenger's (1998) theory of CoP and considers how the success of multi-disciplinary teams (or 'intergroup working') in healthcare is influenced by the degree to which the groups establish positive social interaction. Richter, West, Van Dick and Dawson (2006) consider intergroup working within five English healthcare trusts within the NHS, focusing on 'boundary spanners' (i.e. those whose work requires them to work with professionals in different roles, across traditional professional boundaries). They conclude that intergroup working is perceived to lead to more positive professional relations when the interactions take place more frequently. They also noticed that professionals started to take on a dual identity, retaining their original professional identity, but also identifying strongly with their membership of the new group (i.e. their trust team). Wenger (1998) theorises that a practitioner can be a member of more than one CoP and that in fact 'identity as multi-membership' is our natural state (Wenger, 1998, p158).

Wenger later theorised the 'multi-membership learning cycle' (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002, p18) where the work of CoPs feeds into professional learning and practice in the wider organisation, reaching across different professional teams. Healthcare appears to have embraced the notion of boundary spanning (and by implication the formation of multi-disciplinary CoPs) as a way of an enriching professional learning and improving practice. Within healthcare and beyond, the notion of 'boundary spanning leadership' has emerged, where high level strategic leadership negotiates and transcends traditional boundaries in service of a higher vision (Yip, Ernst and Campbell, 2016; Shirey and White-William, 2015). Within all-

through schools there are aspects of leadership which will cross traditional professional boundaries and jurisdictions. This research also considers the role of headteachers and other leaders in all-through schools and the extent to which their role requires them to become boundary spanners.

Cross-boundary models within the healthcare sector are still evolving and implementation has posed challenges. Early evaluation of role redesign in the NHS suggests that there are ongoing challenges for management and in-service training (Hyde, McBride, Young and Walsh, 2005). Moonesinghe (2016) argues for small-scale qualitative research to complement the use of 'big data', to try to understand practitioners' experiences of rapid innovation within the NHS. Masterson (2002) emphasises that the move to cross-boundary working can be a demanding change, in that it can require practitioners to relinquish or share areas of their professional domain: it involves a 'willingness to share and give up exclusive claims to specialist knowledge' (Masterson, 2002, p333). There could be learnings from the evolution of cross-boundary working in the healthcare sector which are applicable when considering the development of cross-phase working in all-through schools and more widely across the education system. Sensitivities around 'exclusive claims to specialist knowledge' may have a real resonance in how new ways of working between primary and secondary practitioners could be negotiated.

3.7 Why question the status quo of the primary/ secondary binary system?

In the CPR Alexander (2010) highlights some of the strengths and successes of primary education in England. However, the CPR also clearly identifies areas of practice in primary schools in need of attention. This research project seeks to establish whether 'all-through' educational settings offer an opportunity to address some of the 'fit for purpose' concerns of the CPR, particularly those around teacher subject knowledge and specialist teaching. The research considers teaching staff deployment and the application of pedagogy in all-through settings, to see how specialist and generalist teaching inputs are managed.

The notions of federations of schools and collegiate working have been gaining popularity in the twenty-first century in the English state sector, as is evident in the proliferation of such arrangements in practice. Brighouse (2006) argues powerfully

for small groups of secondary schools to work together, to be able to pool expertise and resource, as 'no secondary school alone could meet the needs of all of their pupils,' (Brighouse, 2006, p171). We have seen this type of pooling of resource and expertise as a feature of the rise of academies and MATs since 2010 and research is starting to suggest that some economies of scale can be achieved through locality based MAT working (Townsley and Andrews, 2017). I would argue that if Brighouse's assertion is true of the majority of state secondary schools, then it would be a tall order for a stand-alone primary school, with fewer staff and resources, to truly meet needs of every child. Townsley and Andrews (2017) conclude that primary schools, particularly, achieve economic benefits through MAT membership. However, English primary headteachers have been more reticent than their secondary counterparts to engage in the academies programme (Simkins et al 2019). In chapter nine I reflect further upon the rise of academies and MATs during the five years of the research project and consider how this interelates with all-through schools. At the beginning of this research project I had wondered whether the all-through school configuration could offer a way of replicating some of the advantages of partnership or MAT working, but within a single school.

In this chapter I have considered the impact of a system where each year hundreds of thousands of children transfer to secondary school. Viewed through the lens of the transition 'bridge' model all-through schools seem to provide the possibility of an alternative. Perhaps the most compelling challenge to the status quo in the literature comes from Galton and McLellan (2018). If we really are doing no better in managing the challenge, experience and well-being of children as they move into secondary schooling than we were 50 years ago, then an exploration of alternative approaches is warranted.

4. Research design and methodology

This chapter details my research philosophy and explains my research design, choice of instruments, sampling strategy, pilot work and approaches to data gathering and analysis. I also discuss my epistemological positioning, which is an essential starting point in explaining my research planning and decision-making and my choice to conduct a mixed methods study. Where I am drawing upon conceptual frameworks from educational research or other social science fields, I discuss their application (and adaptation) in my work and how these align with my own research aims and philosophy. In addition, I consider the ethical dimensions of researching in school settings, particularly with regard to protecting pupil and staff participants. Finally, I reflect upon my experiences in the field and note where some amendments to planned research activities were made.

4.1 Research questions and overall research design

All-through schools are a relatively new phenomenon in the English state education system. Where some research projects' foci may be directed at what researchers see as problems to be examined, for example in some case study research (Stake, 2006), this study seeks partly to generate new knowledge in an area that has been little researched. However, what have been clearly problematized in the literature are aspects of how state secondary schools came into being and have developed, and how the mass school transfer between primary and secondary schools currently functions (as detailed in chapters two and three). Therefore, my research questions reflect both the need to collect overview data about all-through schools and a focus on aspects of curriculum continuity, pedagogy and transition raised in the literature relating to the wider school system. As this is what I believe is the first study of its kind relating to all-through schools, the research also seeks to establish the emerging challenges and opportunities stemming from the configuration, as perceived by practitioners working within them. Following the examination of the literature, my research questions were refined as shown in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1: Research questions

1	**What are the characteristics of English all-through schools?** In relation to: - School organisation/type - Leadership structures - School vision and values
2	**How do all-through schools plan and teach the curriculum?** Considering: - Curriculum continuity - The deployment of generalist and specialist teachers and cross-phase teaching - Pupil grouping - The provision of formal and informal cross-phase learning opportunities - The choice of teaching methodologies and pedagogies
3.	**How do all-through schools approach the KS2-3 transition?** Considering the five transition bridges: - Social - Administrative - Curriculum - Pedagogy - Management of learning
4.	**What are emerging as the affordances and opportunities provided by the all-through configuration?** Open ended at stage one. Stage one findings to help frame the detail of stage two research
5.	**What are emerging as the main challenges faced by all-through schools?** (as question four)

The study has a two-stage, 'multi-strategy' (Robson and McCartan, 2016) research design, with a double focus: a 'big picture' view of all all-through state schools in England, through a questionnaire and a consideration of public domain data, followed by a very detailed consideration of case studies of three individual all-through schools. The case study approach provides an over-arching structure for

the elements of the research based in schools, within which a range of research instruments are used, namely semi-structured interviews (with school leaders and teachers), focus groups (with students as participants), observations of cross-phase activities/teaching and the use of digital images by student participants to help exemplify their views and experiences. The two-stage design allowed me to consider the findings of stage one when planning stage two, and to examine in-depth at stage two topics which appeared as recurrent themes within the questionnaire findings. The timeline and phasing of the two stages of the research are shown in Figure 4.1.

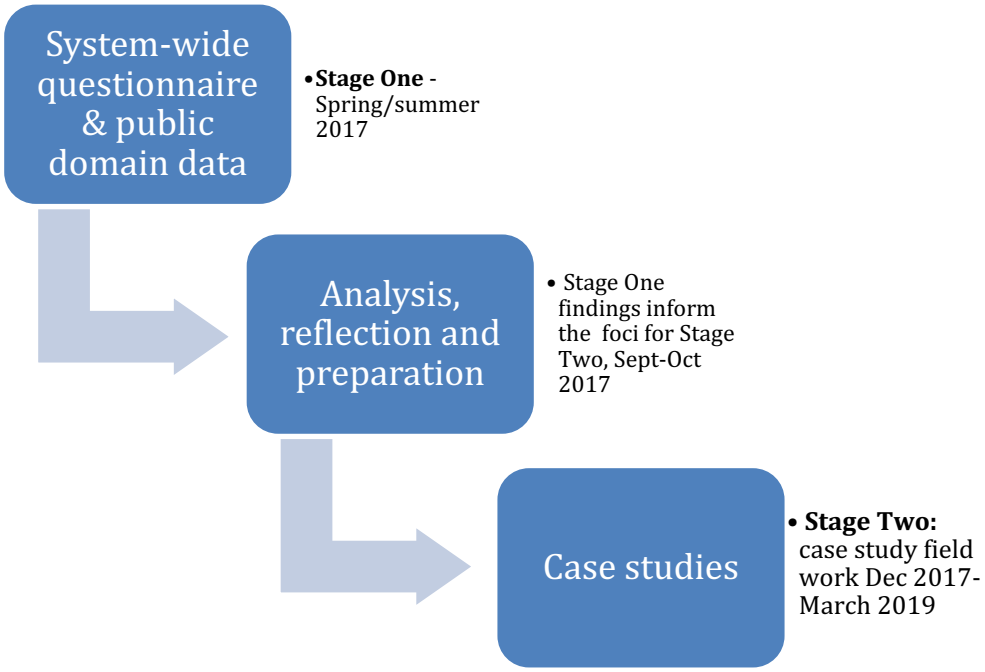


Figure 4.1: The timeline and phasing of the two stages of research

How the data collection relates to the research questions is shown in **Appendix A**. The table maps each question and sub-question to research stage, instrument and participant. In the case of the stage one research, each questionnaire question or section is mapped to research questions.

4.2 World view and epistemological positioning

Who we are and what we have experienced influence our research and act as a form of 'individual lens' (Egbert & Sandon, 2014, p17) on our thinking. My own experience of the use and influence of school performance data as a headteacher, has led me

to question the current dominance of quantitative analyses of school performance in the English state system and the positivistic 'cause and effect' assertions that are often made from these data. Whilst these data have an established place in school evaluation, I hope that my research provides the opportunity to also place a strong emphasis on the views of research participants and to reflect their lived experiences in all-through schools.

The foundation of any educational research project should be its world-view and epistemological positioning, as these elements relate to the researcher's view of the nature of knowledge (Egbert & Sandon, 2014). The overall philosophy of this research is in the interpretivist tradition, as I am consciously choosing to step away from the positivistic ways in which the current English state school system is measured. The notion of the researcher as an 'insider' 'interacting with participants' (Thomas, 2011, p 111) is also often in evidence within the interpretivist paradigm. Whilst I did not conduct my research within my own school for the main study, the fact that I started the research as the serving headteacher of an all-through school means that I am, to a great extent, an insider within the system I am studying. The connection between me, as researcher, and the object of study, links to the notion of 'intentionality,' in that there is 'a very active relationship between the conscious subject and the object of the conscious subject' (Crotty, 1998, p45). My work is also typical of EdD projects in this respect, in that I am a practitioner researcher situated within the landscape being studied (Drake and Heath, 2011).

The main focus of my research is eliciting the views of headteachers, teachers, children and young people about their experiences within their own all-through school. Therefore, I have adopted a phenomenological approach, which places an emphasis on the voice of the individual participant. Phenomenology sets out to describe 'how things are experienced at first hand by those involved.' (Denscombe, 2010, p94). A key method in the phenomenological toolkit is the research interview, as it allows the participant to relate their experiences and construct their own meaning around the research topic. A large proportion of my data has been gathered through semi-structured interviews and focus groups, with the aim of being able to present the authentic voice of the participants in the research findings; what

Van Manen describes as 'obtaining experiential descriptions from others' (Van Manen, 2007, p62).

Phenomenology also advocates a concentration on the phenomena as they exist and are experienced. To do this properly, researchers are encouraged to set aside their pre-conceived notions about the object of study and to try to look at the phenomena afresh. Whilst I have already identified myself as an 'insider' researcher, I do believe it is possible to balance the seemingly contradictory requirements of being as close to the phenomena as possible as a researcher and yet still trying to observe 'through the eyes of others,' (Denscombe, 2010, p95). In my research, seeing 'through the eyes of others' is partly achieved through my choice not to research in my own school, which has helped me in 'bracketing off' by adopting 'the stance of a stranger' (Schulz, 1962 cited in Denscombe 2010, p99). In the more recent phenomenological tradition, other researchers have reconciled these competing demands by 'collecting and analyzing data in ways that do not prejudice their subjective character' (Crotty, 1998, p83). This includes going back to participants with initial findings and seeking their views to inform interpretation: Stake terms this 'member checking' (Stake, 1995, p115) and advocates it as a technique to validate findings, but which adheres to phenomenological principles. A strong element of member checking has been included in my research design and is detailed in section 4.6.

In the next section (4.3) I explain my choice of a multi-strategy, mixed methods approach. However, this choice also needs to be considered in the light of the overall philosophical stance taken in the research. Phenomenological research is associated with qualitative research interviews, but it can also be multi-modal: some researchers assert that a range of approaches can lead to participants being understood 'more fully' (Boden and Eatough, 2014, p174). Some multi-modal approaches are particularly in tune with phenomenological aims, such as combining interviews with photo-elicitation (Burton, Hughes and Dempsey, 2017). In this research I use photo-elicitation in the student focus group activities (see 4.6).

However, this research goes beyond a multi-modal approach, in that at stage one I also include an examination of public domain quantitative data and generate my own

statistical data from the research questionnaire. Whilst the inclusion of quantitative data may, at first glance, appear to be inconsistent with my philosophical positioning, it actually reflects a wider methodological movement in social science research. Mayoh and Onwuegbuzie (2013) conceptualise mixed methods studies which incorporate phenomenology as mixed methods phenomenological research, a growing subset of mixed methods studies. They note that the majority of MMPR studies conducted since 2005 are in the fields of healthcare and psychology (Mayoh and Onwuegbuzie, 2014), where the phenomenological intent of understanding personal experience is a valuable explanatory complement to the examination of quantitative data.

Similarly, my use of approaches adapted from interpretative phenomenological analysis might initially be seen as unusual, in a study which also contains a quantitative element. Again, the decision to combine IPA with other methods in this way reflects a widening use and adaption of IPA across social science research fields. Whilst IPA is more usual as the sole methodology in a research project, increasingly it is being combined with quantitative research, particularly in the field of healthcare (for example, Byrne et al, 2013) and has also been deployed in educational research (Taylor, 2015). Studies such as this doctoral project, which combine IPA with other methodologies, fall within Mayoh and Onwuegbuzie's (2013) definition of MMPR, as single studies which utilise an alternative paradigm in addition to phenomenology. They argue that designs which 'interface' (p91) with other traditions can be very worthwhile, as phenomenology can 'work extremely well as a component of mixed methods research approaches' (p92). My use and adaptation of IPA is examined in full in 4.8.

4.3 The choice of a multi-strategy, mixed methods study

Crotty explores the choice of quantitative or qualitative research, which many perceive as the 'The Great Divide' (Crotty, 1998, p14). Crotty is pragmatic in his stance, in that he acknowledges that research can be both qualitative and quantitative. However, in his view, the researcher should be consistently objectivist or constructionist in their stance. Despite feeling that the worth of school performance data has clear limits, my research does have some engagement with public domain data about all-through schools, such as OFSTED judgements and

headline performance measures. These data have helped me to construct a contextual narrative (chapter five), which in turn helped to frame the focus for the qualitative data collected. I also generated my own quantitative data as part of my research, through a questionnaire sent to all-through schools. However, my epistemological stance impacts upon 'the truth claims proffered' on behalf of these quantitative data (Crotty, 1998, p16) as they are presented as part of a contextual narrative, rather than to claim cause and effect.

As explained in 4.2 I have had to closely consider the inclusion and status of quantitative methods and analyses, within research which professes to have an overall interpretivist or phenomenological positioning. After reflection and discussion at the planning stages of my research, I chose to include quantitative elements in the research, namely: quantitative analysis of some of the questionnaire questions, a comparison with the TALIS 2013 teacher and principals' surveys and an overview of public domain data, comparing all-through schools with national datasets. I believe that adopting a mixed methods approach, with the inclusion of some quantitative methods, is compatible with the overall research philosophy, as the purpose of collecting these data is to provide a broad contextual commentary as part of my findings. My research also has a mixed methods approach to its sampling, as the combination of a system-wide questionnaire, followed by three detailed case studies leads to both purposive and probability sampling' at different stages of the research, an approach advocated by Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009). Therefore, the research is functioning within the 'third methodological movement' (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009), by combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, but aims to maintain its overall phenomenological integrity.

Pring (2015) considers the frequent assumption that quantitative and qualitative analyses are philosophically incompatible as a 'mistaken opposition' (p72), as they can be successfully combined. Plowright (2011) views mixed methods research as an opportunity to integrate different approaches and operate within an 'alternative paradigm' (p182). Whilst reference to alternative or third routes in research may sound radical, combining or integrating methods has become increasingly accepted (Burke-Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Robson and McCartan, 2016), as has the aim of combining phenomenology with other paradigms (Mayoh and Onwuegbuzie,

2013 and 2014). The type of two-stage research design I have adopted, with a broad descriptive commentary established by quantitative analyses, followed by a detailed consideration of an aspect of the phenomena using qualitative methods, is an approach which has been gaining in popularity in the last 20-30 years (Gorard and Taylor, 2004). They desribe how this approach has been used to examine aspects of social policy and is termed the 'New Political Arithmetic' (NPA): 'the numeric techniques are simple, and largely descriptive, but they are linked to a second dataset (consisting of the more in-depth data)' (Gorard & Talyor, 2004, p59). The purpose of the questionnaire in my research is largely to establish a context within which to consider all-through schools, but it also helped me to refine the foci and questions to participants in the interviews and focus groups at the case study schools. Again, this conforms to the conventions of NPA, as the second explanatory phase of the research seeks to elucidate the findings of the first (Gorard and Taylor, 2004).

In many respects my mixed methods study conforms to the features of what Cresswell and Plano Clark (2011, p69) term the 'explanatory sequential design'. In this mixed methods design, a quantitative dataset is gathered in relation to the area of enquiry and is then followed up by a second, qualitative research phase. It is intended that the 'qualitative helps to explain the initial quantitative results' (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011, p71). Bryman (2016) also advocates the use of exploratory sequential designs when the research aims to explain trends seen in quantitative datasets. Robson and McCartan (2016) describe how what they term as a multi-strategy approach, can be particularly fitting for research which is planned sequentially, with different methods being deployed at different stages of the research. Where my study design differs from those described by Cresswell and Plano Clark (2011) is that a greater emphasis is placed on stage two of the research and the stage two qualitative dataset is larger than that generated by stage one. However, in common with NPA, what is also changing through the phases of my research is scale: I start from a perspective of considering all all-through schools in stage one of the research, placing them in the context of the wider school system; I then go on to focus in on three all-through schools in stage two, often researching with individual participants or small groups during the field work. Mason (2006) uses the analogy of a *close up* image for case study work, which is illustrative of trends

which exist in the *big picture* landscape of quantitative data. I found this analogy resonated with the aims of my research design as the case study work is intended to provide a close view of aspects of practice in all-through schools, viewed through the eyes of pupils and practitioners in those schools. The type of data collected and the scale of focus at each research stage is shown in Figure 4.2:

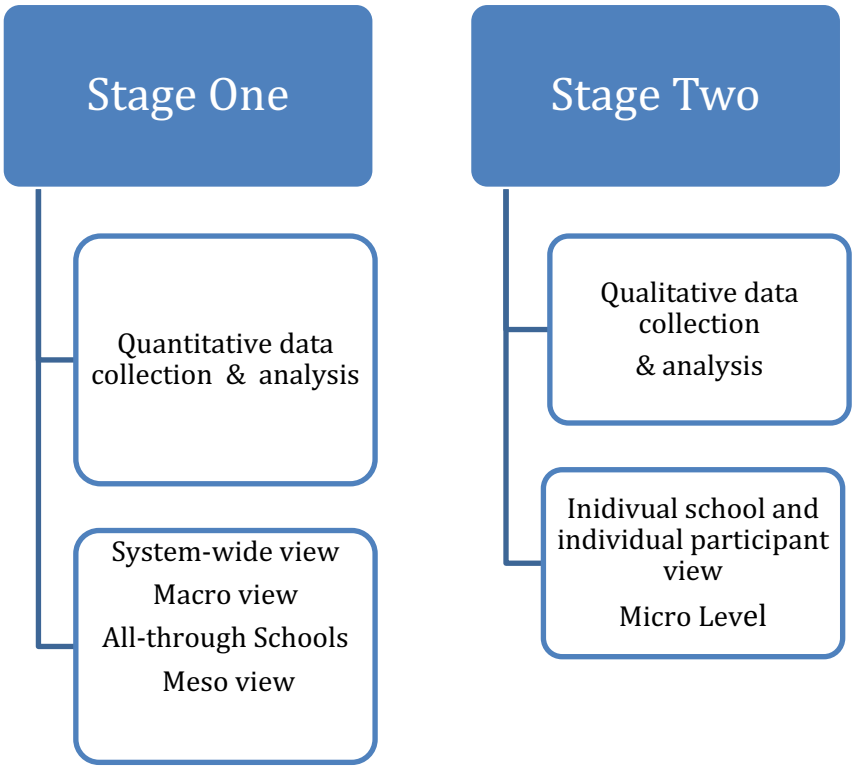


Figure 4.2: Research stage, data collection and scale of focus

However, in order for a mixed methods study to be successful, one must be clear from the outset about what the research is trying to achieve and how the different datasets are going to contribute to answering the research questions (Robson and McCartan, 2016). Venkatesh, Brown and Bala (2013) highlight as a potential pitfall of mixed methods studies, that reseachers tend to have and favour a dominant component of their research and that the non-dominant aspects can be superficial. This flaw is sometimes manifest in less attention being paid to the analysis of one dataset and its findings. They suggest that one needs a credible and rigorous approach to the analysis of *both* aspects of the study, in order to then make credible inferences from the findings. However, they do think that having a dominant approach is appropriate, if that stance best suits the requirements of the study, as I

believe is the case in my research. I also detail later in this chapter how rigour is applied to data analysis at both stages of the research.

Credibility and trustworthiness

An often cited advantage of mixed methods and mulitiple case studies is that they facilitate a degree of triangulation between datasets which can be seen to increase the validity of the research findings (Stake, 2006, Robson and McCartan, 2016). Stake (2006) sees triangulation as a way of ensuring that 'we have the picture as clear and suitably meaningful as we can get it.' (Stake, 2006, p77). My own justification for a mixed methods and multiple case approach is more nuanced, in that whilst I concur with Almalki (2016) that multiple datasets and sources help to build up a more complete picture of key findings in educational research, I also agree with Morgan (2019) that we have to be mindful that we are comparing different types of data. As advocated by Morgan (2019), rather than talking in terms of triangulation, in my findings chapters and discussion I am sharing and reflecting upon points of *complementarity, convergence* and *divergence* (Morgan, 2019) between the findings at different stages of the research and in the different case study schools. Similarly, some qualitative researchers avoid talking in terms of *validity* and instead use terms such as *credibility* (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In this study I aim to establish the *credibility* and *trustworthiness* (Robson and McCartan, 2016) of the project by having a clear rationale for each reasearch stage and instrument and a rigorous analysis plan (see section 4.8).

4.4 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are of paramount importance in educational research. We, as educational researchers, have a duty to all concerned to behave in an exemplary way, to be responsible guardians of participants' data and to be aware of the possibilities of unforeseen ethical concerns arising during the research. When we are working with children and young people, we have a particular responsibility to protect them and ensure that their participation is given due recognition. The most basic ethical principle is 'not to harm anyone' (Sikes, 2004, p32). The most effective way to do this is to plan the research thoroughly and ethically, be familiar with ethical and safeguarding frameworks (Robson and McCartan, 2016) and to have communicated well in advance with participants and case study schools about the

expectations of participants, their right to withdraw and the steps taken to minimise 'harm' in its broadest sense.

At all stages of the research I was as vigilant as possible to mitigate against any potential harm which might arise from teachers, leaders or pupils participating in the research. In establishing my sample of teachers and students, I stressed that participation in the scheme was both voluntary and completely separate from other processes in the school (e.g. observation linked to teacher appraisal). Busher and James emphasise that in order to construct ethical research a key principle is 'that of voluntarism by the participants when engaging' (Busher & James, 2007, 110). The participants were all involved on an entirely voluntary basis and were aware of their right to cease participation at any time. Central to ethical educational research is the concept of 'informed consent' (BERA, 2018). To achieve informed consent, I implemented the follow measures, to ensure that participants were very aware of what their involvement in the research would mean:

- Permission to participate was sought from students' parents/carers well in advance of the field visits. The letter sent to parents/ carers clearly explained the purpose of the research and that their child's anonymity would be protected. (See **Appendix B** for the full wording of the letter to parents/carers).
- Each adult participant was given and had explained to them the purpose of the study, how their data would be used and their right to withdraw. They each signed the adult participation form at the start of my field work engagement with them (see **Appendix C**).
- Adult participants were given the opportunity to review a transcript of their interviews and retract or amend what they had said.

Establishing pupils' truly informed consent requires additional efforts, as initial access is gained through gatekeepers at the school and through parents and carers. Mortari and Harcourt (2012) are critical of frameworks which only require consent from adults, and do not give thought to the child's view of participation. I was keen to ensure that students really did want to take part. At the beginning of the focus groups sessions I reinforced that their participation was voluntary. Despite the

challenges and additional ethical concerns in relation to researching with children, I think it is important that research acknowledges the enormous potential that student voice has to add to educational research: Groundwater Smith (2007) considers the challenges and ethical constraints of representing student voice beyond superficial engagement, but concludes that these additional efforts are very worthwhile, given the moral imperative we have to include pupils in educational research.

There are additional ethical considerations as a practitioner researcher going into the field. I chose not to research in my own school, although I did pilot some of the case study intruments there, prior to the main study. One of the reasons for choosing other schools for the main research was my consciousness of my role as headteacher and that I worried that some staff might feel obliged to take part and that they might have preconceived ideas about what I wanted to hear. This type of organisational dynamic is explored by Drake and Heath (2011), who consider that researching professionals have to navigate organisational politics and loyalties, work place power hierarchies and professional affliations, in addition to the usual range of ethical challenges. One of the additional responsibilities of practitioner researchers identified by Drake and Heath is to recognise that we have priviledged access to the work environment and participants: they consider that in educational and healthcare settings practitioner researchers need to be particularly mindful of their situatedness and to ensure that they are not taking advantage of their access to colleagues and pupils/patients in any way. In my pilot work I made sure that parental and participant permissions were sought in exactly the same way as the in the main study, as I was very conscious that I *was* the gatekeeper in the organisation.

Whilst I undertook my main case study field work in other schools, I was still very conscious of my professional status and that the adult participants, particularly, were aware of my working role. I also believe that my dual identities as researcher and practitioner (headteacher) made it more likely that the case study schools would allow me to research in their school and that I therefore still had a privileged access which other reseachers might not have been allowed (as suggested by Drake and Heath, 2011). As a result, I feel a tremendous responsibilty towards my research participants and am hugely appreciative of the time, good will and candour demonstrated during my field work. Gorman (2007) also highlights the potential for

conflicts of interests when professionals in healthcare or educational settings discover practice which does not reflect well on their colleagues: to whom is the researching professional ultimately responsible? To formulate my approach to potential conflicts of interest, I referred to the ethical, professional and safeguarding frameworks considered below.

Ethical frameworks and safeguarding regulations

During the study I was consciously operating within several ethical frameworks, to protect my research participants and also myself as the researcher: the ethical guidelines of the University of Cambridge and the Faculty of Education; the BERA (2015) guidelines, which were replaced by the BERA (2018) guidelines while my field work was taking place; and the statutory safeguarding requirements in schools and individual schools' own additional safeguarding practices and frameworks. The key requirements of those working in education are outlined in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE, 2019c) and in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government, 2018). As a headteacher, I am well versed in the safeguarding legislation and have current LA certification as a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) within my school trust. Therefore, I began my field work with a clear understanding of the rightly high ethical expectations of the university/faculty and of the professional standards and ethical expectations of those working in schools.

Mortari and Harcourt (2012) discuss research ethics in relation to working with children and recommend building upon what they term as the *ethics of justice* (i.e. adherence to legal and ethical frameworks) and that when researching with children we cultivate something beyond that: an *ethics of care*. They define this as the researcher seeing themselves as a 'moral agent' who 'conducts her/himself in a way that embodies ethical values' (Mortari and Harcourt, 2012, p241). I would agree whole-heartedly that ethical considerations, particularly when working with childen, have to go beyond a tick box compliance approach and consider at each stage of the research what is right for the children/child. Mortari and Harcourt (2012) term this the 'ethical posture' the researcher assumes throughout the time of the research 'in their relationships and actions' (p237).

Another key ethical consideration for educational researchers is how to secure anonymity, which is important both for the individual participants and their schools. Anonymity also encourages participants' candour in discussion. As all-through schools are much less common than stand-alone primary and secondary schools and could, therefore, be much more easily identified, one of the steps I have taken in the research is to not refer to the schools' location and I do not state the town/city, county or LA in which they are situated. Walford (2005) notes that preserving anonymity is a cornerstone of ethical frameworks internationally, but can be impossible to guarantee in reality. His experience was similar to my own, in the respect that he conducted research about City Technology Colleges (CTC) in the 1990s (Walford and Miller, 1991) and the schools could be easily identified. His approach to overcoming this dilemma was to name a particular school in the research and offer the headteacher the chance of writing an insider perspective. Unlike Walford (2005) I have tried to preserve the anonymity of the case study schools. All-through schools are not politically controversial in the way that CTCs were and I have not felt it necessary to tackle problems around anonymity in that way. However, I do have to acknowledge that, even given the steps taken, an informed reader could have an educated guess at identifying the schools. Therefore, I have been very careful about what I attribute directly to an individual in the case study reports. As is discussed in Campbell and McNamara (2007) there is a tremendous value in including practitioner accounts and profiles in educational research, but their inclusion needs careful consideration from an ethical perspective.

During the course of my research the General Data Protection Regulation GDPR (2018) came into force in May 2018, which the BERA ethical guidelines (2018) make clear also applies to researchers. The requirements of GDPR as they relate to permission to hold data and the requirements for secure storage reflect what we as researchers would consider to be best practice in any case. I ensured that a robust system was in place to gain permission to hold and use the research data for the specified purposes **(Appendixes B and C**). All data are securely stored and are password protected. I am not holding any personal or sensitive data about any of my participants.

The interests of the children observed or spoken to during the field work were and remain protected by the measures described. I did not encounter any situations during the field work observation of, or discussion with children or young people which concerned me in any way or led me to log a concern with the case study school or university. Similarly I had no well-being concerns for any of the adult participants. However, I discuss in 4.9 issues arising in the field, including when some adult participants' views were 'off message' compared to those expressed by the school leaders.

4.5 Stage One: The Questionnaire

The starting point for the research was a questionnaire to be completed by the headteacher (or a nominated senior leader), which was sent to all English state all-through schools (150 schools) in February 2017. Within the research design it was essential to administer and analyse the questionnaire data first, as the findings were intended to shape the next stage of the research (see Figures 4.1 and 4.2). The questionnaire responses helped to determine the selection of the three case study schools (explained in section 4.7), as well as framing revisions in the detail of the case study instruments (e.g. refinement of the questions for the semi-structured interviews). The full questionnaire is included as **Appendix D**.

As educational researchers we are aware that questionnaires have both advantages and limitations (Nardi, 2018; Gillham, 2000): therefore, it was essential that the questionnaire was carefully planned and structured, to optimize the one opportunity to administer it to all all-through schools. One advantage of the use of a questionnaire is that it is a very time-efficient way of testing out ideas/hypotheses (Munn & Drever, 2004). For example, I had started my research journey imagining that there was a connection between the proliferation of all-through schools and the policy paradigm introduced by the *Schools White Paper* (2010); asking in the questionnaire for the year the school opened or became all-through enabled me to quickly form a view on this. In addition, my decision to use a self-administered questionnaire at stage one of the research was motivated by the need to gather as much contextual information as I could from as many all-through schools as possible. Gillham (2000) also cites the standardization of a questionnaire, the convenience of the participant being able to complete it at time of their choosing and a reduction of

researcher bias (compared to interviewing) as factors which are advantageous in the choice of questionnaire as research instrument.

Within the questionnaire I chose to deploy a range of question and response types. Basic factual information is gathered by closed questioning/tick boxes. I deliberately included the option of free text for key questions where I did not want to pre-suppose the participants' responses and felt that free text would also generate 'leads' for the future case study research. Peterson (2000) suggests that some freedom in participant repsonse helps to mitigate against researcher bias or inadvertently influencing answers by how questions are presented. Therefore, by the inclusion of open questioning and the use of a four point attitudinal scale (often strongly agree to strongly disagree) I intended that the questionnaire would function beyond the purely descriptive and would identify themes and attitudes to be explored in depth during the next stage of the research.

I also chose to use and adapt a number questions from the OECD's 2013 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) for headteachers. This enabled me both to use questions which have been trialled in a large international survey and to be able to cross-reference my findings in my small-scale survey with those in a larger dataset (see chapter five). I had initially intended to use the five point Likert scale (Likert, 1932) in my questionnaire to gather attitudinal reponses. The Likert scale is a well tried and tested social science tool for converting respondent views into attitudinal data and I had been used to using it in work-force surveys at my school. However, when finalising my questionnaire design and after including a number of questions from the TALIS (2013) Principal Survey, it seemed much more logical to consistently use the four point attitudinal scale deployed by TALIS (2013) throughout. This gives the questionnaire a more uniform feel, with questions requiring a 1-4 response largely grouped together. It also meant that in many cases the respondent had to chose between a negative or a positive response. Nardi (2018) supports the use of gathering reponses as ratings on an intensity scale (e.g. four points from strongly disagree to strongly agree), as responses then capture not only participants' views, but the intensity of those views.

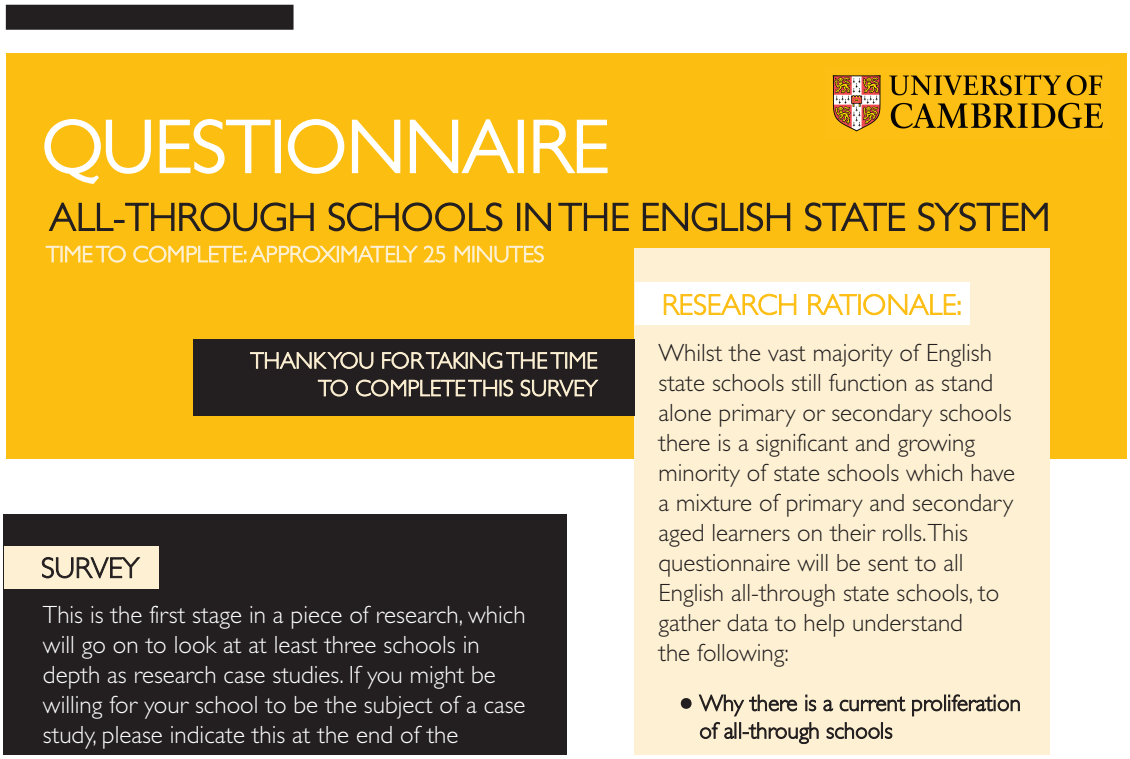
In the early stages of my research I piloted all of the research instruments which were to be used in the main research. In 2016, I created a prototype of the stage one research questionnaire and sent it to 10 all-through headteachers. As well as completing the questionnaire, they also provided me with feedback about the questionnaire design, which helped me to refine it into the final version used in 2017. Floyd and Fowler (2014) stress the particular importance of piloting or 'pre-testing' self-administered questionnaires, as in the main study the researcher will not see them being completed and is not able to answer participants' questions. Pretests help to identify questions which are unclear or confusing to participants. Following my pretesting of the pilot questionnaire I made two substantial changes. I took out what had been question 16, which asked for some workforce statistics. The pilot headteachers reported that this was time consuming to complete and meant that they had to consult with others to fill out that section. On reflection I did not think that those data were particularly important and did not want to put off participants or waste their time. I also changed question 20 (which became question 19 on the final version). I had asked participants to choose three statements from ten provided about school aims and ethos, and then to rank them by strength of agreement. This was not only complicated (some respondents just ticked three) and did not allow them to express views about the other statements. I changed this to the 1-4 intensity rating used throughout the survey and favoured by Nardi (2018), which also allowed the participants to respond to each of the ten statements.

The questionnaire was sent to all all-through state schools in England. The schools, their addresses and email addresses and the names of the headteachers were in the public domain and could be accessed through the government school information portal (called at the time *Edubase*). These data largely came from the census returns that state schools must complete electronically for the DfE. I downloaded the list of English state schools in January 2017 and was able to sort the data by school phase, which provided me with a list of all-through schools.

I considered carefully how best to administer the questionnaire. There are a number of software packages which will create online questionnaires, which have the additional advantage of also collating the data. However, I considered the sheer volume of emails I receive as a headteacher, which can easily amount to 150 in a

day: I know all too well how tempting it is to press delete, if something unsolicited finds its way into my inbox. At the planning stage I considered literature relating to the pros and cons of paper based and electronic surveys. Whilst some of what I found was already eight or nine years out of date at the point I was planning my survey, I was surprised that there did not seem to be a clear advantage of a digital survey in terms of response rate. Porter (2004a) suggests that despite advances in technology, there is likely to remain a place for the paper based questionnaire, particularly in educational settings and that at that time, they still had higher response rates than e-surveys. Shih and Fan (2009) conducted a meta analysis of 35 studies and concluded that at the time email surveys actually had a lower response rate than traditional questionnaires sent out by mail. More recently, Nardi (2018) states that paper based surveys administered via a mailing often receive around 20 to 30 percent response rates. Nardi (2018) goes on to cite a SurveyMonkey report from 2012 suggesting that their online surveys typically also have a response rate of around 30 percent. So while electronic administration has been gaining ground in the last decade, as we might expect, there is still not a conclusive case to support favouring it over traditional administration methods.

I took the view that a well presented colour hardcopy, with an accompanying letter on headed paper, might mean headteachers and/or their PAs would look at the correspondence more closely and make an informed decision about whether to participate. Hardcopy post is less common and tends to be at least looked at, before being discarded. I also chose to use my professional identity in my approach to potential participants, writing on school headed paper and identifying myself as a serving headteacher. The reasoning behind these decisions resonate with advice in the literature. Robson and McCartan (2016) stress the importance of well presented hardcopy questionnaires, which use colour and have clear instructions for each section. A section of the front of the questionnaire is shown below in Figure 4.3. A full copy of the text of the covering letters is in **Appendices E and F** (a slightly different letter was sent to the 10 schools that participated in the pilot) and a full copy of the research questionnaire, as it was received by the paricipants is **Appendix D**



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

QUESTIONNAIRE

ALL-THROUGH SCHOOLS IN THE ENGLISH STATE SYSTEM

TIME TO COMPLETE: APPROXIMATELY 25 MINUTES

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY

RESEARCH RATIONALE:

Whilst the vast majority of English state schools still function as stand alone primary or secondary schools there is a significant and growing minority of state schools which have a mixture of primary and secondary aged learners on their rolls. This questionnaire will be sent to all English all-through state schools, to gather data to help understand the following:

- Why there is a current proliferation of all-through schools

SURVEY

This is the first stage in a piece of research, which will go on to look at at least three schools in depth as research case studies. If you might be willing for your school to be the subject of a case study, please indicate this at the end of the

Figure 4.3: A section of the front page of the questionnaire

A stamped, addressed A4 envelope was provided in the pack and participants were also given the option of sending me a scanned completed questionnaire via email. This pragmatic hybrid approach between paper-based and digital methods is acknowledged by Porter (2004) as a sensible way forward for the foreseeable future. The letter offered to send participants a copy of emerging research findings if they completed and returned the questionnaire. In this respect, completion of the questionnaire had been incentivised to encourage participant response, as discussed and suggested by Porter (2004b) and Dillman, Smyth and Christian, (2014). However, I also wanted to established a sense of shared endeavour with my participants, which is explored in detail in chapter six.

Questionnaire data

The questionnaires were sent out by post in mid-February 2017 and completed returns started to arrive at the beginning of March 2017. I had originally hoped that all returns would be sent to me by Easter and had put the return date of 31 March on the hardcopy of the questionnaire. However, it became evident through the chasing process, that I would get a higher return rate if I could be prepared to wait a

little longer. I used follow up contacts, as discussed in Porter (2004) and Robson and McCartan (2016), to optimise my return rate. A follow up email was sent to all schools in March 2017, which asked schools to indicate whether they intended to return the questionnaire. Where schools/headteachers indicated that they did intend to participate, but the response had not been received, this was followed up with a phone call to the Headteacher's PA. Some headteachers/PAs indicated that they could make time to complete the questionnaire during the Easter holidays. The deadline was then extended to after the first May bank holiday weekend (communicated to the all all-through schools by email). The final (42nd) returned questionnaire arrived on 25 May 2017.

Questionnaire data were collated in excel spreadsheets. I entered the data of the first 10 returned questionnaires myself, very carefully: this was initially a very slow process. However, this helped me to refine the templates further and arrive at the final spreadsheet design. In April 2017 I enlisted the help of a paid administrator to aid me in inputting the data. Before she started work, we met to go through the spreadsheets together and how I wanted the data to be input, and looked together at the data already collated. When she was confident to proceed, I started to send her questionnaires. Four of the pilot schools chose to re-submit their original return from 2016 and re-validate these data. I inputted the returns of these four schools, as the numbers of the questions were different and question 19 had been redesigned. Overall, 40 percent of the questionnaire data was inputted by me and 60 percent by an administrator. A rigorous data cleaning and checking procedure was implemented when all data had been collated. Details of these procedures are given in **Appendix G**

<u>Questionnaire: data analysis</u>

All responses were collated in excel. All free text responses were transcribed verbatim and codified to identify thematic trends in responses. See Table 4.2 for details of the analysis approaches applied to each questionnaire question.

Table 4.2: Approach to analysis for each questionnaire question

Questions	Analysis/approach/data generated
1-4, 6, 9A/B, 16 A/B/C, 17, 18, 22	Collation and descriptive analysis (e.g.% of school types)
5, 11, 14, 15, 20, 21, 25, 26, 27	Collation, descriptive analysis and comparison to TALIS 2013
7	Year of opening/ becoming all-through collated
8	More than one response could be ticked. Responses collated and descriptive analysis
10, 12	Collation of binary responses
13	Verbatim transcription of free text responses. Responses coded
19	Collation and descriptive analysis. Verbatim transcription of any free text responses made. Responses coded
22-24	Free text responses transcribed verbatim and coded

Approaches to coding and analyzing free text responses in the questionnaire.

The three main questions in the questionnaire which had a third of a page devoted to each of them (questions 22-24) asked respondents to provide free text responses in relation to the challenges and opportunities experienced in all-through schools and invited respondents to list examples of effective all-through practice. Elsewhere in the questionnaire there were also some optional opportunities for respondents to provide additional information in free text format, if they wished to (e.g. question 13 in relation to their school's leadership structure).

In my analysis of the pilot data, I was able to pick out key themes fairly easily from the small number of responses (nine in total) and had created a rudimentary thematic coding framework. However, whilst I felt that this system had been adequate for a quick review of the pilot data, I believed it needed to be more methodologically robust, before I then applied it to my larger main study dataset. With hindsight, in my pilot I had, in some cases, skipped straight to assigning a theme to a response, rather than a code. Saldana (2016) distinguishes between themes and codes: 'a theme is an outcome of coding.' (Saldana, 2016, p15). He suggests that whilst we can talk of 'thematic analysis', coding is the act of assigning words, short phrases or long text, with the aim of capturing the essence of what was said or written. Themes emerge from the coding process, and the subsequent analysis (even if some themes may be very evident to the researcher from the very beginning). He also sees coding

as an iterative process, where coding is assigned initially and then refined or re-coded in cycles, as necessary.

When the questionnaire responses were collated, all free text responses were typed verbatim. Whilst this requires an investment of time, it allows a greater flexibility and reflexivity in the analysis process, as the raw data is captured permanently, but can be manipulated, cut and pasted, and revisited and even re-coded many times. Sapsford and Jupp (2006) recommend this approach because it also 'allows the various concepts that the respondents may have given in the answer to the question to be split up and allocated to different categories' (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006, p166). As I started my first coding cycle I felt that this was particularly helpful, as repondents would sometimes make more than one point in their answers and I needed to allocate two or three codes. It also enabled me to revisit the codes and even go back to the raw data, when necessary, in planning for stage two of the research and in then comparing findings from both stages of the research.

4.6 Stage Two: Case Research

Stage two of the research consisted of case study work in three all-through schools. Case study is a particularly apt approach to examine 'a contemporary phenomenon in its real-world context' (Yin, 2014, p2). In the case of all-through schools, as a new and growing phenomenon within the English state school system, I believe the context provided by each of the case study schools helps us to understand some of the 'why' and the 'how' of this development across the school system. By opting for a multiple-case design, where the methodological instruments and data collection are to a large extent replicated during the field work at each school, it could also lead to findings which may be considered, by some, as more compelling and robust than a single study design (Firestone and Herriott, 1984; Stake, 2006). However, my own epistemological stance means that I think that generalisation claims made even from multi-case research remain tentative.

Bassey (2007) talks about case studies in educational settings as 'leading to fuzzy general predictions' (p147). The notion of 'fuzzy' predictions resonates with my view of my research, as it links to the tentative nature of any generalistations made. Moreover, I think part of what I feel is compelling about the case study reports

(chapter seven) is the extent to which each is unique. My efforts to maintain a phenomenological approach and stay as close to the data and participants' words as possible, mean that I am trying to present the 'things themselves' (Willis, 2001). Simons (1996) believes that the drive for increased quantification in education research should not be allowed to detract from the new learning which can be derived from considering the unique, through case study. As detailed in 4.3, where I compare the findings across the cases, I am noting and reflecting upon points of *complementarity, convergence* and *divergence* (Morgan, 2019) rather than seeking triangulation or claiming cause and effect. Having considered the different types of case studies (Thomas, 2011), I would see my own as largely interpretative: this is what Thomas views as 'the classic approach to doing a case study' (p124), in that my intention was that my participants would be building theory with me during the research.

Tight (2010) considers the widespread use of case study in educational research and asks whether case study is a method, methodology or a strategy. His own view is that it is a research strategy to consider detailed examples of a given phenomenon. Verschuren (2003) also sees case study as a research strategy and believes that the term 'case research' might better describe approaches which are evolving in the social sciences. He acknowledges that within each piece of case research a number of methods will be used and these will have been selected by the researcher to consider the complexities of their area of focus. Brown (2008) also notes a lack of clarity around case study's methodological status. She reviews the case study literature and concludes that each researcher needs to be clear about their intent and research paradigm, to ensure their findings are not clouded by questions about the rationale for their use of case study. I believe that the explanations I have given of my research philosphy and epsitemological positioning are clear and aligned with how the research was conducted and the way my findings are framed.

As explained in 4.3, my case research forms part of a wider 'explanatory sequential design' (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011), where the second stage of the research explores in detail themes arising in the first stage. Simons (2009) writes about 'foreshadowing issues' before choosing the case, or starting the field work. She

observes that even when our epistemology demands that we keep an open mind, researchers inevitably start field work as well informed about the phenomena they wish to observe and with a view about what they might find. Therefore, it follows that researchers would select cases where they believe they will be able to find and best observe the facets they wish to study. In my research, the preparation for the case study element was foreshadowed not only by my prior knowledge and engagement with the literature, but also by the findings of the first stage of my research. The strategy and rationale used to select the case study schools is detailed in 4.7. The data gathering methods used in the research are summarised in Table 4.3 below and the case study instruments are considered in detail in the next sections.

Table 4.3: Summary of data gathering methods

Research Stage One	
Questionnaire sent to school leaders	
Examination of public domain/ national datasets	
Research Stage Two	
Case research in three schools	
Primary case research instruments	Semi-structured interviews (practitioner participants)
	Focus groups (student participants)
Supplementary case research instruments	Visual methods (within the focus groups)
	Observation

Case study instruments: semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interviews are one of the key sources of rich data within my research project and provide my largest dataset. Interviews are an often used and valued instrument in the educational researcher's toolkit (Ribbons, 2007). I opted for semi-structured interviews, because I wanted a balance between gathering data in a way which enables a degree of comparison between some participants and across case, but which has a strong emphasis on providing sufficient freedom for participants to narrate their lived experiences and to enable the conversation to flow in as natural a fashion as possible. The aim of my interviews was to be what Brinkman and Kvale (2015) describe as 'a semi-structured life world interview' (p31). To be consistent with my phenomenological aims I opted for thematic interview

schedules, which covered the areas of the research questions (see **Appendix H** for an example of an interview schedule). The schedules were refined in the light of the stage one findings, allowing me to focus closely on particular issues and themes. As Gillham (2005) notes, 'semi-structured interviewing is not a preliminary method: it has a developed focus on which it operates with a degree of precision' (Gillham, 2005, p 71).

During the semi-structured interviews I also needed to ask the right questions and respond in the moment, to ensure that I made the most of the opportunity of speaking with each participant. Dilley (2000) sees the skilled research interviewer as someone who listens intently and responds in the moment, to gather the richest responses from the interviewee. He likens the interview schedule to the path along which we want our participants to walk, inviting them to comment on what they see as the significant landmarks, as they journey. Roulston (2010) is clear that the semi-structured interview does not adhere strictly to a schedule and that ordering and content may vary between interviewees, depending upon the direction the interview discussion has taken. Dilley (2000) typifies a successful research interview as one where the participant to interviewer talk ratio is 80:20. Reflecting back upon my research interviews I think the particularly rich discussions were when my questions stimulated very extended narration from the participants.

Interviewing and the other 'in person' instruments are extremely time intensive. To make the most of this opportunity, I chose to record the interviews on digital dictaphones, which are both unobtrusive during the interview and allow for the instant saving of data as audio files. Following the interview, each audio was fully transcribed before detailed analysis began. There are obviously advantages and disadvantages to producing full transcripts, but there are two advantages listed by Opie (2004, p121) which seemed particularly pertinent to me and my research: the integrity of the data is preserved because all dialogue is captured, including the interviewer's contributions <u>and</u> the data can be re-analysed at a later date. The recording of an interview also captures all of the interviewer's utterances and the noises of the environment (school bell, student voices in a corridor etc.) This helped me to contextualise the interview when I listened back. Potter and Hepburn (2005) think that a problem which can arise from the use of interviews in social science

research, is that the interviewer's voice can be lost, which can lead to an over emphasis on particular things participants say, because the stimulus and context for their comments have been discarded. By using digital recordings and verbatum transription of the full conversation I have endeavoured to stay true to the participants' words and the context within which they were made.

In each school the final interview with the headteacher(s) was conducted several months after the main block of field work, and focused on the discussion of a draft visit report. I had written the report so that each school had a tangible product arising from their participation in the research, which I hoped would be valuable to them. The final interview allowed this key participant to revisit and reflect upon their own input and comment upon my emerging interpretation of data in the form of the summary report. This was intended to align with my phenomenological research philosophy and embed a signifcant 'member checking' (Stake, 1995, p115) element within the research design.

Case study instruments: Focus groups

In my M.Ed thesis (Price, 2012) I had drawn upon the work of McCluskey (2008) who had been studying pupils' perception of behaviour management in Scottish schools, through focus group research. I had adapted and used her stimulus activities from her focus group work in her research in my Master's study. I found that a real strength of having a structured discussion with negotiated outcomes, was that it helped the students to work in a truly collaborative way, discussing and if necessary moderating outlier views. My own experience echoed the view espoused by Kitzinger and Barbour, (which I also cited in my M.Ed thesis) that focus groups ensure that '..accounts are articulated, censured, opposed and changed through social interaction..' (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999, p5).

I believe that my experience as a long serving teacher and my thorough preparation enabled me to build a rapport with the participants and make the most of the opportunity to talk to them. Edmunds (1999) alludes to the skill needed to keep conversation flowing, while not unduly dominating or leading proceedings. Her context is the use of focus groups in market research, but her emphasis on the skill of the moderator is as valid in the educational research field, when working with

young people or children: moderators need to '..use a wide variety of techniques to draw out thoughtful, useful information from participants' (Edmunds, 1999, p84). Edmunds suggests polling, ranking and comparision games as good ways of engaging the group and achieving a group outcome. In my focus groups work at each case study school, the group had a range of activities which required discussion and sometimes a joint outcome which are discussed later in this chapter and in **Appendix I**.

I also feel passionately that educational research should have a strong student voice element, whenever possible. If we just stop to ask and listen, children and young people will offer us insightful reflections which can contribute powerfully to school improvement (Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007). As Rudduck, Chaplain and Wallace (1996) suggest, if we expect that children and young people will stay in education until their late teens, we owe it to them to 'take seriously' their 'accounts and evaluations of… learning and schooling' (Rudduck, Chaplain and Wallace, 1996, p.178). Of couse, we have to be prepared to hear things that we may not like, what McIntyre, Pedder and Rudduck (2005) called 'uncomfortable learnings'. I felt that if this research was to have integrity, it must engage actively with the pupils at each school and give weight to their views and observations. Kamberelis and Dimitradis (2013) discuss their belief that focus groups can recalibrate the power relationship between researcher and paticipants: 'focus groups can mitigate or inhibit the authority of the reseacher, allowing participants to 'take over' or 'own' the interview spaces, which can result in deeper understandings…'(p41).

Creating the right environment was important, I felt, in acknowledging and facilitating the child/young person's contribution to the research. Jones (2004) suggests viewing student participants like valued employees, who need training and support to do their best and I considered this in my preparation for, and conduct of, the focus groups. The students were invited to take part on the basis of having some experience of cross-phase activities (e.g. supported reading, drama workshops, cross-phase project days etc.) and were briefed about the research activities in advance. Hennessy and Heary (2006) state that many researchers choose to use focus groups with children and young people because it reduces pressure on individual participants and mitigates against feelings of being put on the spot. This was

certainly my experience, as individual participants could present as very quiet, but by operating as a group and in sub-groups, all were included and able to contribute. The focus groups had a maximum of eight students, with a balance of genders (if not always an even balance). Both secondary and primary phases had their own focus groups in each school, what Robson and McCartan (2016) term *homogenous* focus groups. This was to avoid age and confidence imbalances deterring full participation. In some of the schools there was an additional practical element, as primary and secondary children were in different buildings.

Focus Group activities:

In preparation for the field work I had planned that the focus groups would work through three activities, which were:

- Presentation and discussion of digital images
- Concentric circles
- Discussion cards

Activity one is described in the visual methods section. Activities two and three are adapted from McCluskey (2008). A description of these activities and the questions and prompts used are in **Appendix I**.

I also made a digital audio recording of each focus group. This allowed me the opportunity of re-listening to the discussions later as part of the analysis process. I feel this is an important addition to the focus group 'products' created at the time (e.g. the flipchart 'stickies'). As Foster (1996) observes, 'it is very difficult to observe and record simultaneously, and impossible to record all the sensory information coming in. Selection is inevitable' (Foster, 1996, p45). Digital recorders are very discrete, so the recording did not inhibit the natural flow of the observed activity or the participants interactions. Of course, the teacher/participants were aware that an audio recording was being made and the purpose and use of any recordings are covered in my ethics section and in the information and agreements undertaken with the case study schools. This combination of field produced artefacts and audio recordings is also advocated by Silverman (2006) who sees the two instruments as a complement, which allow for better retrospective analysis than a single method of recording what is observed/heard.

Case study instruments: Visual methods

The first focus group activity was the discussion of participant produced digital images. I was particularly keen to include the use of digital images as part of my research, even though this was an area which was new to me and is potentially fraught with ethical considerations. However, I was convinced that its inclusion could enhance the findings of the research and empower the student voice dimension of the project. At this point in the twenty-first century many young people and even young children are skilled at the production of digital images and in constructing images/media products, which convey multi-layered meaning. Lodge (2009) notes the disconnect between how images of children and young people are used in the public sphere (e.g. on social media), and in the extreme caution exercised by educational researchers. She advocates powerfully for the use of visual research, despite its inherent challenges, as a means to facilitate truly participatory research.

Discussion based around a participant made image has become a well used social science method, termed *photo-elicitation* (Rose, 2014). Rose (2014) also deems this method particularly suitable for work with childen and young people, as it may be a motivating factor in their choice to participate and is empowering. Marion and Crowder (2013) consider the impact of the near universality of mobile devices and the internet on visual research and conclude that the boundaries between researcher and participant are becoming blurred. Digital cameras/cameras on mobile phones/tablets etc. are now so widespread that they 'have become part of the common enthnographic toolkit.' (Marion and Crowder, 2013, p48).

I asked the schools to ensure the focus group participants had produced at least five images in advance of my visit, which sum up their school and would tell me something about it as an all-through school. To enable the participants to explain the intended meaning of their images and to ensure that I did not attribute an unintended meaning to the images, the first activity in the focus group was to tell me about their pictures and explain what they were hoping to show me and the group. This links to my approach in the semi-structured interviews and draws on the thoughts of Galletta (2013) about asking the participants to co-construct meaning and interpretation, by encouraging them to explain their contributions.

In the early days of visual methods there were issues around the power relationship between the researcher, who was usually the person making the images and those being researched and 'captured' in the images. In recent years, there has been a move towards research which is both participatory in ethos and which mirrors the democratisation of media-making in wider society, through the proliferation of new technologies and the exponential rise in user-made content online. Mitchell (2011) describes a wide range of twenty-first century research projects as examples, which are participatory in ethos, and require participants to create and annotate their own images, videos or installations. She notes the wide diversity of approaches to and realisations of visual research, but feels there is a 'constant',, in that there is always 'some aspect of the visual as a mode of inquiry and representation, and as a mode of dissemination and engagement' (Mitchell, 2011, p5).

Images which show children and young people needed a carefully considered consent process before publishing as part of my research and the vast majority of images produced are not included as part of this final thesis. That only a small number of images made during the research process are ever published, is typical of the use of photo-elicitation in research (Rose, 2014). I was struck by how examples cited by Mitchell (2011) ensured that the ownership of the images stayed primarily with participants, which I endeavoured to achieve. For example, I focused on the partcipants' explanations and interpretations of their images as the main data source for analysis, rather than the images themselves. In some cases the students arrived with pictures on their own mobile devices, which I do not have a copy of. In other cases the school provided me with either the digitial images or a hardcopy print out of the images. In all cases, I have the audio recording and written transcript of the students describing and discussing their image. Wall, Higgins, Hall and Woolner (2003) argue for the inclusion of visual data in mixed methods studies, but urge researchers to consider how the analysis of the images and subsequent findings are to be synthesised with other findings. I believe that my treatment of the visual data as part of my analysis strategy (section 4.8) provides a logical rationale, which enables the findings to be synthesised with those of the other research instruments.

The BERA (2015) guidelines took account of the proliferation of new technologies, digital media and social media. During the course of my research, these were

superseded by the BERA (2018) guidelines, which explore these areas further. As Thomson (2008) acknowledges, these now ubiquitous technologies provide both tremendous opportunties for educational and participatory research, but also require particularly carefully considered participant guidelines. BERA (2018) recommends that serious consideration is given to where images/video/audio materials are published and in making sure that participants are fully aware of the purpose and audience of any images/media in which they appear. I was clear in communication, in writing and in person, that the digital images and audio recordings would be used solely for the purposes of research.

Case study instruments: Observations

When I initially considered research instruments, I had discounted observations. I believe that this reluctance stemmed from my professional experience of the use and, arguably, the abuse of teaching observations in teacher appraisal and in OFSTED inspections. Foster (1996) validates this concern to an extent, by noting that observational enquiry has become much more widespread in schools since the 1980s, but that very often it is carried out in relation to teacher professional appraisal and OFSTED inspections, rather than for educational research purposes. However, on reflection, I also felt it would be a huge opportunity missed to visit three other schools and not take the time to look at what is going on in classrooms and assembly halls etc., in order to see the all-through working lived in a real life context. Cotton, Stokes and Cotton (2010) argue that 'post hoc' methods such as questionnaires used to consider the learner's experiences have the limits of possible selectivity and after the event rationalisation. They suggest observational methods as a complement to other approaches, which enable the researcher to 'see, first hand, the kinds of interactions which take place' (Cotton, Stokes and Cotton, 2010, p 465).

I consider that ethical dilemmas related to observing in schools and lessons as falling into two categories: those relating to teachers/adults in the setting and those relating to the children/young people. The main concern in relation to teachers and other adults is not to add to their stress levels or workload, by your presence. One of the ways of avoiding this is by being clear that no judgement is being made about their performance. This was made clear in advance of my visits and hopefully helped to allay any anxieties. Simpson and Tuson (2003, p62) believe that steps taken in

reducing the level of threat helped to make the process more natural for both the observee and the researcher. I would agree and certainly had the impression that the colleagues I came across during my field work were comfortable having me in their classrooms/schools. Consideration of ethical practice in relation to children and young people is covered in section 4.4.

What I chose to observe during the field visits were examples of teachers working across phase and children/students engaged in learning activities across phase and/or cross-phase projects. Having considered the range of approaches, I quickly discounted having a highly systematic observation schedule, as the aim of this aspect of my research was not to judge or quantify what I saw. I decided upon devising my own observation schedule proforma (**Appendix J**) which captured overview information about the observation (e.g. date/time/age of learners/numbers present etc.), but then mostly took the form of structured fields notes or a 'narrative' observation schedule (Simpson & Tuson 2003): this flexible format seemed ideally suited to my research needs as 'narrative systems are used to obtain detailed descriptions of interactions or events without starting from pre-specified categories..' (Simpson & Tuson, 2003, p49). I also wanted a schedule which would reflect that the observations were a *supplementary method* (Robson and McCartan, 2016), allowing the observation notes to be mapped and synthesized with the other datasets. Whilst by the very nature of less structured fields notes there is not a definitive list of things which should be recorded on the observation schedule, my suggested schedule conforms to the key areas suggested by many social science researchers, synthesized and summarized by Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2011, p466-467): records kept of location, participants, their actions, their interactions, their views and the activities taking place.

<u>Piloting of case study instruments</u>

I piloted the case study instruments in my own school, by interviewing teachers, observing cross-phase practice and by conducting student focus groups and some visual methods work with students. The pilot work in summer of 2017 also allowed me to trial approaches to data analysis, which were then further developed for the main study (see section 4.8). A practical change that I made to the interview schedule ahead of the main field work, was to group questions about specific topics

together and to have the topic heading clear, in larger text (see **Appendix H**). This enabled me to glance down to the schedule to keep track of topics covered. This also enabled me to move on to cover key areas, when time was running short. My adaptations made to some instruments in the field, in response to circumstances I faced such as reduced time, are considered in section 4.9.

4.7 Sampling Strategy

Selection of the case study schools

The public domain data considered covered all all-through schools listed as such in Janauary 2017 on *Edubase.* The research questionnaire was sent to all all-through schools in England, with the hope of as high a return rate as possible, to provide me with a wide sample. In actuality, the return rate of 28 percent (42 schools) was at the upper end of a typical response (Shih and Fan, 2008, Nardi, 2018) and the schools who had self selected to take part proved to be reasonably representative of all-through schools as a whole (see chapter five). My case study selection took place after the first stage of my research (the school questionnaire) had been administered and analysed. From the outset, it was intended that the questionnaire should not only aid case study selection in a practical way (as headteachers could express interest in their schools becoming a case study school on the final page of the questionnaire) but in that the findings would help to inform the case study selection and aid the refinement of the areas of enquiry for the field visits.

24 headteachers had indicated on their questionnaire responses that they would be prepared for their school to be a case study. I knew that case study selection needed to be determined according to a robust logic and appropriately theorised, and so returned to the case study literature to help me to determine my approach to reducing the 24 possible schools to three. Simons (2009) states that some case researchers have considered the notion of typicality as a 'holy grail' (Simons, 2009, p30). However, she argues that in reality each case will be unique, even if it shares commonalities with other cases. Both Stake (1995) and Thomas (2011) are somewhat sceptical about the notion of typicality as a leading factor in case study selection, considering it as not necessarily illuminating (Stake 1995) and difficult to define and defend (Thomas 2011).

Given the literature had guided me to thinking I was searching for something more specific than the notion of typicality, I carefully considered a number of factors. Whilst I was clear I would not be claiming my cases were typical, I firstly eliminated five schools which I considered to outliers or very *untypical*. Four were former independent schools which had become state funded in recent years by becoming free schools. The fifth had very small student numbers and was a Steiner free school. Whilst each would have been a fascinating study in its own right, I felt that my research focus in this project lay within the mainstream of English state education.

My next step in selection was to eliminate a further five schools on the basis that they did not (yet) have learners from EYFS to KS4 or had very low overall student numbers. Following the two sifting stages I was left with 14 schools which fulfilled my student number and age distribution criteria. All had learners in each key stage from EYFS to KS4 and all had total student numbers of over 600. Simons (2009) advises that rather than seeking the typcial, it may be more fruitful to ask '..what will yield the most understanding..' (Simons, 2009, p30). I found this question helped me enormously to move forward in my thinking. The final 14 were a mix of LA community schools, stand alone academies, members of MATs and free schools. For multiple case studies Yin (2014) suggests applying replication logic rather than sampling logic. My 'replication' was a theoretical one: to now select schools on the basis of their 'all-through-ness.' I theorized that schools which were full in all year groups and had been all-through schools for the longest period of time, would have much to offer in terms of following up on my areas of enquiry. Stake (2006) also suggests the selection of cases based upon the *prominence* of the phenomenon of interest. I therefore ranked the remaining schools based on the year they opened or became an all-through school. The profiles of the three schools ranked highest on this system are summarized in Table 4.4:

Table 4.4: Table to show the case study schools selected in autumn 2017

School	**School type**	**Year became all-through**	**NoR**
72	Academy	2004	1913
35	Academy/MAT	2008	1802
102	Academy/MAT	2008	1069

*NoR = number on roll

This also provided me with a ranked 'shortlist' of other schools to approach, if any of my three selected case study schools decided they did not now wish to participate in the research. The school number relates to the number of the questionnaire the headteacher had completed in stage one and became a useful way of identifying schools whilst protecting their anonymity. However, as I moved into the second stage of the research, the case study schools became known as Schools A, B and C.

Field work started in School A in December 2017 and was on-going in Schools A and B up until July 2018. I had been expecting to start work in School C in June 2018, but the school had to withdraw from the research and informed me at the beginning of June that it would no longer be able to take part. I then contacted the school which was ranked fourth according to my selection criteria and was very fortunate that they agreed to join the study. Due to the timings of the school holidays and the commitments of the busy examination season, it was agreed that I would carry out the main bulk of the field work in October 2018 and the final interview with leaders at School C took place in March 2019. The final selection of participating schools is detailed in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Table to show the final selection of case study schools in summer 2018

School	School type	Year became all-through	NoR
A	Academy	2004	1913
B	Academy/MAT	2008	1802
C	Academy/MAT	2009	1850

*NoR = number on roll

Sample of teachers to be interviewed and/or observed

When arranging the visits, I specifically asked to meet teachers and leaders who were 'boundary spanners' (Richter et al., 2006; Wenger, 1998), i.e. who were working across the primary/secondary divide. I asked the case study schools to ask teachers meeting this criterion to volunteer to be interviewed for the research and/or to have all-through activities they are involved in observed. Therefore, the samples of participants were 'purposive', in that teachers had been selected because of their experience and/or knowledge (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p76). In some cases

this also led to an 'exploratory' sample (Denscombe, 2010, p24), involving staff who have been at the forefront of the development of the all-through school's cross-phase working. The school was best placed to approach the appropriate staff to recruit them as research participants. However, as is detailed in the ethics section, all participants were voluntary and had the right to withdraw at any stage. Examples of the communication with schools ahead of the field work visits are in **Appendix K.**

Sample of children/young in the focus groups

I gave each school tailored guidelines about my preferred composition of each of the student focus groups (a primary and a secondary group in each school). I had asked for a balance of ages and gender. In Schools A and B I specifically asked that the majority of students in the secondary focus group were from the all-through cohort. Following those discussions and after reflecting upon emerging findings, in School C I specifically asked that the group also include some students who were not from the all-through cohort, so that their perspective could be captured too.

In reality, student selection was the aspect of the research sampling I had the least control over and had to entrust each school with finding willing, appropriate partcipants. This is not unusual in case research: Plowright (2011) observes where the case unit is an organisation, such as a school, there may then be limited control over individual participants, even if there has been a high degree of control over the selection of the organisation.

4.8 Case Study Analysis Plan and Rationale

At the end of my field work I had a large data corpus to organise and analyse. The research participants and case study data corpus are summarised in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Case study data corpus

School	Participants/research activity	Data gathered
A	Principal and deputy principal (primary) – interview	Audio /transcript (1 hour 12 mins)
	Teacher of Spanish – interview	Audio /transcript (21 mins)
	Head of MFL – interview	Audio/ transcript (37 mins)

	Assistant head (transition) and deputy principal (Primary)	Audio/ transcript (43 mins)
	Observation – year nine and year five joint English lesson	Field notes Lesson materials Work samples
	Primary student focus group	Audio/ transcript (28 mins) ‘Stickies’ of students’ ideas Individual written responses Digital images taken by students
	Secondary student focus group	Audio/ transcript (35 mins) ‘Stickies’ of students’ ideas Individual written responses
	Principal – final interview	Audio /transcript (1 hour 2 mins)
B	Principal – interview	Audio /transcript (51 mins)
	Primary head - interview	Audio /transcript (24 mins)
	Assistant head and head of year seven – interview	Audio/ transcript (36 mins)
	Primary head (free school) - interview	Audio/ transcript (21 mins)
	Parent governor	Audio/ transcript (21 mins)
	Observation - primary assembly	Field notes
	Observation – German parade	Field notes
	Observation – Year two German lessons (two classes)	Field notes
	Observation – year four music lesson	Field notes
	Primary student focus group	Audio/ transcript (28 mins) ‘Stickies’ of students’ ideas Individual written responses
	Secondary student focus group	Audio/ transcript (46 mins) ‘Stickies’ of students’ ideas

		Individual written responses Digital images taken by students
	Principal – final interview	Audio /transcript (1 hour 3 mins)
C	Tour with year seven students	Field notes Digital images of the building
	Head of primary and secondary – interview	Interview notes
	Head of primary and secondary – interview	Audio /transcript (19.27 mins)
	Assistant head, teacher of mathematics - interview	Audio /transcript (33 mins)
	Assistant head (transition)	Audio/ transcript (32.53mins)
	Head of engineering	Audio/ transcript (20.42 mins)
	Observation of year six pupils in engineering	Field notes
	Secondary student focus group	Audio/ transcript (48.48 mins) 'Stickies' of students' ideas Individual written responses Digital images taken by students
	Primary mathematics leader	Audio/ transcript (24.09 mins)
	Head of art and primary art leader	Audio/ transcript (36.36 mins)
	Assistant head and KS1 Leader	Audio/ transcript (35.24 mins)
	Tour of primary building with year six students	Field notes Digital images of the building
	Primary student focus group	Audio/ transcript (33 mins) 'Stickies' of students' ideas Some images/artefacts given to me during the discussion
	Informal group discussion with sixth formers	Audio/ transcript (10.26 mins)
	Heads of primary and secondary – final interview	Audio /transcript (50.32 mins)

After each field work visit I immediately spent time saving, organising and curating my data. Audio-files were backed up in several places, documents were filed and poster/post-it activities were photographed. Where respondents had provided handwritten responses (e.g. items from the focus group) these were also typed up and collated. Audio-files were then sent to a professional transcriber (the same person who inputted some of the questionnaire data). The typed transcriptions were sent back to me. I then checked and cleaned these data, by checking the transcript against the audio recording. Very rarely I made a correction in the written transcript, usually in relation to an educational acronym or language usage particular to education (e.g. the transcriber had written 'game time' which I corrected to 'gained time'). The data were then ready for analysis.

In addition, for each case study I produced a detailed data summary for each case study (see **Appendix L**), which helped me to write a report for each school, which was discussed during the final interview with the headteacher.

Analysis of case study data

The analysis techniques which were applied to each of the datasets generated during the case research are detailed in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Table to show analysis techniques applied to each case study dataset

Research method	**Data generated**	**Analysis Technique**	**Product of Analysis/ outcome**
Semi-Structured interviews	Audio files Transcripts	IPA	Clustered themes for each interview
Focus Groups	Audio files Transcripts Digital images 'Stickies'	IPA Themes identified	Clustered themes for each focus group Links made to IPA clustered themes

	Individual written responses to prompts	Themes identified	Links made to IPA clustered themes
Observation	Field notes Digital images Student work	Key aspects of the observations identified Cross referencing with Interviews/focus groups findings	Links made to IPA clustered themes
School documents	Department/phase documents	Key aspects identified Cross reference with interview/focus group findings/observations	Links made to IPA clustered themes

<u>Analysis of semi-structured interviews and focus group data: approaches adapted from IPA</u>

Qualitative researchers have an array of analysis methods to choose from and approaches chosen need to be aligned with the research philosophy and intent. I chose to use IPA in this part of my research over other techniques for a number of reasons. Firstly, I felt that there was a strong alignment between my aims and intentions and those of IPA. Tuffour (2017) asserts that IPA aims to provide detailed and nuanced analysis of the lived experiences of participants. I was also drawn to the focus that IPA has on the individual. Its commitment to idiography means that analysis starts from the participant's words and themes are constructed from them.

By far the largest part of my entire research data corpus were the audio-files and written transcripts of the semi-structured interviews and focus groups in the case

study schools. In total I had approximately 17 hours of recorded speech and hundreds of pages of typed transcripts. I felt it was crucial to the integrity of the research, and to respecting the participants' commitment to the research, to ensure that these data were analysed in a very meticulous and robust way. I was conscious that 'close to practice research' is sometimes criticized for a lack of methodological and analytical rigour (Wyse, Brown, Oliver and Poblete, 2018) and wanted to make sure that this aspect of my project was sound and thorough. However, I also felt that a mechanistic coding approach, or strict frequency counting, were not in the spirit of the phenomenological philosophy of the research. My aspiration was to tell my participants' story and, therefore, my analysis needed to be firmly grounded in the respondents' actual words. After deep consideration, I decided that applying the main principles of IPA to my analysis of audios/transcripts, would enable me to be true to the contributions of my participants, aligned well with my research philosophy and was a very robust and systematic approach.

IPA is actually a methodology in itself, rather than simply an analysis tool. It was developed in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century and has been developed and championed extensively by Jonathan A Smith, Professor at Birkbeck, University of London (Smith and Osborn, 2008; Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2012). His field is social/ qualitative psychology, where the technique has been widely used, as it has been in the field of healthcare research. The IPA process is a 'double hermeneutic or dual interpretation process' (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2012, p362): the participants narrate and make sense of their own experience, which the researcher endeavours to understand, interpret and respond to with a degree of criticality.

Smith and Osborn (2008) suggest the stages of IPA can be refined and adapted by the individual researcher to meet their particular needs, but in essence the steps taken in analysis are:

- immersion in the data: multiple listening and reading of the transcripts
- initial free notes made by the researcher
- a second stage of researcher written response, where themes are noted
- the listing of all themes in the transcript
- clustering linked themes together, under over-arching themes

In my own adaptation of IPA I created a template in word. The verbatim transcripts were pasted into the template. Key words and phrases were highlighted. There were two further margins, where the second and third stages of the analysis were recorded. The listing and clustering of themes were then carried out at the end of the same document (see **Appendix M**).

I had been heartened to read that Smith and Osborn (2008) felt that individual researchers would adapt the approach to meet the needs of their studies. Some of my adaptations were relatively minor. Firstly, Smith and Osborn (2008) suggest working in two margins, one on the left and one on the right of the transribed text. In my template I had two margins on the right, simply because I found it easier to work that way. Secondly, in IPA the second stage of researcher annotation tends to be at a higher level of abstraction than the first. I found I often wrote the same comment at the second stage or wrote slightly more (making the comment or idea clearer for a reader). I think this was for several reasons. I was already very familiar with my data before working within the template, having generated/read/listened to the audios many times and having already extracted key ideas to produce a visit report for each of the schools. I think, therefore, that my 'first' responses on the IPA template were already very focused. I also think that often the next level of abstraction/reduction really came when I organised the themes into clustered themes, later in the process. (See **Appendix M**).

I think that it is important to say that my research, as a mixed methods project, would not be seen as and does not claim to be an IPA study. IPA studies are conceived as such from the outset and typically have between six and eight participants. Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012) state that a study with 15 participants would be at the very upper end of sample size in IPA, as detail and idiography are so important in this method. What I have undertaken in the second stage of my research has a slightly wider sample of individuals, but is using IPA's staged approach to transform the data into themes. I am also very closely aligned to IPA in terms of my reflexivity and in considering that the meaning making goes beyond that that is achieved with the participant, as the researcher's analysis is ultimately an interpretative process (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008).

Many of the traditional IPA studies focus on homogenous samples of individuals, likely to be experiencing a phenomenon from the same perspective: for example, those receiving the same medical therapy. However, as the application of IPA across a range of social sciences is growing and it is also developing. Larkin, Shaw, & Flowers (2019) explore the value of multi-perspectival designs, as an innovation within IPA research. They point to a growing number of more complex designs, particularly within healthcare research, which synthesise mulitple perspectives, whilst still maintaining their commitment to idiography and rigour in their analyses. My own research is multiperspectival, because leaders and practitioners at different schools and at different levels of the organisation where interviewed. The inclusion of the student focus groups also offers an insight into the experience of the learner within the system, which is a completely different perspective to that of practitioners/leaders. Therefore, I feel that my adaptions of IPA and my inclusion of some if its analysis techniques are very much in the spirit of emerging multiperspectival research designs. Larkin, Shaw, and Flowers (2019) assert that a multiperspectival approach can lead to 'strong and persuasive analytic accounts', and this was certainly my intention in my research design.

Visual methods: analysis

There are many ways to approach the analysis of visual data, including approaches which seek to analyse the content of the images and psycho-analytical approaches (Rose, 2014). In my research, by asking the students to make the digital images, they became in effect partners in the research. The ethos of this strand of the research is participatory and therefore my analysis of the images is through what the students *say* about their image, rather than through content analysis of the images themselves. What I am analysing is the accompanying audio recording and transcript of what the children/young people themselves say about their images: as discussed earlier, that *they* lead the interpretation and meaning making. Rose (2014) confirms that in analysis of *photo-elicitation* many researchers will apply conventional social science analytical techniques to the transcript of the discussion. The principles of IPA were used in the analysis of the transcripts of the children/young people discussing their self-made images as part of the focus group discussions.

Observations: data anaylsis

The notes produced in the field using my observation schedule (**Appendix J**) provide the basis for findings. The key points from observations appear in the form of descriptive narratives within the findings for each school, in chapter seven, which tend to concentrate on what children and young people and the adults in the setting were doing during the observation and/or their perception of the activity. The observation findings contribute to the overall case research analysis in that they are mapped against themes which emerge through the IPA analysis of the interviews and focus groups and are discussed in the case reports when those themes are considered. This is consistent with my use of observation as a *supplementary* method (Robson and McCartan, 2016), which complements the data generated by the primary case research methods of semi-structured interview and focus group.

Other forms of data and their analysis

During the field work I collected other forms of data, such as: students' written responses to prompts in the focus groups (a starter activity while we were waiting for everyone to arrive), post-it notes and documents given to me, such as schemes of work and project plans. These data were also read, re-read many times and given close attention. Often the document provided additional explanation of something which had been mentioned in an interview or was an example of practice which had been discussed. Where appropriate, links were made to interviews/focus groups findings on the IPA templates and to specific themes and clustered themes. Even in a study which uses IPA as its sole methodology, data need not be confined to interviews (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). All forms of data are reflected in the case study findings and were mapped in the data summaries (see **Appendix L**)

From analysis to story: in-case and cross-case analysis

In all, I analysed approximately 17 hours of conversation, across 20 interviews and six focus groups. I estimate for that for every 60 minutes of audio recording I spent three full days on the IPA work on the transcript. As I have explained, IPA is ideal for studies with a small number of participants and the scale of my work is at the edge of what IPA can be applied to, simply because it is so labour intensive. However, I feel the rigour applied to the analysis and the detailed focus on the actual words spoken by the participants were exactly right for my study. I particularly liked

how in the final stage of analysis key quotations from participants are filed under clustered themes on the template, making it easier to write the thick description in the case study reports and to keep that narrative firmly rooted in the actual words of the participants (see **Appendix M**).

The distillation of responses down to overarching clustered themes and a further distillation down to broader topics enabled comparision between participants and cross-case comparison, which helped to generate the bones of my story. For example, Figure 4.4 shows the clustered and over-arching themes identified through IPA from the semi-structured interviews with adult participants at School A. The figure maps individual participants to clustered themes, which are in turn are mapped to broader topics.

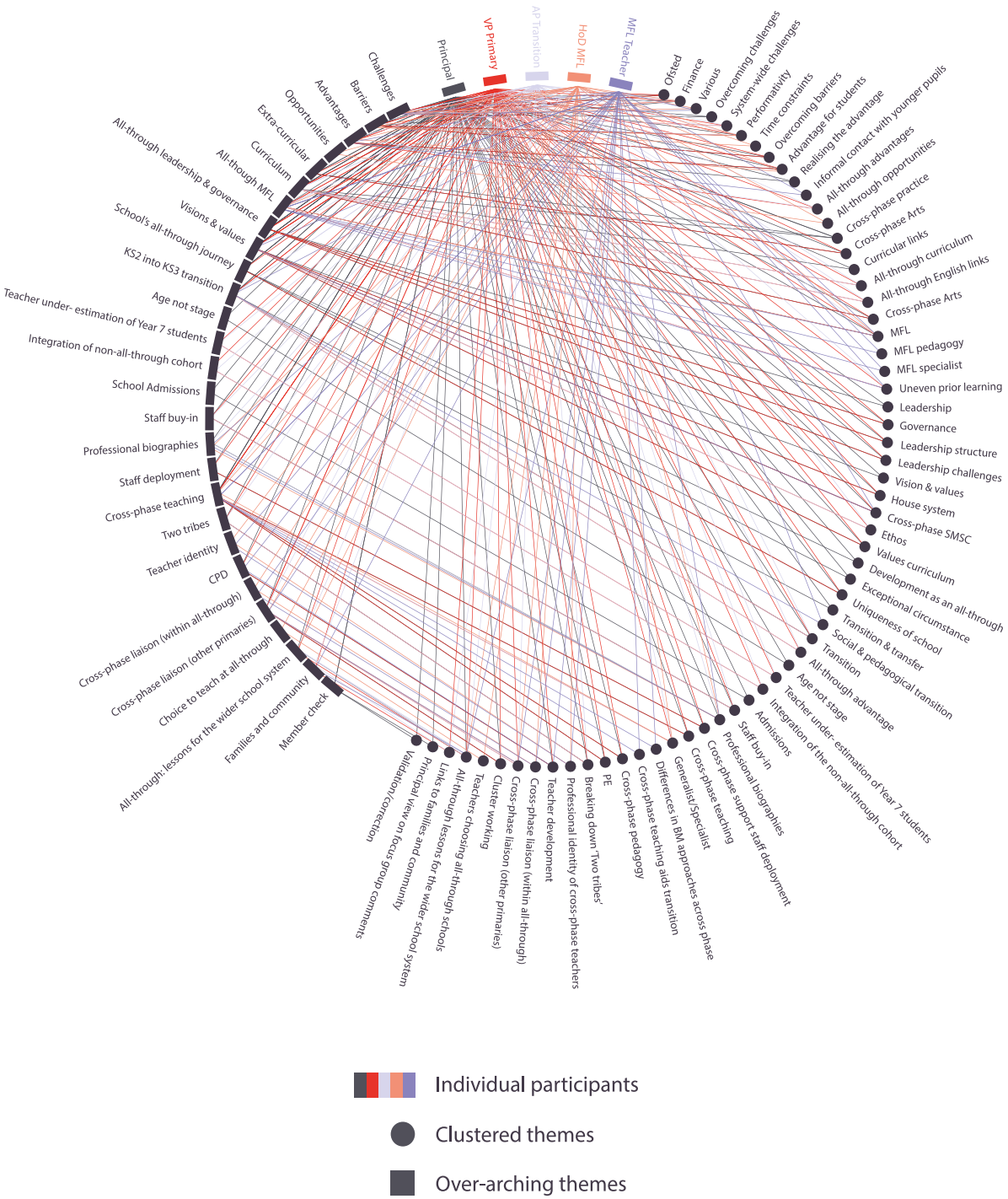


Figure 4.4: School A individual participants mapped to the clustered and over-arching themes generated by data analysis

After the analysis process was concluded the supplementary data sources were distilled and mapped against the IPA clustered themes, to provide a summary of responses by topic. These responses were then collated onto data-files which were compared with responses to the same topic prompts from participants at the other case study schools. The clustered themes and over-arching themes also allowed a comparison with stage one findings. A high-level overview of cross-case findings, and of how the findings at each research stage combine to answer research questions, is presented in chapter eight.

4.9 Researching in the field

Decision making in the field

The area where I found I had to make the most adjustments to planned activities in the field was in relation to the focus groups. In one school at the start of the session, the accompanying member of staff informed me that the children had to go back for their lunch in 30 minutes, when I had planned an hour's activity. This meant I had to conduct an abridged version of the discussions, trying to concentrate on covering some of the main topics. In another school, the primary focus group arrived, having not been given the opportunity to make their digital images. In that case we went straight on to the next activity. I also found that some of the rooms we were given did not lend themselves to the planned movement required for the concentric circles activity (swapping partners). Where this was the case, students worked with the same partner or small group. I had anticipated that not all students might arrive at once and so had a sheet ready for students to complete as a starter activity, gathering some of their views ahead of the discussion (**Appendix N**). This not only worked well in terms of managing the waiting time to be able to start the discussion, but also provided some rich responses and ideas, which were not always stated in the conversations that followed.

During my field work I also had to contend with the loss of one of my interview audio-files. This was as the result of human error, as I inadvertently deleted the file while trying to back it up. I immediately typed up notes under the question headings, to record the interview to the best of my recollection. I was fortunate that this happened on day one of field work, where I was scheduled to be at the school for day two the next day. The participants (two people) were kind enough to meet me again and

conduct a shorter interview, where we discussed my notes and whether I had captured the main points they wished to convey.

Ethical issues in the field

As I have detailed in section 4.4, I had no major ethical concerns during my field work. However, I did experience a section of conversation with one participant, which made me feel a little uncomfortable. This was during an interview with a middle leader where the participant asked me my opinion about an aspect of school policy (not related to the research). I stated that it was not my role to comment and tried to redirect the conversation back to the interview schedule. However, the participant continued to press me for an opinion, stating that as a headteacher and a doctoral candidate I would have an interesting and informed view. I was very non-committal in my response, as it became clear that it was an aspect of school policy the participant was unhappy about and I did not want my view used to undermine the leadership of the school. I believe that this is an example of the kind of situational ethical dilemma discussed by Drake and Heath (2011). Whilst I was not researching in my own school, I think the conversation arose from the participant seeing me in my professional role, rather than as an independent researcher.

Similarly, but less specifically, there were occasions when I interviewed staff who seemed unaware of, or were 'off-message' in terms of initiatives going on at the school or particular areas of focus. Had I been in the school in a different role, for example as an educational consultant, I might have wanted to feed back these inconsistencies to the school leaders. However, I was very clear that in my role as researcher, it was not my place to interfere. It was also essential in terms of protecting my participants that their confidentiality was fully respected (BERA, 2018). I hoped that this was balanced by my offering some benefit to school leaders through the production of an overall visit report, which summarised findings and offered reflections about how they might build upon their current all-through practice.

5. A view across the landscape: stage one research findings

5.1 Data sources and points of comparison

This chapter presents the findings of the research questionnaire administered in spring/summer 2017. 42 questionnaires were returned between the start of March and the end of May 2017 (a 28 percent response rate). Details of the analysis approaches and techniques used are given in chapter four. Findings are expressed in the form of descriptive numerical data generated from most questions and from the themes identified in the free text responses. A full copy of the research questionnaire is provided in **Appendix D.** An overview of questionnaire findings sent as a research newsletter to participants is included in **Appendix O** and a description of participant contact and dissemination activities, which followed the questionnaire being administered, is given in chapter six.

In addition to the quantitative data generated by the stage one research questionnaire I also spent some time using public domain data to help me to build a contextual narrative about all-through schools. Considering data which was easily accessible in the public domain allowed me to look at all all-through schools to help build a picture of some of their characteristics, and to form a view about how the 28 percent of all-through schools that completed the questionnaire related to the 72 percent that did not participate. From *Edubase* I was able to build up a picture of the types of schools which were all-through and the regions where these schools are located. I looked up the 2017 Ofsted judgements for the all-through schools listed on *Edubase* and considered the headline school performance data (KS2 and KS4 results) for these schools from summer 2017.

A number of questions in the questionnaire were adapted from the TALIS 2013 international survey (OECD, 2014). This enabled me to use some questions and question designs which had been developed and refined in a larger scale international survey and also enabled me to be able to compare my findings with those of English headteacher participants in TALIS 2013. In 2013, 154 English headteachers and 2,496 teachers took part in the TALIS survey (Mickelwright, et al., 2014). I consider that the comparison with TALIS 2013 was of benefit at this first

stage of the research and that identifying points of convergence and divergence adds additional perspective to my findings. Where I discuss points of alignment and divergence between my own findings and TALIS, these are made on the basis of comparing descriptive statistics; as my sample size was relatively small, significance testing was not applied. The TALIS 2013 data I have used most often as a point of comparison are the TALIS survey results of headteachers in lower secondary schools in England. I considered this to be the 'best fit' as a comparator, as the primary headteacher data would not have surveyed leaders working in institutions of the scale of all-through schools.

I am clear that I am not attempting to assign huge significance to a relatively small-scale survey and its inter-relation with the TALIS 2013 findings. It is now nearly three years since my questionnaire data was generated and it has been over six years since TALIS 2013. In reality, both datasets provide a snapshot of the activities and attitudes of headteachers at that time: no more, no less. The purpose of the comparisons with my research has been to contexualise the findings of the stage one research questionnaire.

Key findings from each questionnaire question are shared in this chapter. Table 5.1 signposts where findings for specific questions can be found.

Table 5.1: Questionnaire questions mapped to findings sections

Questionnaire questions	Findings
Questions 1 - 9	Section 5.3
Questions 10 - 15	Section 5.6
Questions 16 - 17	Section 5.7
Questions 18	Section 5.8/Appendix S
Questions 19 - 21	Section 5.9
Questions 22	Section 5.10
Questions 23 - 24	Section 5.11
Questions 25 - 27	Section 5.2

5.2 Demographic profile of the respondent group

School leader characteristics and professional experience

The questions intended to gather information to create a profile of the school leaders were placed at the end of the questionnaire. The idea had been that some people do not like to give personal information, even with assurances that all findings are anonymized. This assumption was borne out in reality, as 13 respondents chose not to answer the question asking for their age and two did not specify their gender. The TALIS 2013 findings are used in this section as a comparator, to help gauge how similar or 'typical' my respondent group were in terms their demographic and professional profiles.

Headteacher gender

Of those answering (40 respondents), the gender split was almost exactly one third female and two thirds male. The TALIS 2013 findings for England had 38 percent of lower secondary headteachers as female. Therefore, the headteacher sample in this research broadly reflects the gender balance in secondary school leadership in general in England.

Headteacher age profile

Of those giving their age (29 respondents) the average age was 49.7 and the distribution of ages was as follows:

- 60s 11%
- 50s 48%
- 40s 30%
- 30s 11%

These findings are also broadly in line with TALIS 2013, where the average age of the English headteacher respondents was also 49 and the distribution of ages is very similar.

Headteacher qualification profile

Respondents were also asked to specify the highest level of formal education they had completed. 40 leaders answered this question and the findings are shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Headteacher education profile: all-through respondents compared to TALIS 2013 respondents

	Highest level of formal education			
	No degree	Bachelors	Masters	PhD
All-through respondents Spring 2017	0	50	47.5	2.5
English lower secondary headteachers TALIS 2013	1	49	48	2

Given that these findings are almost identical to TALIS 2013, the qualification profile for headteachers of all-through schools seems to be the same as for those leading in stand-alone secondary settings. The findings also mirror TALIS 2013 in that half of the English headteachers surveyed hold a higher degree.

5.3 The characteristics of all-through schools

School type

Whilst all-through schools are a very small proportion of the schools in the state system, the diversity of schools which have chosen all-through configurations is striking and includes: academies; free schools; local authority maintained schools; former independent schools; Steiner schools and schools with a religious foundation (Catholic, Church of England, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh). The school types of all-through schools, nationally and in this research, are shown in Tables 5.3 and 5.4.

Table 5.3: All-through schools by school type in January 2017

School type	% All-through schools*
Academy (Converter)	19
Academy (Sponsor led)	38
Community School (Local Authority)	10
Foundation School	4
Free School	23
Voluntary Aided	5
Voluntary Controlled	1

- Source *Edubase* January 2017

Table 5.4: All-through schools represented in the stage one sample, by school type

School type	% of respondent schools
Academy	24
Academy/MAT	28
Academy/VA	2.5
Community School (LA)	16.5
Foundation School	2.5
Free School	16.5
Free School/MAT	5
Voluntary Aided	5

The categorization of academies is slightly different in the two datasets, as *Edubase* differentiates between converter and sponsored academies. In my questionnaire, I differentiated between stand-alone academies (which tend to be converter academies) and those which are part of a MAT (which includes sponsored academies). If the different types of academy are added together (which eliminates this variance in categorization), it demonstrates that the questionnaire sample was broadly similar to the national picture for all-through schools in 2017 in terms of school type, with 76 percent of respondent schools being in the academy and free school sector (80 percent in the national dataset). 27 percent of all-through schools have a faith designation (percent breakdown: 73 no faith designation; 22 Christian; 3 Sikh; 1 Hindu; 1 Muslim).

Location of all-through schools in England

Table 5.5: Location of all-through schools in England in 2017

RSC Region	% *All all-through Schools N = 150	% Research Survey Sample N = 42
East Midlands	8	7
East	4	10
London	30.5	19
North East	5	7
North West	8	10
South East	13	7
South West	12	16.5
West Midlands	8.5	7

York & Humber	11	16.5

*Source *Edubase* January 2017

Table 5.5 shows that all-through schools are spread throughout England, although a concentration of 43.5 percent was to be found in London and the South East at the time the questionnaire was administered. The questionnaire returns reflect a reasonable geographical spread, with responses from all RSC regions. However, London, the South East and Yorks and Humber are slightly under-represented in the sample compared to the national distribution.

Table 5.6: Respondent school locations using the TALIS settlement categories

TALIS 2013 category of school location	% Respondent schools	% TALIS 2013 for England
Major City	24	17.8
City	33	14.7
Town	31	38.9
Small Town	7	20.4
Village	2.5	7.2
Hamlet	2.5	1

The majority of respondent schools in this research are located in cities or major cities. Table 5.6 shows that the sample schools have a greater proportion (57 percent) located in cities and major cities than was typical in the TALIS 2013 English sample (32.5 percent).

Age range

Three schools in the sample did not specify their schools ages ranges, but for the 39 that did, the distribution of school age ranges is shown in Table 5.7:

Table 5.7: Distribution of school age ranges in the respondent schools

Age range given	Number of schools N = 39	% of those responding to this question
2 - 16	1	2.5
2 - 18	1	2.5
3 - 16	7	18
3 - 18	4	10.5
3 - 19	6	15
4 - 16	3	8

4 - 18	6	15
4 - 19	8	21
5 - 16	1	2.5
5 - 18	1	2.5
7 - 18	1	2.5

Whilst the *Edubase* definition of an all-through is a school with learners across the primary and secondary age ranges, it is interesting to see that that two thirds of the sample schools also have learners in the non-compulsory school age range of Post 16 and just under half (48.5 percent) also have children in the pre-school age range. Only one of the sample schools had KS2 as their lowest age range (the 'junior' age range, where separate infant and junior schools exist).

Numbers on roll and across the key stages in the respondent schools

Data gathered in this area were not exact, in that six schools in my sample did not specify their number on roll and not all schools gave their figures for each or all key stages. However, the overview from the collated data does reveal that perhaps unsurprisingly, when full, all-through schools tend to have large school populations. The average total number on roll in the sample was 1,099 and of the 36 giving this number, 22 had rolls above 1000, 13 above 1200 and the largest school had 2200 children and young people on roll. The smallest schools in the sample had 104 and 295 pupils on roll, but were new schools, that did not yet have learners in all key stages/year groups. Four headteachers had annotated their questionnaires to say that their schools were growing and that rolls would rise over the coming years.

School Affiliations

Table 5.8: Respondent schools' external affiliations

School affiliation	Number of respondent schools N=42
SSAT	14
Leading Edge	6
PiXL	17
In partnership with a university (ITT/PGCE)	15
Affiliation provided by schools in the free text box	
Have or seeking MAT affiliation	5
Has applied for Teaching School and *Leading*	1

Edge designation	
Challenge Partners	1
Link to a music school	1
Link to a football club	1
Affiliation with Federation of Steiner schools	1

The purpose of this question had been to see the extent to which all-through schools are also outward facing, connected institutions. Almost all schools indicated some affiliations, as shown in Table 5.8. Interestingly, the most common affiliation was to PiXL (Partners in Excellence), an organisation which focuses on assisting schools to optimize student outcomes in terms of the main school performance measures. The affiliations were not mutually exclusive, as respondents could tick or list an unlimited number.

Findings related to becoming an all-through school

In questions six to nine of the questionnaire, schools were asked about when and why they had become all-through schools. Question six asked whether they had opened as all-through or whether they had previously been a stand-alone primary or secondary school. Responses were (percentage calculated from N= 41):

- Opened as an all-through school: **36.5**
- Secondary school which became all-through **51.5**
- Primary school which became all-through **7**
- As a result of school mergers **5**

The option to state that the all-through school was formed as the result of school merger had not been given on the questionnaire, but two headteachers had written this on to the hardcopy questionnaire to explain their school's situation.

The Schools White Paper (2010): a catalyst for the proliferation of all-through schools

I started my research with a hypothesis that the number of all-through schools was growing as a result of the policy paradigm associated with the *Schools White Paper (2010)* and the academies and free schools movement. This seems to be borne out to a high degree in that of the 150 all-through schools listed on *Edubase* in January

2017, 80 percent were from the academy/free school sector. The questionnaire findings also underline that the proliferation of all-through schools has occurred overwhelmingly in the last nine years: 83 percent of respondent schools became an all-through or opened as an all-through school after 2010. One school became an all-through school in 1986, but this was an institution which had been an independent school and had converted to being a state school via the free school application process. The next longest standing all-through school in the survey opened in 2004. Therefore, all but one of the survey sample schools was opened or became an all-through school this century.

Reasons for becoming an all-through school

On question eight of the questionnaire respondents were able to tick more than one response. Table 5.9 shows levels of agreement with the statements about *why* their school had opened as, or had become an all-through.

Table 5.9: Reasons for becoming or opening as an all-through school in order of participant agreement

Reason	% agreement
We had a vision about all-through education and therefore were keen to make this a reality when an opportunity presented itself	59.5
We responded to, or were approached to respond to a school place shortage in our area	40.5
We have always been an all-through	19
We were a successful school and took the opportunity to expand and vary our age range	14
We are part of a MAT which operates across the primary and secondary sectors	5

It is interesting to see that just under 60 percent became an all-through school because of their vision for all-through education. If we assume that the 19 percent of respondent schools that opened as all-throughs had a clear founding vision for all-through education, then what emerges is a strong sense of a belief in the potential of the configuration being displayed by headteachers in the survey. As was my own experience, over 40 percent agree that the formation of their all-through school was a response to a school place shortage in their area. This chimes with the example given in the *Schools White Paper (2010)*, of an all-through academy, formed to meet

demand for primary places in its locality. Question eight reveals that a mixture of practical and educational motivations lie behind the growth of the all-through configuration over the last decade.

All-through school buildings

Schools were asked about their sites and whether learners of all ages were accommodated on the same campus and responded as follows (in percent);

A.	Entirely separate primary and secondary sites	**27**
B.	Separate primary and secondary buildings, but on same campus	**39**
C.	Learners of all ages in the same building	**31.5**
	*Combination of B/C	**2.5**

*A participant had annotated this response by hand onto the hardcopy questionnaire

Table 5.10 shows that the majority of all-through schools in the survey group had had some sort of building programme to accommodate their all-through learners:

Table 5.10: All-through school accommodation and new buildings

Building accommodation/building programmes	% of responses
Full new build	32
New primary buildings	14.5
New secondary buildings	9.5
Combination of new primary/secondary buildings	12
Planning a new building	2.5
Accommodated in existing buildings	29.5

68 percent of the respondent all-through schools had had either a complete new build or significant extension/refurbishment of their site, in order to accommodate learners of all ages.

5.4 All-through schools and OFSTED judgements in 2017

Compared to stand-alone primary and secondary schools, a smaller proportion of all-through schools were rated as *Good* or better by OFSTED (70 percent) in the school year 2016-17. This is marked if all-throughs are compared to stand-alone

primary schools (90 percent of primary schools were rated *Good* or better) and it is also lower than 'stand-alone' secondary schools (78 percent *Good* or better). This finding is based upon a comparison of the OFSTED ratings of all-through schools with the data for all schools in England published in the OFSTED (2017) Annual Report.

Three of the participant headteachers mentioned OFSTED as an issue in the questionnaire, citing the challenge of being seen to maintain standards from EYFS to KS5 as demand unique to all-through schools, and that this challenge is under-estimated by external agencies. I shared these comments and the overview of all-through OFSTED judgements finding very tentatively in a research newsletter sent to participants in July 2017 (**Appendix O**) and included the following caveats:

- There were relatively few all-through schools in 2017, meaning the statistics are much more easily distorted than the statistics for all schools.
- A significant proportion of all-through schools were new schools and not yet inspected in 2017 (19 schools of the 150). The overall figures for all-through schools could swing back towards and then pass the rates for other schools over time.
- A number of all-throughs are holding a judgement which pre-dates their all-through status, or reflects very early all-through work. Therefore, the rating may not reflect where they are now.
- Schools are being re-inspected all the time and so the situation will be subject to change.

However, this finding in the national data, echoed in comments made in the questionnaire responses, meant that OFSTED was a topic I ensured that I discussed with the headteachers in the case study schools during stage two of the research. See section 5.9 for details of leaders' responses about the challenges faced by all-through schools, including OFSTED. See chapter eight for an update about how all-through schools have fared in the inspection system more recently.

5.5 All-through schools' performance at KS2 and KS4 in 2017

Table 5.11: KS2 attainment in all-through schools in 2017

% Expected level for R/W/Ma combined at KS2	
All-through schools (N = 84)	55.71
National for England	61

Table 5.12: Distribution of all-through schools for pupil progress at KS2 in 2017

National progress band	KS2 Reading %	KS2 Writing %	KS2 Maths %
Well above average	4 (10%)	7 (10%)	9 (10%)
Above average	11 (10%)	11 (8%)	11 (12%)
Average	51 (63%)	49 (65%)	40 (57%)
Below average	13 (8%)	9 (6%)	25 (11%)
Well below average	21 (9%)	24 (11%)	15 (10%)

N=75, (national figure)

The performance of all-through schools at KS2 in national tests in 2017 is shown in Tables 5.11 and 5.12. Examination of all-through schools' end of KS2 data for 2017 shows that on average the schools with data (84 for attainment, 75 for attainment and progress) did not perform as well as all schools (primary) nationally in 2017. However, of the 150 schools listed as all-through in January 2017, 66 did not have KS2 SATs results in 2017 (being new schools, or not yet having learners in year six). The all-through cohort also includes those new to state education (e.g. Steiner schools) and those who have become all-through through school merger. Therefore, I would be reluctant to draw any conclusions from these data at this stage. However, I would suggest that the performance of all-through schools on primary headline data measures could be included in future research projects.

Table 5.13: Headline KS4 data for all-through schools compared to national figures for 2017

	All-through schools (P8: N = 119, A8 & Basics: N = 120)	**National Average**
Progress 8	+0.05	0.00
Attainment 8	45.6	43
Basic measure = % GCSE Maths and English at 4+	62.1	64

120 of the 150 all-through schools had GCSE results in 2017. As shown in Table 5.13, these schools' average attainment and progress outcomes for 2017 were broadly in line with national and slightly above national on the Progress 8 and Attainment 8 measures.

5.6 Findings relating to school leadership

All respondent schools indicated that they had a school leadership team and 90 percent had a senior leader who had responsibility for the whole all-through school. 71 percent had a 'head of school' or equivalent for the primary phase of their all-through school, but only 29 percent had a 'head of school' for the secondary phase. The research findings suggest that this is because in many cases the leader with overall responsibility for the school *is* also the secondary 'head of school' (i.e. a leader from a secondary teaching background). Over half of the all-through schools in the survey were originally a secondary school. In my stage two case study schools, of the two all-through schools which had an overarching headteacher, both had come from a secondary teaching background and in the headteacher profile data gathered in question 27 of the questionnaire, 30 of the 42 headteachers/leaders stated that their teaching background had been in the secondary years.

Approaches to all-through leadership appear to be bespoke to each institution, but seem to divide into two main groups: those that try to ensure that senior roles have all-through elements and those that have retained phase specific responsibilities. Only around a third of respondent schools had leaders at assistant headteacher level who also had an all-through element to their role. This is reflected in the responses to question 12, where 64 percent considered that their senior and middle leadership structures were the same or similar to those in stand-alone secondary or primary schools: 36 percent considered that their leadership structures were 'substantially different' to stand-alone schools.

22 comments were made in the free text box for question 13 about school leadership and one school included a diagram of its leadership structure with the returned questionnaire. The free text responses are summarized below:

- Six schools described leadership structures where primary and secondary responsibilities are separated out
- Five described structures where senior leaders have an all-through element(s) to their roles (e.g. being responsible for teaching and learning across all-phases)
- Five are in new and/or growing schools where the leadership structure is still evolving
- Two clarified that the headteacher is the head across the whole all-through school
- Two described co-principal models (having a primary and a secondary school leader sharing responsibility)
- One described a bespoke leadership model, where there are leaders responsible for different age ranges, but these do not fit along traditional primary/secondary division or NC key stages (for example, a leader responsible for years 5-8)
- One comment was made about the effectiveness of a local governance model

Questions (14 and 15) about leadership activities and decision-making powers were adapted from TALIS 2013. An overview of responses and a comparison with TALIS is given in Table 5.14.

Table 5.14: Leader and stakeholder involvement in management functions and comparison with TALIS 2013

	*TALIS 2013 English Heads %	Head of all-through %	Exec Head %	Finance Director /Business Manager %	Head of Phase %	Other SLT % %	Other Teachers %	Governors %	LA/ Trust %
Hiring teachers	66	81	19	14	64	48	19	36	7
Setting teacher salaries	51	81	19	36	19	10	0	48	14
Deciding budget allocations across the all-through	73.6	81	21	60	29	17	0	36	7
Setting the curriculum	40	71	14	5	83	71	26	19	2

Choosing courses	66	48	10	5	69	64	33	7	2

*source OECD (2014) Table 3.4

In some respects, the headteachers of the all-through schools appear to have even greater autonomy than the TALIS 2013 English headteachers, who in turn, appeared to have greater autonomy than their international counterparts (Mickelwright, et al., 2014). However, what is also evident is the increased complexity of leadership within all-through schools, the potential for additional layers of leadership (e.g. associated with academy trusts), and the extent to which decision-making is shared and distributed between leaders, teachers and stakeholders.

What the findings show is that some areas of decision-making traditionally associated with headship are distributed to other leaders within the all-through structure. In comparison with the TALIS 2013 English headteachers, all-through headteachers appear to have greater autonomy related to hiring staff, setting salaries and in deciding budget allocations. However, decisions about the curriculum and choice of courses, seems to be distributed further down to the heads of secondary and primary phases (i.e. the leaders who are closer to the teaching of the curriculum and are more likely to be expert in that phase of education).

TALIS also surveyed headteachers' actions in their professional roles. Table 5.15 compares stage one respondents' answers with the TALIS 2013 findings.

Table 5.15: Respondents' leadership actions compared to TALIS 2013

Statement from Questions 15/TALIS 2013	Survey % Often/Very often	TALIS 2013 % Often/Very often
I collaborated with teachers to solve classroom behaviour management issues.	54	39
I observed lessons.	71.5	78.4
I took actions to support cooperation among teachers to develop new teaching practices.	73	61.4
I took actions to ensure that teachers take responsibility for improving their teaching skills.	69	75.2
I took actions to ensure that teachers feel responsible for their students' learning outcomes.	86	82.9

I provided parents or guardians with information on the school and student performance.	90	71
I provided governors/trustees with information on the school and student performance.	98	N/A
I collaborated with headteachers/school leaders from other schools.	74	58.1

For most of the statements the responses about activities undertaken by the all-through headteachers are broadly in line with those of the TALIS 2013 English headteachers. Both datasets show headteachers to be highly involved in instructional leadership within their schools and to a greater extent than many of their international counterparts (Mickelwright, et al., 2014). For example, over 70 percent had observed teaching in the last 12 months (in both this study and in TALIS 2013 results for England) compared with the TALIS 2013 international average of 49 percent.

The all-through headteachers surveyed appear to be slightly more involved in supporting behaviour management in the classroom than the TALIS 2013 English sample. All-through heads also appear to be more collaborative, in that 74 percent had worked with fellow headteachers in the last year, compared to 58.15 percent of the TALIS English headteachers and the TALIS international average of 62 percent. A larger proportion of the all-through headteachers spent time preparing information about the school and its performance for parents and carers (90 percent). I had added in a statement which was not in TALIS 2013, about information prepared by the headteacher for governors/trustees, as it was something which I was very conscious of having to do as a headteacher. The fact that 98 percent of the all-through respondents had also spent time gathering information for governors would suggest that this is a feature of the English system, which impacts upon headteacher workload, which had not yet been considered by the international study in 2013. The particular demands and challenges of all-through governance are considered in the case study findings in chapter seven.

5.7 Findings relating to staff deployment and generalist and specialist teacher deployment

Questions 16 and 17 asked respondents to consider all-through staff deployment and the blend of specialist and generalist teaching at their schools. For question 16 respondents were asked to indicate which statement of a choice of four was the 'best fit' to describe arrangements at their school. Table 5.16 shows their responses.

Table 5.16: Responses in relation to staff deployment

Statement	Best fit agreement %
All teachers teach learners of all ages.	0
Many teachers teach learners of all ages.	10
Some teachers teach learners of all ages, but most teach in either the primary or secondary phases of the school.	80
Teachers all work in either the primary or secondary phase of the school.	10

Statement	Best fit agreement %
Teaching assistants teach learners of all ages.	2
Many teaching assistants teach learners of all ages.	5
Some teaching assistants teach learners of all ages, but most teach in either the primary or secondary phases of the school.	60
Teaching assistants all work in either the primary or secondary phase of the school.	33

Statement	Best fit agreement %
All support staff support across both phases.	19
Many support staff support across both phases.	31
Some support staff support across phases, but most work in either the primary or secondary phase.	50
Support staff all work in either the primary or secondary phase of the school.	0

Respondents were asked to rank their agreement of given statements related to staff deployment and generalist/specialist teaching on a four point scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree). Agreement is shown in Table 5.17 as the sum percent of the 'agree' and 'strongly agree' responses.

Table 5.17: Statements about staff deployment placed in order of participant agreement

Statement about staff deployment	% agree or strongly agree
We use some specialist teachers in our primary phase in addition to the generalist class teacher.	100
We believe that learners' experiences and outcomes are improved by specialist teacher inputs in primary phase.	98
We achieve cost effective provision by deploying teachers across all phases.	88
We achieve cost effective provision by deploying support staff across all phases.	88
We believe learners' needs are better met by deploying teaching assistants across all phases.	88
We are able to deploy teachers across the all-through school to optimise students' learning.	86
We believe learners' needs are better met by deploying teachers across all phrases.	67
We believe that learners' outcomes are improved by generalist teacher inputs in the secondary phase. (e.g. nurture group work).	62
We achieve cost effective provision by deploying teaching assistants across all phases.	57
We also use some generalist teachers in the secondary phase.	50

What the responses in relation to staff deployment reveal is that the all-through schools in the sample are deploying both teachers and support staff flexibly across phase. Support staff and school services appear to be being shared across phases, with none of the respondent schools saying all support staff work only in one phase. In terms of the teacher workforce, most of the survey schools have the majority of practitioners based within one phase, but 80 percent are using some of their teachers across phases. All of the schools in the survey said they were using specialist teachers in their primary phases in addition to the generalist classteachers. This decision links to the view that specialists teaching inputs add value in the primary years (Statement C of question 17), with 98 percent of respondents agreeing that 'learners' experiences and outcomes are improved by specialist teacher inputs in the primary phase.' 50 percent of the respondent schools also used some

generalist teachers in secondary phase and 62 percent agreed that the use of generalist teachers could enhance the outcomes of some students in the secondary years. Therefore, there is some evidence to suggest that all-through schools are beginning to blur the boundaries in terms of the deployment of generalist and specialist teachers across the primary/secondary age ranges.

88 percent of respondents agreed that a degree of cost-effectiveness could be achieved by deploying teachers and support staff across phase. This flexibility of staffing and skill-sets does seem to be an affordance of the all-through configuration, which would be less easily achieved in a stand-alone setting. The large majority of respondents (88 percent) also felt that by deploying teaching assistants and teachers across phase learners' needs were better met. These findings echo the recommendations of the CPR (Alexander, 2010) and suggest that a more nuanced blend of specialist and generalist teaching inputs may be of benefit to the learner.

5.8 Findings relating to learner grouping

A full breakdown of responses to question 18 is detailed in **Appendix P.** By adding together the responses for 'always' and 'usually', I arrived at a picture of what might be deemed as usual practice across the majority of the respondent schools in relation to student grouping and cross-phase learning activities. 95 percent of the schools always or usually use traditional (NC) learner age/year groupings. The same overwhelming majority place students always or usually in classes/year groups based upon their chronological age. 43 percent would sometimes consider placing a learner in a different year group based upon their ability, while the other 57 percent would 'never' place a learner away from their chronological peers. However, 55 percent will sometimes provide learners with the opportunity to learn with a different year group for a specific activity/subject. Whilst one might argue that flexibility of student grouping is as much an affordance of the all-through configuration as the flexibility of staffing, there is no evidence in the responses to suggest that all-through schools are grouping students differently on a day-to-day basis than other schools in the wider state system.

When asked about the provision of extra-curricular and cross-phase learning opportunities, the most common response was that these were things which

‘sometimes’ happened: 67 percent sometimes provide cross-phase extra-curricular provision and 81 percent sometimes stage cross-phase learning opportunities. The learning opportunities can take the form of joint projects or collapsed timetable days and will sometimes (67 percent) include secondary learners leading and assisting primary aged learners.

5.9 Findings relating to all-through vision, values and ethos

All-through schools are working across the traditional primary and secondary divide. This section explores responses which relate to the schools’ vision for their all-through working and their broader aspirations in terms of school climate. Respondents were asked to rank their agreement with statements about all-through vision on a four-point scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree), and their responses are shown in Table 5.18.

Table 5.18: Responses related to schools’ all-through vision

	Strongly disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
A. We believe that having learners of all ages enhances our sense of being a community.			25	75
B. Our learners are encouraged and supported to mix with learners of different ages.		3	54	43
C. We are not a joint primary and secondary school: we are an all-through school, which is something distinct in its own right.		2.5	23	74.5
D. We believe in stage not age learning.		46	40.5	13.5
E. We work hard to foster an all-through ethos and to build a sense of the school as a whole community.			19	81
F. We are aware of all-through configurations in other countries (e.g. Scandinavia) and aspire to replicate aspects of those schools systems.		42	50	8
G. We are trying to break down the barriers between primary and secondary education.		5	40	55

H. We are trying to support our teachers to develop a professional identity as educators which transcends the traditional primary and secondary divide and fixed primary secondary teacher identities.		5	59	36

What comes through clearly from these responses is the extent to which all-through schools are trying to create a coherent all-through school community across all ages (statements A, B and E) and are striving to be something distinct from the majority of primary and secondary schools in the system (statements C, G and H). 97.5 percent agreed or strongly agreed that all-through schools are something distinct in their own right. 95 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they are trying to break down the barriers between primary and secondary education, and the same majority are supporting teachers to develop a professional identity which transcends the traditional boundaries between the primary and secondary sectors.

As has already been explained in this thesis, there is very little literature about all-through schools in the English state system, not least because the configuration is a relatively new innovation. What the responses to question 19 reveal is that there is a strong alignment in the sample schools' vision, with many wanting to create an all-age learning community and to develop the all-through practice of their teacher workforce. However, there appears not to be a particular educational philosophy which sits behind this in the majority of cases. Statement J in question 19 asked respondents to say whether their school adheres to the views of a particular educationalist. The examples of Steiner and A S Neill were given in the question. Only 21 of the 42 respondents ticked anything at all on this question and the majority of those writing anything disagreed. Two respondents agreed and four strongly agreed, with one school writing in the free text box that it is a Steiner school.

Responses were noteworthy on the topic of 'stage not age learning.' 54 percent agreed with the principle. However, responses to question 18 show that in reality, the sample all-through schools are teaching in traditional NC year groups and overwhelmingly learners are taught with their chronological peers. Perhaps the slim majority of agreement with statement D indicates an awareness amongst all-through

leaders of the potential in their schools to group learners more flexibly, even if this affordance is not being used currently.

Responses related to school climate

Table 5.19: Responses about school climate and a comparison with TALIS 2013

Statement from Question 20	Survey % Agree/ Strongly agree	TALIS 2013 % Agree/ Strongly agree
This school provides staff with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions.	98	96.7
This school provides parents and carers with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions.	76	73.1
This school provides students/children with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions.	93	91.8
I make important decisions on my own.	12	14.7
There is a collaborative school culture which is characterized by mutual support.	100	98

The statements shown in Table 5.19 are taken from TALIS 2013 were designed to tease out the headteachers' leadership styles. The statement about 'making important decisions on my own' is intended to be key in gauging headteachers' attitudes to distributed leadership (Mickelwright, et al., 2014). English headteachers had a low agreement rate with this statement, suggesting that they have a more collegiate/distributed approach than headteachers in many other jurisdictions (for example, in Japan the statement had a 95 percent agreement rating). The results from this survey are extremely close to the TALIS English headteachers' findings. The all-through headteachers all believe that their schools have a supportive, collaborative culture. They also believe that staff and students are part of the decision-making processes in their schools (agreement rate of over 90 percent) as are parents and carers, although to a slightly lesser extent (76 percent).

Table 5.20: Responses about common beliefs and relationships and a comparison with TALIS 2013

Statement from question 21	Agree/strongly agree %	TALIS agree/ strongly agree %
The staff share a common set of beliefs about schooling/learning	100	96
The relationships between teachers and children/students are good	100	99.3

The responses to question 21 (shown in Table 5.20) were again extremely close to the TALIS 2013 findings and show a universal perception amongst the surveyed headteachers that practitioners in their schools have shared beliefs about learning. Relationships between students and teachers were considered to be good by all of the all-through leaders, again closely mirroring TALIS.

5.10 The challenges faced by all-through schools

The penultimate page of the questionnaire consisted of three large free text boxes for respondents to give extended answers/examples (questions 22-24). Respondents were asked to give three answers to each prompt (although not all did). The free text responses were all collated verbatim and coded, as described in chapter four. In question 22 respondents were asked to list the three main challenges faced by all-through schools. Once the responses had been coded, each code was attributed to an over-arching theme. The coding frame for question 22, which lists each code, its frequency and the over-arching themes, is given in full in **Appendix Q.** There were 11 themes for the challenges, which are shown in Table 5.21:

Table 5.21: Stage one responses about all-through challenges and their frequency

Theme	Frequency
Curriculum and pedagogy	27
Staff/Staffing related issues	27
Ethos/School culture	25
Leadership	24
Finance and resourcing	21
Consistency/Whole school policy	12
Accommodation (split-site etc.)	7

Well-being, inclusion and conduct	7
OFSTED/External agencies/Accountabilities	6
Practicalities	2
Admissions issues	2

Challenges - curriculum, pedagogy and staffing

A number of challenges relate to the staff in all-through schools. Attracting the right staff, with the correct skill-sets and the flexibility to work in an all-through school is a challenge in itself. 'Two Tribes' (Sutherland et al 2010) issues were evident in the responses too, with five headteachers mentioning primary/secondary pay differentials as a cause of disgruntlement, and the need to foster a parity of esteem across the primary/secondary divide. Some headteachers also recognised that staff need to be supported and developed to be able to see beyond their traditional primary/secondary roles and to increase their knowledge of pedagogies beyond the phase of education in which they were initially trained. Staffing issues were often interlinked with the challenges of planning a truly all-through curriculum and the practical challenge of creating a whole school all-through timetable. Perceived curricular and pedagogical challenges were linked to cross-phase teaching, ensuring curricular continuity and planning for student progression.

Challenges - ethos/school culture

Some aspects of all-through schools were seen by school leaders as both challenges and strengths. Whilst school ethos and culture are viewed positively elsewhere in the survey, the responses to question 22 show that establishing and maintaining a truly all-through ethos is challenging. The most frequently mentioned challenges within the school culture and ethos theme were: ensuring that the reality matches the rhetoric; the challenge of maintaining an all-through ethos when the school has a split-site; fostering an all-through ethos amongst the staff and students; and getting parental buy-in to the all-through vision.

Challenges - leadership

All-through school leadership was also identified as a significant challenge, which has many facets. Some of the leadership challenges relate to the wider than usual scope of the school and that leaders and governors need to develop sufficient cross-

phase knowledge to be able to support and challenge appropriately across all key stages (in many cases from EYFS to KS5). Another aspect of leadership mentioned by five headteachers was the need to develop an understanding of all-through practice amongst key stakeholders and partners. This links to comments made about OFSTED and other external agencies not appreciating the scope of the work of all-through schools. It is interesting that in the survey the school leaders *perceived* that all-through schools were treated harshly in the OFSTED system, when the comparison with the 2017 national data suggests that this may indeed have been the case (see section 5.4). What also emerges is a sense of dilemma and a potential for conflicts, when decisions have to be made for the whole school, which may be seen as being less favourable to one of the phases. All-through leaders have to navigate these additional issues, whilst the pressures to achieve student outcomes remain the same as they are for stand-alone schools, as do the consequences of not meeting national expectations.

Challenges - finance

School funding levels were already a contentious issue at the time of the questionnaire (spring 2017) and very much remain so at the time of writing (Adams, 2019; Harnden, 2019). However, what emerges from the leaders' responses is that there are particular concerns which relate to all-through schools and what headteachers perceive as inequities in how school funding is allocated across the system. For example, stand-alone schools are allocated an annual lump sum, in addition to their per pupil funding. However, all-through schools receive just one lump sum, which has to be split between the phases, even though they have equivalent site/s and student numbers of a separate primary and secondary school. Some headteachers also mentioned that where one might imagine a larger organisation would have a greater economy of scale, they had found that in reality this is either not the case, or is difficult to achieve.

5.11 The opportunities and affordances of all-through schools

The list of themes for the opportunities afforded by the all-through configuration has a high degree of overlap with the list of challenges. There were 11 clustered themes of the perceived opportunities, shown in Table 5.22.

Table 5.22: Stage one responses about all-through opportunities and their frequency

Theme	Frequency
Curriculum and pedagogy	42
Staff deployment and development	33
Transition (particularly KS2 into KS3)	25
Families and communities	21
Ethos/SMSC/Pastoral systems	14
Finance and resourcing	10
Standards/Student progress	9
Positive impact upon students	9
Leadership	7
Accommodation (shared facilities)	5
Well-being, inclusion and conduct	2

Opportunities - curriculum, pedagogy and staffing

The two over-arching themes which were most frequently touched upon as opportunities were 'curriculum and pedagogy' and 'staff deployment and development.' Six headteachers cited what they saw as a 'continuity of learning' across all keys stages as a significant advantage of the all-through configuration. A further four leaders wrote about the ability to plan for long term student progression, enabled by having an unbroken view across the different phases of education. Comments in this area also touched upon the advantages of practitioners developing an understanding of the content and pedagogical approaches adopted by their counterparts in different phases of the school. Headteachers provided examples of projects and approaches associated with one phase of education being taken up in another: for example, forest school approaches being adapted and used in secondary outdoor learning.

Teacher deployment was highlighted as a key flexibility within all-through settings. As discussed earlier, all surveyed schools were using some subject specialist teaching in their primary phases. This was mentioned as an opportunity, together with the possibilities of blending generalist and specialist teaching inputs and using some generalist teachers within the secondary age range (for example, in nurture provision). In response to this question, perceived challenges were re-framed into professional opportunities for practitioners. These were largely the opportunities: to

teach beyond the age range of a traditional school; to collaborate across phases; and to engage in wider, cross-phase professional dialogue and professional learning. There were 17 comments that suggested that collaborating and working in an all-through way offered a unique opportunity for enhanced professional development.

Opportunities - KS2 into KS3 transition

As discussed in chapter three there are no school transfers at all for a child who makes the whole all-through journey within one school, possibly all the way from EYFS to year 13. There are still transitions and the move from year six into year seven remains a significant moment of change, even within an all-through school. Nonetheless, 24 respondents cited enhanced transition to the secondary years of education as an opportunity provided by all-through schools. These comments covered many aspects of transition, including: the potential to optimise progress and academic attainment between KS2 and KS3; enhanced support for learners with SEND and those from other vulnerable groups; and for student well-being, as the child is already well known within the school.

Opportunities - families and communities

Around half of respondents wrote a comment in the free text box about how they felt their work with families and communities is enhanced by working in all-through ways. The most frequent reason given for this was that the all-through school has a much longer time-frame to build positive and productive relationships with families, even the traditionally hard to reach. A number saw the social aspects of the school's work as fostering wider community cohesion and leading to earlier interventions with families who need support. Three headteachers related that the continuity of contact with the school over many years ensured that parents also experienced a seamless journey through the different phases of the school.

Opportunities - student progress

Reponses to question 23 also focused on what the impact of all-through working is on the students. Nine comments were made which linked improved pupil progress and standards to working in an all-through way. Of these, three pointed to a better mutual understanding between KS2 and KS3, which meant that expectations in both

key stages were then raised. There was also a wider range of one-off comments made which were largely specific examples of perceived benefits for students, such as cross-phase peer mentoring programmes.

Opportunities and challenges interlinked

The similarities between the topics considered to be challenges and opportunities would seem to suggest that establishing and maintaining aspects of all-through practice are demanding endeavours, but are also the very endeavours which can have impactful benefits for staff and students, if they can be done well. For example, 13 respondents wrote about the benefits of an all-through ethos, where a mutual valuing and respect is fostered between learners of all ages. Indeed, in question 24, there were 26 suggestions that aspects of all-through ethos/SMSC were what the school would choose to showcase to others as areas of effective practice. Some indicated that this was achieved through having common aims and values across all phases. Four headteachers wrote that the school itself became its own family or community.

School leadership and finance were seen as areas of challenge in the responses to question 22. In the responses to question 23 a smaller number of respondents raised them as areas of opportunity. Ten comments mentioned a financial or resourcing advantage enabled by being an all-through school. Three cited the economies of scale achieved by bulk purchasing and shared resources. Others mentioned shared staff in general and specifically 'central service' arrangements to cover functions such as HR and finance across the whole school. Similarly, where question 22 had prompted descriptions of the challenges of operating on split-sites etc., five leaders listed the possibility of sharing specialist accommodation across phases as an opportunity enabled by being an all-through school. At leadership level, opportunities identified were: being able to promote the all-through vision with students, staff and stakeholders; the level of challenge and insight all-through schools offer leaders; and the potential to develop shared leadership models.

Aspects of all-through practice that the respondent school leaders considered effective

The final of the three large free text questions asked respondents to list three areas of effective all-through practice at their school, of which they were proud. I followed the same system of coding responses and then of producing clustered themes. The list of themes (shown in Table 5.23) was again very similar to those generated for challenges and opportunities:

Table 5.23: Stage one examples of effective all-through practice and their frequency

Theme	Frequency
Curriculum and pedagogy	61
Staff deployment and development	45
Ethos/SMSC/Pastoral systems	26
Transition (particularly KS2 into KS3)	17
Standards/Student progress	15
Positive impact upon students	16
Leadership	13
Families and communities	12
Finance and resourcing	6
Accommodation (shared facilities)	1
Well-being, inclusion and conduct	2

The purpose of question 24 had been to require the respondents to reflect upon their own setting and then give specific examples of practice which they considered to be linked to their status as an all-through school and were areas which they considered to be effective. Whilst the themes are the same as for question 23, this question did, in many cases, prompt the headteachers to give specific examples, which help to exemplify these broad themes. For example, below are specific examples of all-through practice mentioned which relate to curriculum and pedagogy:

Curriculum and pedagogy – examples of all-through practice

- Cross-phase reading programmes (8 schools)
- Cross-phase projects/learning activities (7 schools)
- Cross-phase extra-curricular programmes (4 schools)
- Subject links across phases (4 schools)
- Development of a bespoke, all-through curriculum (4 schools)

- Cross-phase Arts & music provision (4 schools)
- Cross phase MFL provision (3 schools)
- Mathematics subject links/link to maths hub (3 schools)
- Continuity of learning achieved across the all-through school
- Increased understanding of education and teaching & learning EYFS- KS5
- Primary practices adopted in secondary (e.g. outdoor learning)
- PE cross-phase links and provision
- Nurture group provision at all phases
- Cross-phase use of new technologies and STEM provision

5.12 Key findings from stage one and areas of focus for stage two

The questionnaire and public domain data revealed that the rise of all-through schools is closely associated with the academies and free schools movements, with 80 percent of all-through schools in 2017 being either an academy or free school. 83 percent of the schools surveyed opened as or became an all-through school in the last decade, suggesting a strong link with the policy paradigm associated with the *Schools White Paper 2010*. All-through schools have learners of primary and secondary ages ranges on their rolls, with over a third of respondent schools in 2017 educating learners from EYFS right through to the end of KS5.

The questionnaire findings reveal that leadership strucures are evolving in all-through schools, with a third of respondent school leaders reporting that they have a bespoke, all-through leadership structure. The profiles and leadership behaviours of the all-through headteachers surveyed were broadly in line with those of the English lower secondary headteachers in the TALIS 2013 survey. However, all-through schools can have additional layers of leadership, depending upon their particular structure and whether they are part of an academy trust.

Teacher deployment in the surveyed all-through schools is particularly noteworthy, as *all* reported using subject specialist teachers in the primary years in addition to the generalist class-teacher, and half were using generalist approaches with some learners in KS3. This suggests a more nuanced approach to generalist/specialist teaching blends is evolving. The responses also suggest that respondent schools

are working to develop practices which transcend the usual primary/secondary divide and that all-through schools wish to be recognised as a distinct configuration in their own right. The school leaders surveyed were also of the view that difficulties associated with the transition between primary and secondary schooling are reduced in all-through schools.

Foci for stage two

Stage two of the research provided the opportunity to consider topics and issues raised in stage one in greater depth, by examining each of the case study schools' approaches to the following:

- Leadership and governance (including accountability regimes such as OFSTED)
- Curriculum and pedagogy (including generalist/specialist teaching blends)
- How the KS2 into KS3 transition operates in the all-through school
- Finance, resourcing and school sites
- Ethos and culture of the school
- A view of the student experience of all-through education (focus groups)
- A view of leaders and teachers' experiences of all-through education (interviews)
- A consideration of the school's work with families, including school admissions

6. Real-world dissemination in real-time

6.1 EdD studies as a 'ripple in the pond'

A metaphor which was often used in discussions during our EdD sessions at the Faculty of Education, was that of doctoral research being the stone thrown into a pond, which then radiates ripples across the water. After all, what is the point of practitioner research, if not to create impact upon practice? Kitchen (2016) explores this metaphor further: a stone could stink without a trace, if its selection had not been considered carefully enough, or it if have not been thrown with the right amount of force, at just the right trajectory. She equates the stone to the research topic and the launching of the stone by the thrower as our choice of methods and dissemination routes.

A second metaphor was also used often at the faculty: that of journeying or travelling along and through the research timeline. Whilst the journey as a metaphor is undoubtedly over-used in popular culture at present, journeying is subtly different. Over the duration of my study, I have been studying and researching, have continued to live a professional life in the field I am researching, and the world and context around me has been changing and evolving rapidly the whole time. Flutter (2016) sees all learning processes as 'travelling' and that research is 'forward movement, propelling us towards new knowledge' (Flutter 2016, p159). Later in this thesis I will examine what I think changes in the national educational context during the course of this project mean for my research. However, this chapter narrates events which were part of my journeying, but which also set in motion ripples on the pond during the research process, emanating from the processes of discussing and sharing my emerging work with others.

6.2 Formative sharing within the faculty, university and beyond

One of the most rewarding aspects of following the EdD doctoral route has been the sense of being part of a researching community. Strong links are forged from the outset with those in the same EdD cohort, who take the research methods courses together in the first two years of the programme and with those within the EdD research communities. Over the duration of the study I met regularly with other students and within the safe forum of the research community meetings we have all

been able to share dilemmas, present emerging findings, and question supportively but with criticality.

There is a strong ethos within the faculty and particularly within the EdD programme which encourages being outward looking. In that spirit, doctoral students are encouraged to contribute to the EdD conference, which takes place annually. At the end of my first year in June 2015, I presented a poster, which encapsulated a large part of my reading and thinking in that year, which had focused mainly on the question 'how did we get here?' The poster and the formative questioning and discussion at the conference helped to challenge and develop my thinking, and my subsequent writing resulted in an embryonic version of what now constitutes chapter two of this thesis. The poster is reproduced in full in **Appendix R** and an extract is shown in Figure 6.1.

REDACTION – Poster extract contains images not cleared for online publication

Figure 6.1: Extract from conference poster from June 2015

Buoyed up by the experience at the EdD conference, which had included talking to those on doctoral programmes at other universities, I presented the poster again at a conference in October 2015. This event was at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge and was a graduate student conference. Graduate students from multiple disciplines showcased their research in short presentations and/or posters. Whilst it was very daunting to participate alongside others undertaking seemingly very high powered and complex research, I again found that responding to the questioning of others ultimately led to me refining my thinking.

6.3 The research questionnaire as a catalyst for participant contact and dialogue

Each subsequent year, 2016-2019, I continued to contribute the EdD conference hosted at the Faculty of Education: three times by presenting on aspects of my project and once as part of a joint presentation with research community members. In 2017, I presented about how I had contacted and attempted to encourage all-through headteachers to become research participants and complete the stage one questionnaire. What I was also able to relate, was how this engagement was leading to contact and dialogue with professionals who were interested in the research.

As explained in chapter four, I had taken the decision to send the questionnaire as a colour hardcopy document, with a covering letter on headed paper, using my professional identity. This was a considered approach which I hoped would optimise the numbers of returns. Full copies of the text of the letters to the schools are in **Appendix E** and **F.** The letter appealed to the potential participants as fellow professionals:

> ‘ I have contacted you, as a fellow school leader in an all-through setting and hope that you will share my desire to gather some research data about all-through schools. All-through schools are a small, but rapidly growing proportion of state schools in England and yet to date, very little research has focused on all-through configurations. I would, therefore, be extremely grateful if you could find the time in your busy schedule to complete and return the enclosed questionnaire.’

The letter also explained that the research had two stages and invited the headteachers to indicate on the returned questionnaire whether they would be interested in their school becoming a case study.

I will never know whether my choices of a hardcopy questionnaire and a direct appeal to headteachers using my professional identity did illicit more responses than I would have gained had I used an online questionnaire, or had I made the approach identifying myself solely as a graduate student. However, I do consider that identifying myself as a current practitioner helped to facilitate and encourage some of the dialogue and contact which followed the mailing of the questionnaire. As discussed in chapter four, researching practitioners can find they have a privileged level of access to participants (Drake and Heath 2011): I would contend that my situatedness in the landscape being studied similarly facilitated a level of contact connected to, but also beyond the research project. Thomson and Gunter (2011) consider that research in schools can lead to researchers developing multiple and fluid identities in the field, as they build relationships with participants. Similarly, McNess, Arthur and Crossley (2016) see educational researchers as developing multiple identities, particularly those who may be seen as insider researchers. I am of the view that at both stages of my doctoral research participants related to me as *both* practitioner and researcher, which led to professional contact and an authentic dialogue around my research topics.

Between March and May 2017, four participant headteachers contacted me directly at my school and we spoke on the telephone. All wanted to express support for the research and that they were pleased that someone was looking at all-through schools. They indicated that they would really like to hear about the outcomes of the research. Following these conversations, one of the headteachers arranged to visit my school that June. She was able to visit us, discuss our all-through journey and meet some of the key colleagues in my setting. Another headteacher sent me extensive notes. He had used questions 23, 24 and 25 of the questionnaire as a prompt for a leadership team discussion and wanted to send me their thoughts. Therefore, an unexpected outcome of the questionnaire and letter was a kind of reciprocal sharing, which then grew in scale during the lifetime of the project, through the initiatives described in the next sections.

6.4 Creating a feedback loop: a research newsletter

This unanticipated contact with research participants prompted me to reflect upon if, how and over what sort of a time-frame research feeds back to those who contributed to it. Those participants who I had met, or spoken to personally, were all very clear that they would be keen to hear about the findings and outcomes of the research. Whilst in summer 2017 I still was over two years away from completion of the field work and thesis, I did think that the key findings from stage one would be of interest to those working in all-through schools. I decided to distill the main points into a research newsletter, which I sent to the 42 headteachers who had completed the questionnaire. The full newsletter is **Appendix O and** an extract is shown as Figure 6.2. The newsletter aimed to give participants some immediate feedback from the research they had participated in, and also included some analysis I had conducted based on the national datasets.

Early headlines from the research questionnaire: what you said

Emerging Opportunities:

- Overwhelmingly, you identified the **continuity of learning** and greatly **enhanced transition** KS2 to KS3, as significant opportunities provided by all-through schools.
- The opportunities to develop and **deepen relationships with families** and communities, by working with them over a longer period at all-through schools.
- The benefits of cross-phase work and the **sharing of effective** practice across all phases of education.

Emerging Challenges:

- **Funding and resourcing.** Issues such as only receiving one lump sum and the costs of operating a split site were cited. However, 'economies of scale' were mentioned positively by a number of respondents.
- **Leadership** challenges and the difficulties in ensuring leadership structures in all-through schools are fit for purpose and equitable. 60% of respondent schools currently have leadership structures similar to those in traditional primary and secondary schools.

Figure 6.2: Extract from the July 2017 research newsletter

This summary and distillation from the questionnaire data, also helped me develop clarity in my preparation for stage two.

6.5 All-through schools conference January 2018

The ripples radiating out from the questionnaire and the newsletter led to a very interesting opportunity. I was approached by a headteacher who was staging a

conference for and about all-through schools in January 2018. My brief was to share the headlines from stage one of the research in a 20 minute slot at the conference. For the rest of the day I would be a conference delegate, able to network with other speakers, leaders from all-through schools and other delegates attending because of their interest in the configuration.

When I received the draft flyer for the event I was initially somewhat daunted, as the conference featured some very eminent speakers (distinguished academics and a former schools minister). However, I also recognised that this would be a wonderful opportunity to disseminate my research to a wider audience and to network. The full publicity flyer for the conference is **Appendix S** and an extract is shown as Figure 6.3.

REDACTION – Poster extract contains images not cleared for online publication

Figure 6.3: Extract from all-through schools conference flyer

The conference was a hugely important and formative experience for me. As well as allowing me to share aspects of the research (albeit at an early stage) I felt I came away with a number of other benefits: I had had the chance to meet and interact with some of the school leaders who were questionnaire respondents; had presented to an audience which included academics from other universities; and had enabled other delegates to sign up for further research updates/contact.

6.6 A second all-through conference in September 2018

After the first conference I had stayed in touch with the event convenors. The feedback from the conference had confirmed that delegates would welcome a second event, to explore further some of the strands related to all-through schools which had been touched upon at the first. I offered to host the event at a school within our trust during September 2018. The previous event had secured an audience largely based in the north of England; the idea of changing venue was to see whether we could reach more of the all-through schools in the centre and the south of the country. We also wanted to change the emphasis away from high profile speakers and run a conference by and for all-through headteachers.

A flyer for the conference (**Appendix T**) was designed and potential delegates were given the option of choosing elective seminars. We also contacted other all-through headteachers to try to secure a breadth of inputs.

Figure 6.4: Welcome slide from the conference introduction

To publicise this event the flyers were emailed to the *Edubase* list of all-through schools, and the growing list of those who had signed up for information about the research. The event was also circulated as a CPD opportunity via email within my local region by the LA and two of the regional teaching school alliances. Perhaps unsurprisingly, as the delegate list was being confirmed, it became clear that there was actually a minimal crossover of attendees across the two conferences. We took this into account in planning the sessions, to not take for granted that people would know what had been shared at the first event, but also ensuring that inputs were not repeated. We also took the view that to access a different audience was on balance a good thing, allowing dissemination to reach further. What was also evident was that only around half of our audience was from all-through schools. The remainder were mostly from schools within MATs which covered the all-through age range and/or what I described in my introduction to the event as the 'all-through curious.' The 'all-through curious' were those working in either primary or secondary settings, but who were interested to hear about the opportunities the all-through configuration and cross-phase working might be able to offer. Figure 6.4 shows the welcome slide for the event.

To date, I estimate that I have presented aspects of my research in person, at events and conferences to around 500 people. Through the research questionnaire and subsequent events I have had direct contact with around a third of all all-through headteachers. I have also tried to keep my participants involved in developments in the research via the research newsletter and the all-through conferences. All of these dissemination activities are in the spirit of generating the 'ripples in the pond' and to make this engagement with practitioners an integral part of my doctoral journeying.

6.7 Future events and aspirations for a research legacy

Plans are already in hand for a third all-through conference in 2021. A different headteacher is taking the lead and will host the event at their school. I have agreed to deliver an updated presentation, looking at my research as a whole. As I will explore later in this thesis, I believe that effective practice from all-through schools could inform curriculum planning and pedagogical approaches in the wider school system. I would naturally be keen to publish parts of this thesis as papers and hope

that the contacts made during my EdD journeying would generate an immediate interest in the research findings and subsequent publications. In the meantime, I have continued to take every opportunity to talk about my research and disseminate it: an interview about my professional life and my research was published on my college's website (Fitzwilliam College, 2019). I am also undertaking a piece of work on behalf of headteachers in Peterborough looking at KS2 into KS3 MFL provision across the LA. This work links directly with findings explored in chapters seven, eight and nine of this thesis and forms part of the city's educational improvement plan for 2019-20.

Drake and Heath (2011) assert that those undertaking professional doctorates may be personally and professionally transformed by their studies, but that they can be disappointed by the ultimate lack of wider impact of their research. However, in an earlier work (Drake and Heath, 2008), they do acknowledge that senior leaders, such as headteachers, can ensure some level impact for their research, by virtue of their profession status. I hope that the focus upon connections made with other practitioners and school leaders *during* this research will mean that networks formed can be sustained *beyond* the life of the project and ensure that some direct impact comes from the research. As has been shown by the recent campaign by English headteachers in relation to school funding (the '*WorthLess'* campaign, Adams 2019), groups of professionals can become effective lobbying bodies. One of my aspirations for a legacy of this study is to see whether the research findings could help all-through school leaders to lobby collectively for change around the challenges they face: for example, around the specific funding issues faced by all-through schools and how all-through schools are judged within accountability frameworks.

7. All-through Schools: Case studies

7.1 School A: case study report

School context and its all-through journey

School A opened in 2004, as one of the first purpose built all-through state schools in England. At the time of the research visits there were just under 2,000 students on roll from reception to year 13. The primary phase has two forms of entry and an additional seven forms join in year seven, making a total of nine forms in each year group of the secondary phase. The sixth form has approximately 320 students on roll. The school operates conventional NC year groups and students are grouped in teaching classes with their chronological peers. The school does not fast track students or operate nurture provision.

School A has a well-equipped all-age campus. The primary and secondary phases are co-located within spacious grounds. Whilst there is some degree of separation between the areas for different age ranges (i.e. separate primary and secondary buildings) and some fencing between certain areas, the design of the campus lends itself to all-through working and the promotion of a community feel across all age ranges. The primary and secondary entrances and reception areas face each other and primary children, older students and parents arrive and leave along the same wide pedestrian boulevard. The campus has a very green feel, with generous sports fields and grounds and is well equipped. In addition to what one might expect to see in a twenty-first century school it has: a lecture theatre, an all-weather pitch and a fitness suite. The co-location of phases has the advantage of allowing primary children and teachers access to facilities on the wider campus to enhance learning. School A also has some spaces which are shared between learners of all-ages. The library/LRC is a shared resource and the school's dining area serves lunch to children and young people across the full age range.

The school was at an interesting point in its all-through journey when I visited during the academic year 2017-18, as the first ever reception children from 2004 had reached year 13 and were set to leave the school that summer. Therefore, the school was just about to complete an important stage of its all-through evolution, by seeing

a cohort from the age of four right through to 18. During my second visit I was fortunate enough to be able to speak to a young person who had made that journey. The school was also at a point where leaders were re-visiting their vision for school. In autumn 2017 the school had had an OFSTED inspection which had resulted in a judgement of *Requires Improvement,* which had been a disappointment to leaders and teachers and had left them with a sense that accountability regimes do not fully understand the demands of all-through schools. The principal was also in the position of being relatively new to the school (in the first term of his third year at the point of my first visit) but leading a senior team of mostly long serving 'home grown' members of staff, many of whom had been founding members of staff at the school. During the course of the visits that academic year it became clear that leaders were reflecting hard on their priorities and were planning how to move forward with a renewed all-through vision.

Professional profiles of research participants at School A.

The principal was in his third year at the school at the time of my visits. He was an experienced headteacher from a secondary teaching background, who had undertaken two executive headships before taking on this position. The vice principal was the head of the primary phase and had been at the school since its inception. Her prior professional background had been in primary teaching, including having been a headteacher in a stand-alone primary school. The assistant headteacher interviewed about transition had joined the school in its second year of operation as an NQT, had trained as a secondary teacher of MFL, but had also taught languages in the school's primary phase. The head of MFL was an experienced middle leader, who was secondary trained but also taught across phase at the school; and the teacher of Spanish interviewed taught across phase and had worked in another all-through school in the region. All of the practitioners interviewed were 'boundary spanners' (Richter et al, 2006) in that they taught or led in a cross-phase way.

Student focus groups

I spoke to two focus groups of children/young people in both the primary and secondary phases of the school. The secondary focus group students had all made the transition between the primary and secondary phases themselves and one year 13 student had been at the school since reception (i.e. had made the whole all-

through journey at the school). The primary focus group comprised ten children from year two to year six and the secondary group was made up of nine pupils from year seven to year 13. Individuals in both groups had produced digital images ahead of the focus group sessions, which they presented and discussed, as part of the focus group activities. Figure 7.1 shows student views from discussion collated onto a flipchart.

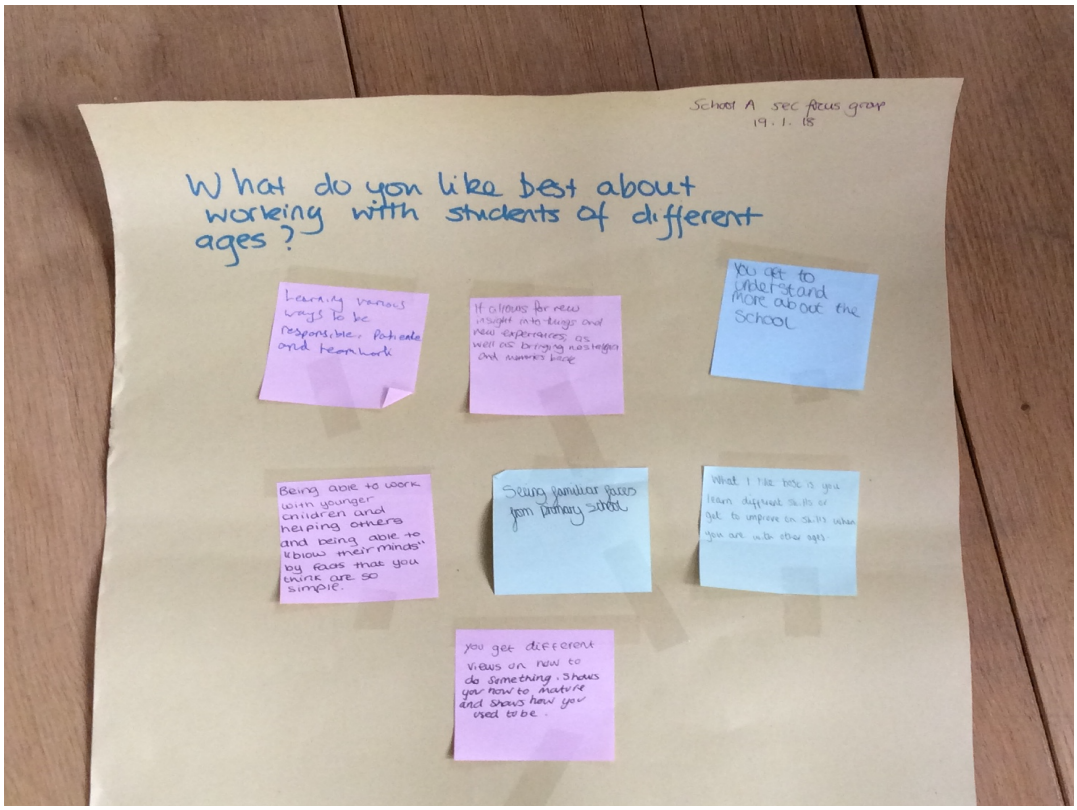


Figure 7.1: School A - Post-it collation sheet from the focus group discussions

Leadership and governance

The school has a single governing body (GB)/trust board, as a 'stand--alone' academy. All GB committees cover all-through/whole school matters. For example, the standards committee monitors educational standards from EYFS to KS5. Following inspection feedback and reflection during the school year 2017-18 the school was planning to re-structure its governance systems in 2018-19. The intention was to slim down the number of committees and to have just finance committee and full GB meetings. It was felt this would lead to governors having a deeper understanding of all phases of the school and would achieve a greater coherence of vision, within this very large organisation. Nonetheless, there remains

a challenge for the GB to absorb and understand the significance of school improvement data: 'the sheer volume of performance indicators that a school this size generates is staggering' (principal).

When the school opened, there was a principal and three vice principals. The founding vision was that all leaders should have all-through responsibilities, although one vice principal has always led the primary phase. In recent years this had reduced to two vice principals on the grounds of cost, although the school was planning to recruit a third vice principal for the following school year. As the school has grown, the leadership team has grown, adding assistant headteachers and responsibilities tend to now sit more in either the primary or secondary phase. Three assistant headteachers oversee a key stage in the secondary phase, one assistant headteacher is a leader in the primary phase and there is also an assistant headteacher with responsibility for teaching and learning across the all-through school. In addition, there is an assistant headteacher who is the DSL and leads on SEND and one who is a secondary pastoral/ behaviour lead.

The majority of leaders at assistant headteacher level are 'home-grown', having worked at the school and progressed from middle leadership roles. The principal felt that there were both advantages and disadvantages to having a high number of leaders who had progressed from within the school. These colleagues have an excellent knowledge of the school, its staff, students and families and are extremely committed to the school. However, he felt that external appointees can sometimes bring new perspectives and fresh ideas, which can help to move a school forward. The vice principal (primary) described how the founding vision for the school had been to have senior roles with cross-phase links and that while that had been preserved to an extent, the realities of working in a large school with the usual pressures of accountability and performativity meant that colleagues often have to revert to their 'default' primary of secondary focus.

Vision and values

The school was founded as an all-through school, with a clear all-through vision. A key founding aim was to be a school to serve its local families and to be a hub for the community. During the academic year of my visits a distilled version of the vision

had been relaunched with staff and students around a new motto. The principal felt that the motto encapsulated the 'real things' that were happening in the school in every lesson. The motto was used across all phases and was interpreted and made age-appropriate by practitioners. For example, he commented that how it would be used with four-year-olds would be very different to how it would be interpreted and enacted with 18-year-olds, but that learners of all ages could understand and gain from focus around the same aims.

The values curriculum, house system and all-through events

There is a coordinated values programme, led by the vice principal, which operates across the whole all-through school. Each half term a different value is discussed, and promoted across the whole school. The value (for example, honesty) will be considered in class, through tutor time and through the assembly progamme in all phases. The school is working towards achieving a values education quality mark. Values education is also often a catalyst for cross-phase work, with older students leading activities and cross-phase project groups.

The house system operates across phases. Three heads of house are secondary based and one is primary based. House assemblies (approximately one per half term) involve all children/young people in the house from reception to year 13. These gatherings reinforce a sense of the school community spanning the whole 4-19 age range and help to create a family feel in each house (as described by the student focus groups). House cross-phase assemblies have a strong celebratory culture and learners of all ages often see children/young people receiving recognition and praise. The school has co-ordinated a number of themed days in recent years which have been operated in a vertical, cross-phase way. During my discussions with them, staff and students recalled these as high impact, memorable learning experiences. The student focus groups spoke enthusiastically about the day at the start of each academic year, which has cross-phase activities, and the cross-phase dimensions of the house system.

Pedagogy and curriculum

The majority of teachers teach within either the primary or secondary phases of the school. The areas of all-through practice showcased and discussed by the school

during the visits were: the English all-through curriculum, primary MFL taught by the school's secondary MFL team and the vertical values curriculum. Earlier in the school's history it had been able to blend the primary/secondary, generalist/ specialist teaching inputs more, but this now restricted due to financial constraints (considered later in this chapter).

Spanish: cross-phase teaching

During the visits I spoke to senior leaders, the head of MFL and a teacher of Spanish about the school's MFL provision at KS2. All perceived that there are advantages for learners in using the school's own secondary trained specialists at KS2. Teachers and leaders consider that there is a noticeable difference between the conversational abilities of KS3 students coming through the school's own primary phase and those from other primary schools. The head of department and the teacher of Spanish both gave specific examples of greater linguistic complexity developed during years five and six which are manifest and embedded in the use of Spanish by the all-through cohort in KS3: the use of tenses, the use of connectives to produce more complex sentences, and the ability to express opinions on topics. They reported that the children coming in from other primary settings may have some prior knowledge of Spanish, but that this is usually limited to vocabulary recall (for example, knowing the numbers) and the use of very simple sentences.

Specialist teachers feel that MFL pedagogy is readily adaptable for younger learners and that those who are MFL trained are well placed to engage and enthuse primary learners. In the approach adopted by School A at KS2 there is a strong emphasis on oral work and games and songs are used to motivate the younger learners and reinforce language learning. The head of MFL explained 'I would say the MFL pedagogy works quite well in primary… I'm not necessarily adapting it massively'. Both MFL colleagues spoken to had gained some prior experience of teaching MFL in primary settings before joining the school. They were of the view that specialist teachers bring stronger subject knowledge and teacher mastery of MFL pedagogy than non-specialists teaching primary languages. They also felt that in schools unsupported by MFL specialists, the MFL provision can be 'the first thing to go' when there are other demands on primary classteachers. This opinion was based upon

their work in other primary settings and from their experiences as parents of primary aged children.

Teachers were appreciative of the potential for continuity of learning in MFL and also of the opportunity to sustain pupil-teacher relationships over many years. An example was given of working with a year five group teaching the students Spanish and then five years later still working with some of those same children as young people in year ten. The head of MFL described how rewarding he had found working with a particular student he had taught every year from year five to the end of sixth form. The student went on to do very well in his AS level in German, but the teacher observed 'it's beyond that, isn't it?' The teacher of Spanish mentioned how lovely she found it when she was greeted enthusiastically by the primary aged students in the school canteen at lunchtime. Both practitioners felt that there were benefits on a human level for pupils and teachers of working in an all-through way. The head of MFL contrasted this with specialist MFL teaching inputs at stand-alone primary schools where the specialist has no prior or subsequent contact with learners and is in danger of operating on what he termed a '*Spanish and vanish'* basis.

<u>English as a 4-19 curriculum: innovative all-through practice</u>

A lead practitioner in the primary phase had worked with the head of faculty in secondary phase and together they had started to look at English as a continuum from KS1 to KS4. Particular attention had been paid to the KS2 into KS3 transition in the subject and a bridging scheme of work had been written. Schemes which require sustained reading had been developed and put into years five and six, and year seven now has more work on the technical skills of writing. The practitioners felt that this rectified what they saw as an imbalance between the KS2 and KS3 approaches to English. They perceived that the final years of primary education traditionally have a high emphasis on the technical aspects of writing, because of the preparation for SATs. The bridging scheme aims to even out the pupils' experiences of the subject and develop a range of skills across reading and writing. This in-house approach has been broadened out to encompass the cluster primaries and now the majority of year seven arrive having all read and worked on the same novel in year six. Leaders feel this has been successful because teachers in both

phases have been receptive to co-operation and working in different ways and have developed a 'mindset' which supports all-through working.

During my second visit, I observed a joint year five/year nine English lesson in the main LRC. The lesson was based around Macbeth, which the year nine students had been studying and involved the students working in small cross-phase groups on a descriptive writing task. During the plenary session, groups shared their joint work, by reading out the drafts of their descriptive passage. Teachers were pleased with the end products of the collaborative working session and felt that learning objectives were met. What was also striking to me as an observer was the extent to which the cross-phase groups seemed at ease with each other, with the year nine students being sensitive and supportive while working with the younger children. The year five students, in turn, grew in confidence during the session and a number of year five students chose to be the spokesperson for their mixed age group at the end and read their joint work aloud to the group of over 50 children and young people.

Sport and the Arts in the curricular and extra-curricular life of the school

Physical Education (PE) was not an area of focus planned ahead of the visits, but having toured the school and having spoken to the student focus groups, it was apparent that the school is well-equipped in this area and that sport and other extra-curricular activities play an important role in the life of the school. Leaders place a high value on student participation in the extra-curricular programme and successes in these fields are celebrated publicly. Aspirations are high, with a number of regional and national champions at the school. The principal said that he had recently challenged years seven and eight to 'get me a gold medal'.

The school is well-equipped with impressive facilities for PE and performing arts, which are shared across phase. This sharing is extended to a wider cluster of primary schools to an extent, when School A hosts cluster/locality sporting events. Students spoke passionately about how much they enjoy and appreciate the extra-curricular provision at the school. A year 13 student told me about his enjoyment and developing abilities in Drama, which had been fostered during his time at school and had led him to apply to study Drama at university. The principal talked very

animatedly about KS1-3 school talent show, which had an inclusive atmosphere and included some 'stunningly good' contributions from children of all ages. Primary and secondary pupils performed on an equal basis: 'we didn't even talk about how old people were, and that's really fantastic' (principal).

All-through working: developing beyond 'Two Tribes'

Tribal mindsets can still be evident in all-through schools, although the configuration provides the opportunity for practitioners to broaden their professional expertise and experience in another phase of education. In the interview with the assistant headteacher for transition and the vice principal (primary leader) both mentioned the 'Two Tribes' issues which were evident in the school's early years of operation, when the idea of an all-through school was very novel. They found that some secondary colleagues had little knowledge of primary education, particularly EYFS and had believed that 'all they did was play all day'. They also described encountering some professional snobbery when cross-phase teaching was being set up, with some secondary staff questioning whether primary practitioners were qualified to teach in the secondary phase.

The MFL teachers described their journey to becoming confident in teaching in the primary phase. One teacher admitted being daunted when she first saw that she had year five on her timetable and that she felt that she had taken time to adjust to the 'neediness' of younger children. Differences in approaches and organisation can seem striking when first working in another phase. For example, the head of MFL described his first primary lesson at another school where he 'couldn't get his head around' the fact that the children were sitting on the carpet when he entered the classroom. However, these differences are quite superficial and practitioners described adjusting and adapting and now feeling very comfortable teaching in the other phase.

In my first interview with the principal and the vice principal (primary) we discussed aspects of the traditional professional divide between primary and secondary practitioners. The principal mentioned the differing terminologies between the two groups: 'of course the language in primary is very different'. Part of his adjustment to leading in an all-through setting had been to familiarise himself and learn the

language of primary education. The vice principal expressed what she considered could be a tension between the primary vision to educate the whole child and the secondary emphasis on subject specialism. She noted that secondary colleagues will often identify themselves from the outset by their subject ('I'm a geography teacher' etc.) and that primary colleagues can feel nervous in situations where they feel their subject knowledge is being scrutinised. Both were clear that these 'Two Tribes' mentalities can exist in an all-through school, but that there is a tremendous potential to break these down in a cross-phase setting.

Transition and transfer at KS2 into KS3

'Transition is about more than what happens on two days in July' (vice principal).

Through the curricular and extra-curricular links described in this chapter section and the extensive house and values work, the school's own primary children are arguably prepared over *years* for the move into year seven/secondary phase. By accessing the shared spaces on the campus and through the curricular links, they become familiar with the wider school campus and some of the staff who work predominately in the secondary phase. In addition to the House and sporting cross-phase events described, there is also a cross-phase choir, which involves singers from years six to nine. This is one of three very successful choirs which operate at the school. One pupil told me how much she had enjoying being a part of the choir and that she felt sad that her time in the group was coming to an end.

The majority of the secondary students spoken to perceived that those moving up from School A's own year six have an advantage in the transition into secondary phase. They believe this comes from familiarity with the building and some teachers and knowing what to expect. They also perceive a social advantage in already knowing a proportion of their year seven class and the year group. One secondary pupil said that the friends he had made at primary phase were still his good friends well into his secondary education. One of the primary focus group stated that she felt confident about transition because she could see what it is like there through the shared dining area and through cross-phase activities. Another primary pupil commented 'what's really good about being in this school is …we don't have to worry as much about going into secondary because we know the older students'.

The school's approach to the actual mechanics and practicalities of the KS2/3 transition reflects what is standard practice in many schools: visits to year six pupils and their teachers, information sharing, SEND transition and an induction day(s) in July of year six. Once the students join in September each year, there is a planned induction period before the formal timetable starts to run. Leaders managing transition noted that children coming from the school's own year six are 'known'. This knowledge extends beyond learning to the whole child and their family. Leaders felt this supports transition, as it is easy for secondary staff to find someone who knows the child well if difficulties or issues arise during year seven. Those coming up from within the all-through school have a more 'comfortable' transition (the perception of transition leaders and the secondary student focus group).

Relationships with other primary schools and transfer

As students proceed to year seven the two classes of the all-through cohort are joined by seven forms of entry of children from other primary schools. The year seven teaching groups are created by mixing children from different schools, which means each class of 30 contains five or six children from the all-through cohort. The majority of those joining in year seven come from a group of cluster primary schools in the immediate area. In addition to the school's own all-through working, it has been keen to develop close working relationships with other primaries in its cluster. Events such as cluster sporting competitions are also an opportunity for other primary children to visit the school and use the facilities.

From the perspective of the principal the largest challenges at transfer are for children coming from beyond the schools' cluster primaries: 'we've had to adapt our transition arrangements for non-cluster students to reduce anxiety. Because we're a huge school and sometimes you're coming from a single-form rural school to this huge place and that's very, very scary'. He was of the view that those from the cluster schools also build up a familiarity with the secondary campus ahead of transfer through shared events and because of evening and weekend community use of the site. Initiatives such as the English bridging unit were also part of the school's relationship with the cluster schools and their shared aim of establishing a continuity

of learning between phases and maintaining the progress of trajectory of the students into year seven and beyond.

Challenges and barriers faced by School A

OFSTED and the challenges of performativity

The pressures to secure student outcomes and the requirements of OFSTED are seen as barriers to all-through working by the practitioners interviewed. Meeting the criteria for OFSTED *Good* or *Outstanding* across all key stages is a viewed as challenging. My first research visit was shortly after the school had undergone an OFSTED inspection. Quite naturally leaders' reflections upon this experience formed part of our conversations in the interviews. One consequence of the inspection had been that the principal felt that an even greater proportion of his time was now being spent in the secondary phase, following up on areas for improvement highlighted by the inspection, to the detriment of his all-through focus. The principal and vice principal felt that the inspection team of four inspectors did not have the time to see the whole of the school in operation or appreciate its scope and therefore, that areas of very positive practice were not seen. Their main concern about how all-through schools fare in the inspection regime is that by having six key stages examined, the chances of the team finding something they are not happy with are higher than for stand-alone schools.

During the field work it become clear that the pressures of performativity weigh heavily upon leaders and teachers and are a barrier to all-through working. The pressure to 'chase the grades' (vice principal) means that time for cross-phase working is squeezed. It also means that staff deployment decisions have to relate to optimising student outcomes in key national assessments. The principal explained the logic of such decisions: 'if I don't get that number up to that place there by June I'm stuffed, so, therefore, I'll keep that teacher in that class there, pushing on that number.' This was shared pragmatically, as a recognition of the realities of functioning within a performative system. This relates, in turn, to the high stakes nature of the English education system. The perception of this pressure was evident in conversations with individuals at all levels in School A (as I believe it would be in the vast majority of English state schools). The transition leader observed 'we are

judged by the results that come out in August and… if we don't get the results we have all sorts of consequences that come with that'.

The transition leader also expressed the view that the scale of cross-phase working was impeded by the pressures in both educational phases to achieve high scores in national tests. She felt there was a balance to be achieved between professionals' 'ethical and moral' desire to provide the best possible holistic education for the students and the 'obligation to make sure they leave school with every door open to them'. What is interesting in her observation, is that she is seeing beyond the school performance measures and recognising the real world currency of school examination results for the older students (a point which is sometimes lost in the performativity debate). Viewed in this light, the decisions made around prioritising the staffing and timetabling of examination classes make perfect sense. Individual schools are not in a position to challenge or change the wider system and so can only make the best decisions they can within its constraints. Nonetheless, these constraints seem to impact upon all-through schools' capacity to develop their cross-phase working.

Financial challenge at School A

Schools' finances are a major concern for school leaders across the country, after a prolonged period of austerity in public services. In addition to the financial situation across the state education sector in England, the particular financial challenges of being an all-through school remain a concern to School A and in recent years have constrained some aspects of all-through working. In the case of School A, the financial strain of the school building's PFI arrangements have had an enormous impact on the school too, which compounds the financial disadvantage of being a single all-through school. The principal gave the example of having to pay around £20,000 on window cleaning annually, which he has absolutely no control over. Whist the campus is undoubtedly a 'fantastic facility' he is frustrated at the 'stupid amounts of money' which are committed to maintaining it in the PFI contract.

The school is aware that relatively speaking, stand-alone primaries and secondaries are generally better funded than all-through schools; for example, all-throughs often have only one lump sum. This is the case at School A and leaders feel this is a basic

unfairness in the way funds are devolved to schools. The school has the same student numbers and the same running costs as a stand-alone primary and secondary school, but receives only one lump sum to cover a very large organisation. Leaders feel that if this could be rectified it would create a much less austere operating environment: 'it would make a huge difference if we had the equivalent of the primary and secondary lump sum' (vice principal).

The most concrete impact of financial constraint relates to the levels of staffing the school can afford. In the past, the school had been able to staff at a level in its secondary phase which allowed it to deploy some specialist teachers to also teach in KS2. Previously, there had been some cross-phase teaching in science, the Arts and DT, in addition to the MFL teaching which has been maintained. Now the school has to operate a lean staffing model, which allows it to cover the main timetable, but no more. This limits the school's ability to offer specialist teaching in KS2 or indeed to use any of its primary classteachers in a cross-phase way. The principal described this as there being simply no 'slack' in the system to enable anything above the essential to take place.

Overcoming challenges

Whilst there was a clear recognition of some significant challenges faced by the practitioners spoken to there was also a determination to find solutions and ways forward. Practitioners are keenly aware of the causes of their constraints and are determined to move beyond them. For example, in my final interview with the principal he observed 'the accountability framework pushed everyone to their focus of getting the headline data and by doing that it turns people into GCSE specialists or KS2 specialists or A level specialists. That's not really what we want. We need to unwind that and fix it'. At the time of my final visit the Principal was also considering practical steps forward to re-ignite cross-phase teaching in a wider range of subjects, by considering secondary teachers' capacity towards the end of the summer term when the public examinations are over and the specialist facilities are less heavily used.

All-through advantages

Advantages of all-through working developed by School A:

Some aspects of all-through practice which practitioners and students considered to be advantages have already been covered earlier in this chapter section and are:

- An eased transition to KS3 for the all-through cohort
- Innovative cross-phase practice in English
- Cross-phase teaching in MFL

Further advantages are considered below.

Admissions: advantages for the all-through cohort

Children in year six at an all-through school progress to year seven automatically and do not need to apply for a secondary school place. Depending upon the school's location and particular circumstances many perceive that this places children in the all-through cohort at an advantage in the admissions system. It certainly gives parents certainty, as once a child has been admitted into reception, they can stay at the school all the way until the end of year 13 if they wish. In the case of School A, there had been a perception amongst parents of other children that School A's children were being advantaged. Some years ago (before the current principal was appointed) this advantage was challenged and the school's admissions criteria (based on catchment/ distance) were referred to the admissions adjudicator. As a result admission to reception is now allocated on the basis of a randomised ballot. This does not change the all-through advantage but does mean that local children's chance of gaining that advantage is now equal.

The principal understands why admissions have been randomised, but observed that there are some unanticipated consequences of this approach to admissions. It means, for example, that two children who are next door neighbours and have been friends at the same nursery, may be allocated different primary schools. He also believes that some parents are deterred from applying to the all-through school as they are not guaranteed a place and choose instead to apply for a primary which has a catchment area. Nonetheless, once admitted to the school, children automatically keep their place as they transfer into the secondary years of education.

All-through working: opportunities for professional growth

As detailed in earlier sections, practitioners spoken to have described their initial learning curves and professional growth through their engagement in all-through working. The MFL teachers interviewed considered that the opportunity to teach across phases was in itself part of their CPD. The vice principal, who had previously been a headteacher in a stand-alone primary school, spoke passionately about the opportunities presented by being able to work in an all-through school: 'the opportunity for development, professional development and everything else is phenomenal within this setting'. The principal felt that it was a continuous process of learning ('I'm still learning'), particularly about the phase of education which was not part of leaders' initial teacher training and professional experience.

Practitioners felt all-through schools are particularly well placed to foster cross-phase understanding and to be able to take the best from primary and secondary practice and create a blend of both. The transition leader felt that all-through working placed practitioners in a 'prime position' to 'take the great bits from primary phase that are applicable and use them really, really well and vice versa'. The head of MFL felt that he gained a deep understanding of practice in the primary phase and that cross-phase teaching meant that he had greater diversity in his daily professional experience.

Advantages for the all-through cohort

'This is a place where children thrive because children are cared for, because at the end of the day, their well-being is at the centre of everything we are trying to do' (assistant headteacher for transition).

The school works hard to have a caring ethos and be a place where children and young people are known. Those on the longest journeys, from reception to year 13, are very well known and understood by staff. The comments made by the student focus group echo this, in that they perceive their school to be a caring and kind community. Leaders believe that the continuity of contact supports the students' well-being as they progress through the school. The transition leader gave an example of a child who when he entered the school it had been assumed he would never able to live independently. Over many years at the school he had flourished and as a young man had been able to go on to university. She felt this was a powerful example

of what can be achieved in an all-through environment, where relationships and support can be established over many years. The vice principal was of the opinion that vulnerable learners in the all-through cohort are particularly well supported as they progress through the school, as leaders and teachers are able to anticipate their needs and plan for their transition well in advance. She contrasted this with occasions when a child's needs had not been adequately communicated at the point of transfer from another primary school, which had resulted in distress and failure.

The all-through campus provides opportunities for students of all ages to share facilities and mix informally (for example in the LRC and in the shared dining area). The purpose-built nature of School A's all-through campus aids all-through working and the cross-phase experiences the children/young people enjoy. In the focus groups, the students stated that they valued the opportunities to develop and maintain their cross-phase friendships and familial links. In the photo elicitation activity the majority of images produced by students were of parts of the campus and they talked about the curricular and extra-curricular activities they enjoy and the cross-phase contact the site facilitates. The school was better equipped for this aspect of all-through contact than the other case study schools I visited, who face the challenges of split campuses. For the primary all-through cohort there is the advantage of being able to access facilities on the secondary part of the campus which enhance their learning and extra-curricular experiences. The head of MFL felt that the opportunities for informal cross-phase contact between students was very valuable. He had recently observed some 'unlikely' older students at lunchtime engaging with some quite challenging primary age boys with special needs, in a really positive and supportive way: 'it was glorious. It was absolutely lovely'.

Advantages for families and family engagement

Practitioners remarked on the family feel of the school and the sense of the school being a community or family in itself. The proximity of the primary and secondary buildings enables older children to take their younger siblings to and from school. During one of my research visits I arrived at the start of the school day and was able to see children and young people of all ages walking together and inter-mingling with parents/carers of the very youngest children. The sense of familial and friendship connection was also remarked upon by the student focus groups.

Leaders firmly believe that all-through working means that families are better supported and understood. It also means that cross-phase discussions about families can happen in a timely way. The transition leader believes that parents of the all-through cohort are advantaged at the point of transition to secondary phase because they are already familiar with the staff and systems of the school. In the same way that the school is proud that children are 'known', leaders feel the parents/carers/ families of the all-through cohort become very well known to key staff, which is mutually beneficial and further supports the child. Leaders feel this deeper working relationship with parents is particularly impactful when the child has a high level of need or the family itself is in any way vulnerable.

7.2 School B: case study report

School context and its all-through journey

School B is part of a federation which includes other all-through schools. It is a well-regarded and over-subscribed school, serving a socially mixed urban area. In recent years the federation of schools has formed its own multi-academy trust (MAT). The school became an all-through school in 2008, when it agreed to take on a local primary school which found itself in challenging circumstances. In effect, the schools merged and the primary now has the same DfE number as the secondary (i.e. one institution/legal entity). There are two forms of entry in the primary phase and a further four forms of entry join in year seven, to make year groups of 180 in the secondary phase. The school merger presented challenges in itself. The principal reported that some of the primary staff were disaffected about the situation the school found itself in and the plan to merge into one all-through academy. Staff were transferred over to be employed by the academy trust through a TUPE process. The school then had to work with the staff to secure an improvement in standards and found that individuals either worked hard to achieve the shared goals, or chose to leave the school in the first years of operating as an all-through school.

The all-through school operates on three sites: a primary site, a KS3 site and a KS4/5 campus. The sites are a walkable distance from each other (between a ten and 20 minute walk) and a regular shuttle mini bus operates between the two secondary sites. All sites have main buildings which are Victorian and on the

secondary sites there are additional newer buildings and annexes, which have been added over time. Three years ago the MAT opened a primary free school, which is located in a brand new building on a site immediately adjacent to School B's KS4/5 campus. Whilst the Free School has a separate DfE number, it works closely with the all-through school and is part of the all-through collaborative working and school/MAT leadership structures. The children at the free school will also eventually progress into the all-through school's secondary phase at year seven.

Professional profiles of the adult research participants at School B.

The principal had originally joined the school when it was a secondary CTC in 1999 as head of computing and had worked continuously at the school ever since. He became principal in 2008, at the point the school took on its primary phase. The school year of my visits (2017-18) was in fact his final year as headteacher of the school, as he was moving on to another role within the MAT. The head of the primary phase was a primary trained teacher and leader, with 16 years teaching experience. She was in her third year as head of primary and also undertook all-through leadership responsibilities as part of her role. The headteacher of the primary free school was also in his third year in post and had been the deputy and then headteacher at another primary free school, before joining this trust. The assistant headteacher with oversight of the KS2 into KS3 transition was an experienced secondary teacher, with no teaching or leadership role in the primary. The head of year seven was also based in the secondary phase and came from a secondary teaching background. However, he spent some time in the primary phase, as part of his responsibility for managing the year six into year seven transition. The governor spoken to was also a parent, whose four children had joined the school when the family had moved to the area. Initially two of her children joined the primary phase and two went into the secondary phase. At the point of my visit she had two children still in the secondary phase of the school. She was able to offer a governance perspective and that of a parent whose children had experienced an all-through education.

Student focus groups

I spoke to two focus groups of students, one from both phases of the school and discussed the all-through nature of the school. The students in the secondary focus

group were able to reflect upon and discuss the transition between the two phases, having all experienced it themselves. There were eight participants in the primary focus group, ranging from year four to year six. The secondary focus group had seven participants ranging from year seven to year ten. All of the secondary participants had attended the school's own primary phase. It had been intended that all focus group participants would have made their own digital images ahead of the focus groups session. However, this did not happen in the case of the primary focus group.

Leadership and governance

The principal of School B led and line managed the two vice principals and the two primary headteachers. The primary headteachers operate as the local headteacher on their sites, but are also part of the all-through senior leadership team. There is a weekly meeting of all senior leaders (everyone at assistant headteacher and above level) across all phases. This is designed to give all leaders an all-through perspective and engender a sense of the institution as one entity. Leaders spoken to expressed their enthusiasm for the professional learning and development which working in an all-through setting facilitates and the opportunities to develop their knowledge it provided beyond those available in a single phase setting.

In conversation with the principal we touched upon the dynamics of leadership within an all-through school and an all-through MAT context. He felt that individual leaders (for example heads of primary) could perceive that they have less autonomy than headteachers in stand-alone schools. However, he believed that this is off-set by the 'comfort' of being part of a larger organisation and therefore being perhaps less personally vulnerable to outside pressures and accountabilities. He was of the view that shared leadership came with shared accountability and that if something went badly, for example in the primary years 'I won't be hanging my primary headteachers out to dry'. This collegiate and supportive approach contrasts with some of the realities of modern headship in the wider system.

The school has its own LGB, which operates within its overall MAT governance structures. The chair of governors at the school also sits on the trust board. In the principal's view developing all-through governance it is still a work in progress even

in this established setting, which involves training governors to be able to offer appropriate challenge about all educational phases. He identified that school and trust expansion can expose a vulnerability in governance, as the governance systems have to keep pace with the scale and scope of the organisation as it grows. However, he viewed these challenges more as 'teething problems' than insurmountable issues. At the point of our final interview the principal was having to contemplate the school's governance moving forward without him. He also identified a change in school leader as a moment of vulnerability in governance, as the headteacher can often be a 'key driver' for the all-through vision at LGB meetings.

In the view of the parent governor interviewed, the LGB appreciates the potential advantages of the all-through setting: 'I think that the consensus is it's a good thing'. Nonetheless, developing the knowledge to offer sufficient challenge at all key stages is demanding, noting: 'the volume of data we look at and the volume of things we have to cover in our meeting'. However, a rolling programme of governor training ensures their familiarity with school improvement data at all levels and the governor was of the view that it is the responsibility of individual governors to ensure that they read papers carefully ahead of meetings and are well informed about all areas of the school.

Vision, values and moral purpose

Leaders interviewed had a clear vision that their all-through work links to moral purpose and social justice. They viewed becoming an all-through school as the right thing to do at the time, even though the change had inherent challenges and risks. Children who were in a primary school which had faced significant challenges were now part of an *Outstanding* all-through school, with the automatic right to a place in year seven. The school talks about the 'School B Advantage' for children who progress from its own primary phases into the secondary. The idea is that by being with the school from reception onwards, the children will have access to opportunities which will provide an advantage as they progress through the years of their schooling (e.g. the opportunity to learn a musical instrument). Therefore, all-through education is championed in the dialogue with parents and stakeholders and is linked to the vision and values of the school.

The student focus groups were helpful in creating a picture of the school's traditions and values and how these are experienced and lived by the pupils. There are established systems at both phases for student democracy and leadership. Participants spoke about their roles as student leaders (head boy, school captain, school council members etc.) and were clearly proud of making a contribution to their school. This was also evident in some of the digital images produced by the secondary students. They had been given the opportunity to make some images ahead of the focus group discussion. They had chosen to take some pictures in the primary phase and these included a picture of the board which shows the names of primary head boys and girls: their image showed a couple of students pointing to their names. The two students seemed very conscious of having a part in their school's history and almost a sense of their own legacy, in that they referred to children for years to come being able to see their names.

Over half of the primary focus group had an older sibling in the secondary phase of the school and this familial connection in itself also led some of the primary pupils spoken to to visit and be familiar with the other school sites. One of the images taken by the secondary focus showed a secondary girl pointing at her sibling's picture as part of a group photograph which was on display in the primary building. In common with the views of students in School A, cross-phase family and friendship ties are keenly felt and add to a sense of cohesion across the school. One of the primary focus group commented 'it's like we're all a big family, but.. just in different areas.' One primary pupil also mentioned feeling part of a wider family of schools and made direct reference to the name of the MAT.

Curriculum, pedagogy and cross-phase teaching

The majority of teachers work within one phase of education at the school (i.e. primary or secondary). However, some teachers work across phase, usually in subject areas where the school has planned for subject specialist inputs at KS2 or even KS1. Secondary trained specialists teach in the primary phase in music, PE, ICT and MFL. However, as all-through working has developed, the school's approach has become more varied and inventive, with existing generalist primary teachers 'up-skilled' to teach subject specialist inputs (e.g. in primary languages), or

in the case of the free school, primary teachers who already have a highly developed subject specialist knowledge are actively recruited.

Cross-phase teaching has been a strategy used at the school since it became all-through in 2008. However, in common with School A, the financial imperative to operate a lean staffing model means that the scope for cross-phase teaching has had to become concentrated in certain subject areas. The school has also been keen to innovative its approaches and adapt them to its own setting. The primary free school headteacher spoke to me about the MAT's idea of developing some teachers as middle years specialists in the future. These are likely to be year five and six teachers, who have a strong subject knowledge in either mathematics or English and who could be professionally developed and supported to teach up to year nine. This would lead to further blurring of the pedagogical boundaries between KS2 and KS3, but would also be a bespoke solution in a school which has the particular challenge of having its KS3 students on an entirely separate campus.

Music: cross-phase teaching, curricular and extra-curricular provision

Music assumes a very high profile in the life of school and a director of music coordinates both the formal curriculum across all phases and the extensive extra-curricular offer. In the days of specialist status, the school had had a music specialism and before that, music had always traditionally played a central role in the school's curricular and extra-curricular provision. In the primary phase the main teacher is a secondary trained music specialist and there is a team of peripatetic instrumental teachers. All children have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument in the primary phase and this feeds through to the secondary phase, with its full and varied music provision. During my visits, I saw a group of four primary students being taught the clarinet together and also observed a year four rehearsal for a musical production. The primary headteacher considered that music provision is 'exceptional' and that her own staff would have 'struggled' to have offered such high quality provision without the support provided by being part of the all-through school, with its access to subject specialists.

The principal felt that the extensive musical offer in the school's own primary phase is also socially inclusive: it gives children who otherwise would not have had the

opportunity to have access to these sorts of musical experiences the chance to participate (e.g. by learning an orchestral instrument). Up until the school year 2016-17 instrumental tuition had been free for all students who had wanted it (funded by the trust's sponsors) and all primary aged students had the opportunity to start learning an instrument. This level of funding had reduced over the previous two years. The school still provides free instrumental tuition for those studying music to GCSE or A level and for pupil premium students. The remaining funding was being used to provide subsidized instrumental tuition for any students who would like it. The principal was particularly proud that aspects of musical life which in the wider world are white, middle class preserves have a distinctly more diverse flavour at the school: in the time since becoming an all-through school the school orchestra has gone from being around '90% white' to a diverse mix, which better represents the school population and its inner city community.

The principal felt that music provision in the all-through context is an area where the school is able to offer 'stage not age' learning: talented primary musicians are able to join musical ensembles with the older students. In the student focus groups, students of all ages talked enthusiastically about music and performance as something they enjoyed and as a special feature of their school. For a number it was how they felt and experienced their connection to the wider community of learners across all phases and sites of the school. Many of the primary pupils attend choirs, bands and orchestra rehearsals after school on the KS4 campus, where they played music with the secondary aged students. One secondary focus group student, however, expressed frustration that others coming from different primary schools are not yet at the same level in terms of reading/playing music etc. and that she felt that this had slowed the momentum of her own learning in the subject in year seven. This links to the experiences of some learners at transition in the wider system, explored in chapter three and to issues related to cross-phase MFL teaching considered in the next section.

Cross-phase MFL provision: innovative all-through practice

School B had decided to concentrate on the teaching of German as the first foreign language in both the primary and secondary phases. Unusually, German is taught from year one in the primary phase. Again, the school feels that starting a language

much earlier means that learners who might traditionally struggle in MFL, can have a positive learning experience and develop confidence and a subject knowledge base that enables them to be successful when they move into secondary phase. For many learners, the vision is that they will be supported to build upon their primary learning and may be ready to take their MFL GCSE early.

During my field visits, I was able to see how German is visible in the primary phase (signs and displays around school etc.) and used and valued (for example, a welcome in German and 'phrase of the week' in the primary phase assembly). I also observed year one/two children taking part in a parade, with German music and banners. In December 2017 there had also been a joint year six/year 11 educational visit to Berlin. During the visit the year 11 students supported the year six students in using their language skills in a real-life context, including during a visit to a German school. Having spoken to some of the primary children who had been on the visit, they were very appreciative of the opportunity and explained that one of their teachers had applied for funding for the trip which had meant that the cost was affordable. They also commented that they were impressed by the year 11 students' use of German: one primary pupil remarked 'it's just cool to hear people speaking other languages.'

I was also able to observe year two German teaching in two classes in the primary free school. Whilst it is not the purpose or intention of this research to make judgements about the quality of provision, based upon my own professional experience of teaching German, I felt that the practice observed was exceptional, both in terms of the skillful and expert MFL teaching seen and in the use and understanding of the target language shown by the year two children. What was particularly striking were the teachers' efforts to make the language learning age appropriate and engaging. The children were being taught the *Gruffalo* story in German and were then engaged in spoken activities, which involved language manipulation, but still focused ostensibly on the *Gruffalo* plotline. The lessons were taught using almost total immersion in the target language.

At the time of my visits the school was attempting to maintain the all-through cohort's learning advantage in German into the secondary phase in year seven, by organising

the MFL teaching classes to enable those with prior knowledge (i.e. the all-through cohort) to be in the same classes. This had presented practical challenges in terms of the timetable, but had the aim of ensuring the momentum of what had been achieved during the primary years was not lost at KS3. Piloting this approach in 2017-18 had been a concerted effort to address the difficulty of catering for learners with very different prior learning experiences. In the secondary student focus group I spoke to a year seven girl who felt advantaged by the MFL groupings and could recognise she was further on in the subject than students from other primary schools, in the other classes. However, on my final visit, the principal reported that it was not logistically possible to continue this in the following school year, due to timetabling constraints.

In my final discussion with the principal it was clear that whilst the school had a clear strategy for cross-phase MFL, maintaining the progress and enthusiasm trajectory into KS3 and beyond was still a challenge even in this all-through school. Naturally, a strategy which starts with children in year one is going to take many years before firm outcomes are observable towards the end of the secondary years of schooling. The principal also noted that despite the school's commitment to MFL, they currently still observe a decline in learner motivation for the subject at KS3. Given that it was no longer possible to timetable the all-through cohort separately for German in year seven, the principal was considering whether he could deploy some of his year five and six teachers on to year seven German, to establish a degree of continuity for the all-through cohort and with the aim of helping all learners to make a positive start to their KS3 language learning.

Combatting 'Two Tribes' mindsets

As considered in the case study section for School A, 'Two Tribes' issues can still be evident within all-through schools. At School B, I spoke to leaders who were both committed to all-through working and keen to challenge any perceptions of all-through education being a secondary led venture. The head of the primary free school observed that there is a danger in all-through working that 'there's sometimes maybe an assumption, or a natural occurrence, where KS3 or secondary shapes primary.' He was clear that School B was making a conscious effort to acknowledge

and learn from strong aspects of primary practice: 'we're quite keen to go the other way.'

The principal described some of the actions taken over time to reduce the sense of 'Two Tribes'. The all-through school was formed through a school merger and that posed a number of challenges in itself, including the need to challenge entrenched phase mindsets. The principal stopped conducting CAT testing year seven students on entry and asked all secondary teachers to rely on the KS2 data about the students. This cut to the heart of a 'Two Tribes' issue, when some secondary teachers can have a distrust of the KS2 data. The principal pointed out to staff that progress calculations at KS4 are based on KS2 data (i.e. they would ultimately all be held accountable based on progress from this baseline, whatever they thought of it) and asked the secondary teachers to consider whether they might be under-estimating what year seven students can do.

Transition and transfer at KS2 into KS3

In common with Schools A and C, School B has to manage both the school transfer of the majority of new learners who join the school at year seven and the transition of its own all-through cohort into the secondary phase. I spoke to the head of year seven and the assistant headteacher who has oversight of the KS2 into KS3 transfer and transition. The school's approach to the mechanics of the KS2/3 transfer of external students is very typical of practice in the wider system and that which is described in the transition literature: visits are made to the year six pupils and their class teachers from March each year, information sharing between schools takes place, there are SEND transition arrangements and an induction day in the summer term. Once the students join in September, there is a further planned induction period before the formal timetable starts to run.

The head of year seven and assistant headteacher noted how much easier they felt the internal transition process is within the all-through school in comparison to working with other schools. They view all-through working as easing the 'bureaucratical and jurisdictional boundaries of separate schools.' They described difficulties in scheduling visits to some schools that may only have one or two students joining the all-through school in year seven each September. For students

coming from the school's own year six, there is also an on-going dialogue, once students have moved into year seven. From the perspective of the transition leaders, in terms of the all-through school as an institution, the transition from year six into year seven is 'purely a geographical one..' because the pupils are simply moving from '..one building to a new building.' However, they also noted that from the pupils' perspective, there are still many changes to adjust to and it could not be assumed that all transitioning internally would not be daunted by aspects of the move to year seven.

Overall, however, those coming up from within the all-through school have a more 'comfortable' transition (the perception of transition leaders and the secondary student focus group), which is generally perceived very positively. However, this can mean that a small number of students can seem to some staff to be socially 'over confident', arriving already knowing a third of the year group and many of the year eight students. When I asked the secondary student focus group whether they perceived the all-through cohort were advantaged at the point of transition their view was an emphatic '100%.' They consider their move to KS3 was much lower jeopardy in social terms than that of students coming in from other schools. They described having the option of meeting new people and making new friends in year seven, but in the very secure context of already having established friendships: one boy in the secondary focus group described initial interactions with other students on the year seven induction day as 'so it's like you go and talk to other people, but then you'd always come back to the friends that you knew.' The transition leaders also mentioned what they described as the levels of 'comfort and confidence' the all-through cohort seem to display.

The school's approaches at year five and six mean that the curricular and pedagogical transition from KS2 to KS3 is less acutely felt by its own students. During the student focus group sessions, students mentioned that they already know some of the subject teachers and cover staff when they join year seven, which helps them to settle quickly. They also described a feeling of familiarity with the timings and school's systems, which they view as advantageous at the point of transition. The parent governor described her own son's successful transition within the all-through cohort, which she attributed in part to a 'deliberate continuity of teaching' at

the school and which she contrasted with the 'shock' experienced by her daughter who had joined the school in year eight knowing no-one when the family had moved to the area.

Challenges and barriers faced by School B

All-through challenges: finance and accountability

The main challenges faced by the school were deemed to be financial and those related to school accountability in the wider school system. The financial challenges of being an all-through remain a major concern for School B, as all-through schools are financially disadvantaged compared to stand-alone schools. The principal described a decline in the levels of the school's funding over time. The school had once enjoyed additional funding attached to particular government initiatives, such as specialist status and the early days of the academies programme: all such funding had dried up and all English state schools are facing an austere reality.

The school also views meeting the criteria for OFSTED *Outstanding* across all key stages as a significant challenge. This was first mentioned in the principal's questionnaire response (and was echoed by other all-through headteachers in the questionnaire findings during stage one of the research). As a result, School B is now seriously considering disaggregation. School B would maintain its all-through vision and working, but would have two DfE numbers, separate funding and separate OFSTED inspections and judgements for the primary and secondary phases. The principal was clear and pragmatic about the drivers for this change: OFSTED and school finances. He also explained that during this process, the school would be seeking to ensure that guaranteed progression for year six students into year seven would be maintained, so that the advantages described later in this section would be preserved, even though the school would technically no longer be an all-through school. When I asked whether the all-through vision would definitely be retained post-disaggregation he replied 'I can say yes with confidence.'

Split-site working as a barrier to all-through working

Operating an all-through school across three sites and then incorporating the primary free school on a fourth site adjacent to the KS4/5 building, presents a number of challenges. It also prevents, for example, some of the 'organic' interactions (e.g.

primary and secondary students sitting down together for lunch) I had seen at School A's all-age learning campus. However, the school is well used to multi-site working and works hard to mitigate this challenge and maintain contact and dialogue across the whole school. A regular shuttle minibus operates between the main KS3 and KS4/5 secondary campuses, easing some of the logistical challenges for staff who work across sites. The principal also felt that staff and pupils adjust to the reality of their setting and that the largest impact of split-site working was the need to plan in advance for cross-phase and cross-site contact, which involved primary aged students.

The pressure of performativity as a barrier to holistic education

The potential for the all-through configuration to support inclusion is explored later in this chapter section. However, as was the case in School A, considerations related to how school performance is measured and the impact of performativity on practice did arise in discussions at School B too. The parent governor had a dual perspective: she is someone operating as part of the support and challenge system for the school, but is also a parent of young people and a lay person. She was of the view that the current educational accountability system places an excessive emphasis on examination and test outcomes. In her view, the pressure of the performance agenda can work against the needs of some children and young people; 'we are so data orientated… you forget that these are children who need a holistic education.' She was of the view that because the system places so much emphasis on public examinations and national tests that the impact on students who do not do well can be acute and distressing: a disappointing set of GCSE results can feel 'like the end of the world' to the young person.

Pressures of performativity appear as evident in this all-through context as in any other. The students in the secondary focus group recalled year six as an experience dominated by preparation for SATs: one year nine girl commented we had 'six months of SATs… we had to do SATs preparation, that we had to survive.' The choice of the word 'survive' indicates that the national tests and the build-up to them are seen as an unpleasant rite of passage at the end of the primary years. This resonates with views expressed in the literature explored in chapter three and in the CPR (Alexander, 2010) in particular.

All-through advantages

Advantages of all-through working developed by School B:

The school has a clear, shared vision around securing the 'School B Advantage' for all-through learners in the school and this 'advantage' is articulated to students and parents. Some aspects of all-through practice which practitioners considered to be advantages have already been covered earlier in this chapter section and are:

- The development of an all-through approach to the curriculum. The school has planned to make the KS2-3 transition as seamless as possible, in terms of curriculum and pedagogy from upper KS2 into KS3 within the all-through school.
- Strong practice has been developed in relation to cross-phase music and MFL
- Eased 'boundaries' between colleagues across phases and a better mutual understanding of the different phases of education.
- The opportunities for CPD and professional growth provided by working in an all-through setting

Further advantages are considered below.

Admissions advantage:

The school has a socially mixed intake. For entry to the primary phase, the admission criteria relate to siblings and distance. The admissions criteria for year seven allow for up to ten percent of the students to be admitted on the basis of musical ability. Other students are admitted on sibling and distance criteria. The addition of the primary phase in 2008, means that two forms of entry automatically move from year six to year seven and do not need to apply through the admissions system. The principal felt this has made the school more inclusive, as those children come from more disadvantaged areas and traditionally would have been unlikely to gain a place in the school's secondary phase (i.e. when it was a 'stand-alone' secondary school). The addition of the primary free school will eventually mean that four of the six forms of entry at year seven will come from the school/MAT's all-through cohorts.

The parent governor spoke powerfully about her gratitude that the all-through nature of the school had meant that once she had secured places for her children, she did

not have to negotiate the admission process again. She felt that the choice and processes for parents with children moving between stand-alone primary and secondary schools is 'bewildering' and 'incredibly stressful.' As the parent of four children she reflected upon the level of anxiety she would otherwise have had on four occasions, with the worry that the children would not all have been able to go to the same secondary school, had they not attended School B. The principal also outlined the incredibly competitive situation in the area for secondary school places at popular schools: he said there had been occasions in the last five years when all year seven places allocated on distance had been awarded to children living within 700 metres of the school.

All-through advantage: combatting short-termism

Both the principal and the parent governor spoke with strong conviction about the benefits for inclusion of the all-through configuration, which prevents 'short-termist' approaches to challenging learners or those with complex needs and/or SEN-D. Both felt that there is a danger in the wider system that that those with complex needs or who present with challenging behaviour are particularly vulnerable as they approach transition points in education: the risk is that short term decisions are made in one setting which are really about management or containment, rather than acting in the child or young person's best educational interests in the longer term. The parent governor felt there was a temptation, for example, in year six for a primary school to manage a situation until the child ultimately became 'someone else's problem.' She contrasted this with an all-through setting, which would be completely 'invested' in a child in primary years with complex needs, knowing that it would be working with that child and their family, potentially for a further decade.

His leadership experiences in an all-through school had led the principal to reflect deeply about the provision for students with SEND. The school has a SENCO who works across phase and the principal believes this means that SEND issues are identified early and that this practitioner had become very expert in planning supportive provision for SEND children, as they progress through different stages of their education. However, he also said that it had been sad to observe students who had been able to integrate with others in the lower primary years, but had reached a stage when the gap between them and their chronological peers increased over time

and meant they could no longer access mainstream provision. He recalled a particular female student who had eventually transferred to a specialist setting. In his view, the ideal scenario would be for the all-through school to develop its own specialist SEND provision, to truly meet the needs of all children in the local community.

7.3 School C: Case study report

School context and its all-through journey

The school was founded in 2009 as an all-through school. Existing first, middle and high schools in the locality were merged to create the academy, which was then accommodated on two new purpose-built primary and secondary campuses. The school was an early academy, operated by a multi-academy trust. The school mergers and early academisation were factors which were controversial at the time of the founding of the school, with some local councillors and other stakeholders publicly voicing opposition to the plan. In the early days, relationships with the LA and schools controlled by the LA were limited.

Leaders at the school and the trust had a clear vision and rationale for all-through education. This ensured that the curriculum was planned coherently from reception to year 13 from the outset. The impact of this approach is discussed later in this chapter section. However, as all staff were moved across from the predecessor schools, leaders had to work hard to convince staff and stakeholders of the all-through vision and of the rationale for school reorganisation. From the perspective of leaders spoken to, very high expectations were articulated from the opening of the academy. In common with School B, there was a degree of staff turnover in the first five years of operation, as the majority adjusted to and 'bought in' to the changes and expectations and others chose to leave the school. Now that the school has been established for a decade staffing is very stable, with an annual teacher retention rate of around 87 percent.

The all-through academy quickly established itself as a successful school and a popular choice with parents. The first principal stayed with the school until summer 2018, which helped to ensure that the founding vision was delivered over time and that all-through working remained a key priority. Today the school is led jointly by

head of primary and head of secondary. Nearly ten years on from the school's inception, some of the factors which were once seen as controversial have faded in significance, as the national and local educational landscape has developed. Relationships with the LA and other local schools have become cordial and more collaborative.

Professional profiles of the adult research participants at School C

When I first visited the school in October 2018 leadership arrangements had just changed from having an overall principal for the all-through school, to having a head of secondary and primary in a co-headship model. This change had been prompted by the original principal leaving the school at the end of the previous academic year. The head of secondary had previously been vice principal at School C. Before that, her teaching background had been in RE at secondary level. However, she had gained an understanding of primary education and data during time spent working as an LA advisor and visiting schools of all phases. Similarly, the head of primary had been at School C for just over two years. Previously she had been headteacher in a stand-alone primary school and her background was in primary teaching. Whilst she had been new to working in all-through schools when she started in post, she was now confident working across phase, observing teaching, and coordinating all-through CPD etc. She had previously worked for OFSTED and had also been involved in cross-phase working with groups of headteachers: both of these previous professional experiences had given her all-through insights, ahead of taking on this role.

The other professionals spoken to had training and teaching backgrounds mostly in either primary or secondary education, although all-through working was a feature of their current professional practice at School C. The heads of engineering and art were subject specialist secondary teachers, as was the assistant principal responsible for the KS2 into KS3 transition, the vice principal with oversight for teaching and learning and the assistant principal who was teaching some mathematics across phase. The KS1 leader and primary phase art lead were primary trained generalist teachers, who were able to talk about their work with the secondary specialists. The primary mathematics lead had previously worked in a

middle school and so already had a very good understanding of how the KS2 and KS3 curricular and pedagogical approaches inter-relate.

Student focus groups

I spoke to two focus groups of students from the primary and secondary phases of the school. I also had an informal discussion with a group of sixth form students. The students in all groups reflected upon the all-through nature of their school, and the students in the secondary focus group were able to discuss their transition between KS2 and KS3. Having spoken to students largely from the all-through cohorts in Schools A and B, at School C I had specifically asked to meet some secondary aged students who had come from other primary schools. There were nine participants in the primary focus group, ranging from year three to year six. The secondary focus group had six participants ranging from year seven to year 12. One girl in the secondary focus group had come from a different primary school. In the sixth form discussion, a larger group of students (seventeen) arrived to see me. During the discussion five male and two female students contributed to the conversation. The group were a mixture of students who had made the all-through journey all the way from primary years to the sixth form and others who had joined the school at year seven or later.

Leadership and governance

The school is part of a multi-academy trust, operating across the wider region and has its own LGB, which feeds into overarching trust governance structures. The full governing body meets three times a year and operates sub-committees for areas such as finance and curriculum. The remit of the committees and the full LGB covers the full age range of the school. As also seen at Schools A and B, this is a challenge, as governors have to be trained to understand school improvement data from EYFS through to KS5. The school was considering supporting certain governors to become expert in some of the phases within the school, to ensure sufficient scrutiny and challenge is maintained, particularly when there are sometimes unfilled vacancies on the LGB. The school LGB is directly linked to the trust governance through the acting chair of governors, who is also a trust member. The previous chair of governors at the school had also been the chair of the trust board. There is a clerk

to the LGB, who also clerks the meetings of the other academies within the MAT and can advise on matters of governance procedure and ensure consistency.

When the school was founded it had a principal across the whole all-through school. After the founding principal left the school in summer 2018, the heads of primary and secondary have jointly assumed the all-through headship function. The senior leadership team structure is comprised of three vice principals and six assistant principals. Currently there are two vice principals, as the third post has proved to be difficult to recruit to, but remains in the structure. Leaders are located in either the primary or secondary building, but their responsibilities have all-through reach. For example, the assistant principal based in the secondary building, who oversees attendance, is responsible for attendance for the whole school and will, therefore, also visit the primary site regularly.

Vision, values and moral purpose

The school has a strong Christian ethos. As a visitor to School C, this is immediately evident. Displays around both buildings reinforce Christian values and the school's own core values. During my tour of the secondary campus, a year seven student proudly showed me her 'core values' card and explained them to me. Students at the primary campus pointed out displays and stained glass and were keen to tell me about a local saint. Care has been taken to adapt the school's values to be age appropriate and accessible: for example, 'compassion' in the core values at secondary phase is expressed as being 'kind' in the primary years.

The school also acknowledges and celebrates its location and the heritage of the region. Prominent art work at the secondary campus depicts the area's industrial history. Christian ethos and SMSC is woven into curriculum and cross-curricular activities. For example, the poppy installation project was coordinated by the engineering department across primary and secondary phase, encompassed consideration of the use of plastic and ultimately provided a visually impressive and poignant focal point for the school's commemoration of the ending of World War One (see Figure 7.2).

REDACTION – Image removed for confidentiality reasons

Figure 7.2: School C World War One commemoration

Leaders and teachers spoken to have a clear vision that their all-through work links to moral purpose and social justice. They are proud of the progress made by students during their time at School C and in how their life chances may be improved as a result. Whilst the school has a Christian ethos, its sense of moral duty is much broader, as exemplified by its aims to provide students with a rounded education and to develop a range of character and values-based attributes in its students. Students spoken to understood and respected the core values of their school, which they knew and readily discussed with me during my visits.

The students of all ages spoken to were proud of their school and appreciated aspects of the all-through working, as they experience them. They appreciate the all-through opportunities provided across the whole school, such as a scheme which incentivises student engagement in cultural activities in their region and the prize event for those completing it. Their experience of cross-phase contact was often through music and performing arts events, events associated with the house system, at speech day and through sporting activities. The primary focus group said they would like even more cross-phase contact (such as the 'Art Day' described later in this chapter). The secondary students spoken to appreciate that School C is a well-equipped learning environment. Most of their digital images showed locations around the school campus they particularly value. They feel that their school is successful and that students have the opportunity do well here. Older role models at school inspire younger pupils, who want to emulate their achievements. Students

see all-through events as an opportunity for leadership or to learn from other young people/children. Overwhelmingly, students of all ages at the school perceive that despite the split-site, School C is one school.

Pedagogy and curriculum

Nearly all teachers teach within one phase of education at the school (i.e. in either primary or secondary). This is largely due to the split-site arrangement. The primary phase has its own MFL specialist, who works exclusively at the primary phase. The school has started to pilot the use of specialist teachers from the secondary phase at upper KS2, to help to teach the SATs 'greater depth' content (see section about mathematics) and this may be something which will be developed further in the future.

Where the school has developed some very innovative practice is in relation to its curriculum planning and in the professional links forged between primary and secondary colleagues. All subjects are mapped from reception to year 13. Each subject has an overview document which shows the key subject content and skills being covered each year from year one through to year 13. The school has tried to avoid unnecessary repetition in the curriculum and crucially, tries to ensure that teachers at all phases have an understanding of what goes before and comes after the curriculum content they are teaching. These links are reinforced through regular meetings between secondary heads of department and primary subject leads.

Engineering: innovative all-through practice

The school had been an engineering school in the days of specialist status and has retained this focus ever since. As a result of specialist status, and the new buildings which came with becoming an all-through academy, the school is very well equipped for engineering and DT and, unusually, the primary phase has its own engineering room. The school has strong links to industry, offers a range of vocational education courses and the head of department at secondary phase spoke proudly of strong progression to related fields in higher education. The focus on engineering links to its importance in the region's heritage, but also to future employment prospects for pupils. The head of engineering talked about recent regeneration in local industries, which he felt had 're-ignited…the locality's interest and passion for engineering.'

Engineering has always been a part of the all-through curriculum at the school. The head of engineering liaises regularly with the primary subject lead. Together they plan to try to ensure a continuity of learning and that students are prepared for the next stages in the subject. For example, as a result of the increased demands of the secondary curriculum, they have planned that the key 'command words' used at KS4 are already being used in the year five/six curriculum. The secondary head of department also described the way he and his secondary colleagues support their primary counterparts to deliver the specialist curriculum and projects. Time is spent together at the planning stage and then direct support with teaching is offered: 'we'll go into lessons and support and even lead on lessons and team teach with them, until they feel comfortable to do it.'

The engineering department also coordinates cross-phase events and projects which complement the taught curriculum. During my visit I was able to observe year six children working in the engineering rooms on the secondary site. They were making poppies from plastic bottles, which were to form part of a huge installation to commemorate the centenary of the end of World War One (see Figure 7.2). The observed activity was being facilitated by secondary and primary teachers and teaching assistants and was supported by volunteers from year 12. Under supervision the year six children used a range of DT equipment including power tools and glue guns, while year 12 students assisted with the supervision, demonstrated what the children had to do at each work station and organised a drying area. Year six pupils spoken to during the lesson expressed their enjoyment in taking part in the activity and their appreciation of the facilities they were using on the secondary site.

The head of department at secondary phase has been impressed by the standard of work achieved by some children through the engineering primary curriculum and the extra-curricular projects: 'literally, they created a GCSE project, if I'm honest.' Cross-phase training and moderation ensures that teachers' judgements about standards are consistent. The school has the advantage of being able to track students' progress in the subject across all year groups. The head of department confirmed that usually they would not have any prior attainment information about those students joining from other schools at year seven in the subject. In contrast,

for the all-through cohort, the subject is able to run a six week transitional project between years six and seven.

Mathematics: cross-phase teaching and pedagogical approaches

The primary and secondary mathematics leads at the school have considered their KS2/KS3 practice, to see where provision can be tailored to meet the students' needs and how primary and secondary practitioners can learn from each other. The previous academic year one of the experienced mathematics specialists from secondary phase also taught in year six. He had a brief to teach some of the 'greater depth' content to assist in ensuring that able pupils were receiving the necessary stretch and challenge. From his perspective, this intervention was successful and helped more pupils in the year group to secure 'greater depth' in mathematics in their KS2 SATs.

His experience of cross-phase teaching chimes with a view in the transition literature in that he now believes some secondary teachers underestimate the complexity of the primary curriculum and underestimate the abilities of the students on entry to year seven. He remarked 'it was an eye opener to find out just how hard the SATs were.' Having worked with more able children in year six, he has been able to ensure that his colleagues teaching year seven do appreciate the difficulty of year six work. The whole school has had a focus on 'upping' the expectation at year seven in recent years, but this direct cross-phase connection is ensuring that that this is implemented in a very focused way in mathematics: 'we have definitely racheted up what we're doing in year seven.' The school year of my visit he continued to teach across phase and was also teaching year six children across the full ability range. The school planned to evaluate the impact of this cross-phase teaching and take findings into account when planning future cross-phase working.

The school does not fast track able mathematicians into classes in older year groups. All of the practitioners spoken to at the school did not favour a fast-track approach, even though theoretically the all-through nature of the school could facilitate it. The assistant principal who was a secondary mathematics teacher had experience of fast-tracking from a previous school. He felt that to ensure a real depth of learning, within the same setting as a pupil's chronological peers, was preferable to what he

believed were approaches to teaching the most able which amounted to 'teaching people to do tricks.' The primary mathematics lead felt that all-through approaches in the form of subject support and cross-phase teaching were effective ways of developing the most able primary pupil mathematicians. He felt that he could draw upon the 'absolutely massive amount of in-house expertise' from the secondary mathematics department to develop his own practice and subject knowledge and that the teaching inputs of the secondary colleague in year six functioned as a kind of 'masterclass' for the greater depth learners.

The mathematics leads have also considered when to 'decouple' age-related expectations to support the learner, when the learner has difficulty with aspects of mathematics. What they had observed, was that lower attaining learners were particularly demoralised when faced with the year seven and eight curriculum, when they had already really struggled and to a certain extent 'failed' in mathematics through years five and six. The school now uses the *Big Maths* scheme in year seven and eight with low attainers, which it uses extensively with all learners across KS2. The scheme aims to build confidence and number fluency. The professionals at the school believe that this tailored support for some students, which uses a KS2 approach in KS3, is beneficial for those particular learners. The primary mathematics lead believes that because the children enjoy the *Big Maths* scheme, it aids building pupil confidence and ultimately he hoped it would help pupils to progress. Teachers and leaders at the school are passionate about helping learners to become numerate, rather than rigidly adhering to teaching mathematical content linked to NC age-related expectations.

<u>Cross-phase subject working in art</u>

I interviewed the secondary head of art and the primary subject leader for art together. They have developed a close working relationship, both in terms of the planning of the all-through curriculum for art and in the development of joint extra-curricular projects and events. The head of art was passionate about supporting high quality learning experiences in art in the primary years, in the context of a system-wide (over) emphasis on numeracy and literacy. He also identified art as a subject area where some generalist teachers can feel less confident teaching. The approach developed across phase in art has been for the secondary specialist teachers to

spend time in primary phase and to do some cross-phase teaching, but with the overall aim of 'upskilling' and empowering the primary practitioners to teach the subject confidently themselves. The head of art described the interactive workshop approach taken to in-house cross-phase professional training: 'I'll do a hands on thing where I demonstrate things' then the resources and materials are provided for the primary teachers to try themselves and ultimately teach the subject content and skills to the children.

As well as developing a coherent, all-through curriculum for art, primary and secondary practitioners have worked together to offer a number of enrichment opportunities for students of all ages. In the previous school year, the school had been involved in a regional photography project, which linked schools to photographers and gave children the opportunity to develop photography skills and exhibit their work. This project had spanned the KS2 into KS3 transition, with students involved in year six able to work with the photographer again in year seven. In the same academic year the school had staged a completely cross-phase 'Art Day'. 120 children from year one to year 13 were involved and worked with visiting artists to produce art works in different media, which were displayed at the end of the day in an exhibition for students, staff and parents and carers.

Combatting Two Tribes: professional sensitivities

Practitioners spoken to at School C had a strong awareness of the school's vision to break down 'Two Tribes' mindsets and a sensitivity towards the potential to intrude on other's professional territory or cause offence. The head of art felt that it was important to respect the professional integrity of the generalist teachers and not be seen to 'come in and take over.' The secondary practitioner going in to year six to teach mathematics was extremely mindful that his work with 'greater depth' pupils could be seen as being predicated upon a 'superior subject knowledge' which might make the class teachers feel uneasy or in some way judged. He did feel that his detailed subject knowledge was something additional he was able to bring to his teaching inputs at KS2. However, he was extremely impressed by the versatility of the generalist teachers and could not imagine being able to teach to the level they do in so many different subjects.

As explored in the case studies for Schools A and B, separatist mindsets can and do exist in all-through schools too. The secondary mathematics colleague who taught in year six thought that there were still some secondary colleagues who would 'look down on' primary teaching and the opportunity to teach across phase. He was frustrated that some might not appreciate the professional challenges of working in the other phase. He believed that teaching across phase requires an open mind and felt there was a danger of someone having a 'secondary head on' and thinking they were 'more important.'

Transition and transfer at KS2 into KS3

The school undertakes a number of activities ahead of the internal transition and external transfer into year seven, such as visits to the year six pupils and their teachers, information sharing and a planned SEND transition. Events such as induction days and evenings, which are for all students (i.e the all-through cohort and those transferring from other primary schools) amount to the equivalent of around four days of induction activities in the summer of year six and the beginning of year seven. Students are also CAT tested prior to their start in September. It is evident that the school is thorough in its approach to transition and transfer and plans effectively to try to ensure a positive start for all learners. Care is taken to integrate those from other primary schools on a social level. The assistant principal in charge of transition and the students in the focus group reported that the team building activities during induction are enjoyable and help to build friendships and break the ice.

In reality, those coming up from within the all-through academy have a transition to KS3 which has been seven years in the making. Unsurprisingly, they experience a more comfortable social transition (the perception of the transition leader, the secondary student focus group and the sixth form discussion group): they arrive with a group of friends and with a familiarity of the site and the values and routines of the school. The secondary student in the focus group who had come from another primary school was strongly of the view that the all-through cohort are socially and academically advantaged at the start of year seven: she recalled her own first day in year seven as 'really scary' as she had 'no one to talk to.' In contrast, one of the all-through students in the secondary focus group described being relaxed about the

move to year seven, as she perceived it as shared experience and rite of passage for year six: 'the whole school is coming.' Several teachers and learners spoken to talked about those coming from School C as already having the learning behaviours and prior knowledge necessary to make a strong start in year seven. Staff and some of the students in the sixth form focus group perceived that these differences are noticeable and that in the year seven teaching groups 'you can tell' who is from the school's own primary phase and who is not.

The school's meeting cycle and quality assurance processes take account of the KS2 into KS3 transition for the all-through cohort. The year six books move up with the pupils into year seven, with the idea that the new teacher can see straight away the standards of work and presentation which have been achieved in year six. Year six and year seven teachers do joint work scrutiny and year six teachers observe year seven lessons to give feedback about the standards expected. All of these measures are designed to prevent the attainment and attitudinal 'dip' seen in the wider system at KS3. The assistant principal with oversight for transition KS2-KS3 sees this as a joint endeavour, which combats 'Two Tribes' mindsets: where there are issues, he commented 'we fix those together' as managing transition is 'a team effort.'

Challenges and barriers faced by School C

Challenges common to all-through schools: OFSTED, finance and hours in the day

Some of the challenges experienced by Schools A and B, and identified in the research questionnaire findings at stage one of the project, were also evident at School C. The school was inspected during 2017-18 and judged to be *Good.* This had been a source of irritation to the previous principal, who had felt this did not do justice to the scope and achievements of this large and complex organisation. Her comments on the questionnaire indicated a frustrating experience similar to School A during inspection, and concerns in line with those of School B, in that she perceived meeting the criteria for OFSTED *Outstanding* across all key stages at an all-through school to be a near impossible feat. I discussed the previous principal's questionnaire comments with the new heads of primary and secondary. They explained how the school had now chosen to concentrate on developing areas of exceptional practice, rather than trying to tick boxes on the inspection framework.

They believed this to be both a better alignment with moral purpose and a more worthwhile endeavour. However, they were slightly more optimistic when considering the future of inspection and the proposed greater emphasis on the curriculum in the new 2019 OFSTED inspection framework. They felt that all-through schools could be well placed to demonstrate a broad and well sequenced curriculum and expressed confidence about the work that they had done at School C in this area.

During my final discussion with the heads of primary and secondary, we discussed the stage one research findings and they agreed with leaders in other all-through schools in their questionnaire responses, that school funding/financial pressures are particularly acute in all-through settings. Their observations were the same as those expressed by the other case study school leaders and comments made on the questionnaire; that elements of school funding streams based on a per institution basis disadvantage all-through schools, which have running expenses at an equivalent level of at least two institutions.

The head of secondary also spoke about the challenge of fitting in everything that has to be done into the hours in the day. Whilst this might be familiar struggle in any school, the comment chimes with those made by leaders in Schools A and B, that an all-through school provides additional challenges to leadership capacity, because of the sheer scale and scope of the organisation. The head of secondary talked of the desire to keep the school moving forward and innovating, which is that much harder if the school is covering EYFS to KS5. At the same time, day-to-day workloads for leaders and staff are heavy. School C's approach to tackling this challenge has been to schedule cross-phase meetings and training (discussed later) to ensure that all-through working is not reliant on practitioners trying to find additional time when working hours are already pressurised and full.

<u>Spilt site as a barrier to all-through working and measures to overcome it</u>

School C operates as a single all-through school, but across two sites which are a ten minute car journey apart. All teachers spoken to acknowledged that this aspect of the all-through academy is less than ideal. The assistant principal with oversight of KS2-3 transition remarked 'realistically, if we were on one site, it would be a lot

easier.' The split-site was a source of frustration for those involved in the school's founding, but the decision to build the primary phase on a separate site was to do with a requirement to re-use the land where one of the predecessor schools had been located and restrictions caused by the plot size for the secondary campus.

However, after nearly a decade of operation the school is well used to split-site working and has had to adjust to make the arrangement work on a day-to-day basis. As revealed by the stage one survey, split-site working is a reality for many all-through schools (27 percent of stage one respondent schools have primary and secondary learners on entirely separate sites). The circumstance of the split-site has made leaders think carefully about cross-phase contact and activities, as they have to be carefully planned. This is the reason, for example, that the primary phase has its own MFL teacher, who teaches French across KS2, rather than deploying one of the linguists from the secondary phase, who would need to travel between sites. Like School B, School C has had to develop bespoke solutions to fit its own context. Staff and students do move between sites, but in the case of the latter, this movement has to be planned and coordinated in advance.

<u>The challenge of the integration of the non-all-through cohort and of liaison with other primary schools</u>

School C's greatest challenge is strongly linked to one of its great strengths: whilst the school is proud of the all-through advantage secured for the all-through cohort, those joining as new students in year seven, on average, do not achieve as well or make as much progress by the end of KS4 as those who have made the all-through journey. Practitioners spoken to talked about the challenge of doubling student numbers at year seven and integrating students who may not have had the same experiences of the curriculum or may not yet have developed the learning behaviours to be successful at KS3. In the case of School C leaders explained that this challenge could be inter-linked with social disadvantage to an extent, as some of the feeder primary schools have more deprived intakes.

Some of the feeder primary schools are also more challenged in terms of needing to improve standards, with some being judged as 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' by OFSTED. At our final interview the heads of primary and secondary

described the challenges of successfully engaging with other primary schools. Despite support and participation in joint projects being offered 'multiple times,' the all-through school has found some feeder primaries reluctant to engage. In addition to the historic coolness in relations from the time when School C became an academy, leaders believe liaison is hampered by the pressures on some of these schools linked to performativity and accountability. They believe that pressure of performativity means that the spectre of things going 'pear shaped' for year six teachers leads to them not being willing to risk giving time to extra commitments: 'they've got so much pressure in year six, it's such high stakes… that anything new or additional, they try to avoid.'

The assistant headteacher with oversight for transition felt that it took effort to help the pupils to leave behind their former identities from separate primary schools. In reality, these former identities can linger and the students in the sixth form discussion described how the year groups are made up not only of the all-through cohort as a distinct group, but also of sub-groups of children from other larger primary schools. The assistant principal also mentioned the practical challenges of meeting the needs of all groups of students. Meeting needs involves starting from 'where the students are now' and building upon their knowledge and skills, which in turn has led to an over-representation of the all-through cohort in the upper ability sets, in the subjects where students are grouped according to ability.

<u>All-through advantages</u>

<u>Advantages of all-through working developed by School C:</u>

Some aspects of all-through practice which practitioners and students considered to be advantages have already been covered earlier in this chapter section and are:

- An eased transition to KS3 for the all-through cohort
- Innovative cross-phase practice in engineering and art
- Cross-phase teaching and a blurring of the KS2/3 boundaries in mathematics
- A conscious effort to combat 'Two Tribes' mindsets

Further advantages are considered below.

<u>Advantages for the all-through cohort</u>

Table 7.1: GCSE performance of School C overall and of the all-through cohort in 2018,

	School C overall school result	School C all-through cohort	National
Progress 8	+0.03	+0.44	0.00
Basic measure = % GCSE Maths and English at 4+	68	88	64

School C is very proud of its student outcomes, particularly those of the all-through cohort: school data show that those who make the full all-through journey, on average, attain higher and make stronger progress by the end of KS4, than those who transfer in from different primary schools. Table 7.1 shows the 2018 KS4 outcomes for the all-through cohort, and the whole year group, benchmarked against national figures. Leaders feel that the school can make the biggest difference to the children/young people it works with the longest. At my first interview with the heads of primary and secondary, they attributed the success of the all-through cohort to two main things: firstly, to the high degree of assessment and curriculum coordination across phase and, secondly, to the ethos and expectation alignment, which instils positive behaviour and behaviour for learning strategies in the all-through cohort. The latter is hard to quantify, but both practitioners and students spoken to described an observable difference in the learning behaviours of those coming from the school's own primary phase and those joining in year seven from other schools at the beginning of their secondary education.

A continuity of approaches across phase provides consistency for parents, pupils and practitioners. The assistant principal responsible for transition considered this to be much easier for families, as they do not need to adjust to a new school 'where everything is totally different.' The head of art also spoke about the continuity of systems and values as being an advantage of the all-through configuration. A sixth form student in the discussion summarised this advantage as 'people who had been here kind of knew what the school was already like and what the rules are.' The all-through cohort move into KS3 knowing the expectations, feeling confident about the

school's systems and with some knowledge of parts of the secondary phase building and knowing at least some of the staff.

The advantage of all-through teacher contact and shared CPD

During my visit I spoke to several colleagues who appreciated the time allocated to cross-phase contact within the meeting cycle and CPD programme, and who felt it benefited their professional practice. For example, the primary art lead spoke about the benefits of 'tapping into' specialist expertise, when necessary. The school has made a concerted effort to create the time for cross-phase professional dialogue. In my view, the act of a scheduling this time and planning for cross-phase practitioner contact, has resulted in School C being successful in the ensuring that its vision for 'all-throughness' is discussed and enacted in practice to a tangible extent. It has also fostered a sense of the staff being one professional entity, despite the challenge of split-site working. Where other all-through schools have concentrated their efforts on cross-phase teaching and/or cross-phase pupil contact, School C has placed an enormous emphasis on practitioner contact and dialogue, which has enabled it to develop a genuinely all-through curriculum.

The KS1 leader commented that colleagues from primary phase develop in confidence after they have presented at the whole school CPD sessions, and that it is an unusual professional opportunity for primary practitioners to be able to share effective practice with such a large group of teachers from all educational phases. The head of primary also felt that this is hugely beneficial in the current context of increasing numbers of schools becoming part of MATS, as it gives primary colleagues in particular the opportunity to gain insights and experiences which would 'place them in a superb position' when applying for promoted posts in multi-academy and cross-phase trusts.

Advantages of a 'joined up' curriculum

School C has had a focus on ensuring the year seven and eight curriculum is sufficiently challenging, to avoid the KS2-3 attainment dip. Leaders see this, together with joint CPD and quality assurance processes described earlier, as a conscious attempt to combat the *Wasted Years* syndrome described by OFSTED (2015). The vice principal responsible for teaching and learning related how this approach has

required those teaching year seven to now really understand the content taught at upper KS2. She felt that this focus on 'upping the ante' at KS3 has also had the consequence of prompting teachers at upper KS2 to reflect upon what is taught when and to consider what is to come next in the children's learning.

As described in the chapter sections about engineering, mathematics and art, School C offers a broad and enriched curriculum at both phases. The use of specialist teachers in primary phase (both directly and in the support and training of generalists) and the access to specialist facilities, help to offer children opportunities which would be harder to replicate in a stand-alone primary school. These experiences are then built upon as learners move through the later stages of the school. The subject overviews produced for each subject, showing key subject content from EYFS to KS5, help to raise practitioners' awareness and appreciation of the child's whole learning journey and eliminates unnecessary duplication. This subject level overview of the all-through curriculum and the regular scheduled dialogue between primary and secondary practitioners mean that teachers at School C are extremely well placed to provide a coherent learning experience across the whole all-through school's age range.

8. A cross-case and cross-stage view of key findings

8.1 Cross-case findings in overview

The phenomenological philosophy of this research means that the stage two case research data, consisting largely of participants' views and lived experiences, should allow 'the things themselves' (Willis, 2001) to speak for themselves. The entirety of chapter seven looks at each case study school in depth and tells its participants' unique stories. This chapter considers the high-level view of the key themes identified through data analysis mapped across the three schools (shown in full as a table in **Appendix U**). I also revisit the research questions in 8.2 and provide a cross-case and cross-stage summary of the key findings for each question. In 8.3, I provide some updated headline information about all-schools from the start of the school year 2019-20, which is salient to the discussion which follows in chapter nine.

As is shown in **Appendix U** and can be gleaned from chapter seven, there is a high degree of commonality between the findings at all three case study schools, if taken in overview. The richness is in the detail of the findings (explored in chapter seven). For example, the mapping of the schools' all-through approaches to curriculum and pedagogy shows that all have some specialist teaching in KS2 and have developed all-through subject working in at least some subject areas (see Table 8.1). However, the precise areas of curriculum development and the ways this has been achieved vary between the schools.

Table 8.1: Themes related to curriculum and pedagogy mapped across the three case study schools

Over-arching themes	Clustered theme	School A	School B	School C
Curriculum and Pedagogy	Aligned curriculum/ curricular links			
	Pedagogy and approaches			
	All-through English			
	All-through mathematics			
	All-through MFL			
	All-through PE			

	All-through music/performing arts			
	All-through engineering			
	All-through art			
	Extra-curricular music/performing arts			
	Extra-curricular PE/Sport			
	Cross-phase learning projects			
	Cross-phase practice and influence			
	Cross-phase teaching (specialist)			
	Cross-phase teaching (generalist)			
	Discussion of specialist versus generalist inputs			
	Regular cross-phase teacher collaboration			

The areas of divergence tend to reflect the schools' individualised development of their all-through working. For example, the comparison in Table 8.2 shows that Schools B and C have had additional challenges, compared to School A (which is operating as a purpose-built single campus all-through school). Both Schools B and C were formed as the result of mergers of existing schools, which created the additional challenge of inheriting staff and stakeholders from predecessor schools, who needed persuading of the all-through vision. Schools B and C are also operating on split-sites, which generates further obstacles to forming a unified staff and student body.

Table 8.2: All-through challenges mapped across the three case study schools

Over-arching	Clustered theme	School A	School B	School C
Challenges/ barriers	Finance			
	OFSTED			
	Performativity			
	Leadership challenges			
	Time constraints			
	Scale and scope			
	Realising the potential of all-through			
	Impact of system-wide challenges			
	Integration of the non all-through cohort			
	Uneven prior learning at year 7			

	Overcoming challenges			
	Staff buy-in			
	Staff turnover after merger/becoming all-through			
	Countering social disadvantage			
	Disaggregation considered to counter the challenges			
	Split-site			

The extent to which each school's all-through working is in fact bespoke, is evident in chapter seven and is explored further in chapter nine.

8.2 Summary of the key findings for each research question across research stages and cases.

RQ1: What are the characteristics of English all-through state schools?

School organization/type

At the time of stage one of the research (2017) 80 percent of all-through schools in England were part of the academy and free schools sector. Based upon the data supplied by the stage one respondents, when full, all-through schools can become large organisations: over half of the respondent schools had rolls of over 1000 students. All-through schools have a mixture of primary and secondary aged learners on their rolls and how these are combined (i.e. the exact age range of the school) can vary. The most common configuration in the stage one sample was reception to sixth form (4 to 18/19). 68 percent of respondent schools had had a new building to open as an all-through school, or a significant building programme to extend their school to become an all-through school.

Leadership structures

90 percent of the respondent schools at stage one of the research had an overarching headteacher/principal for the whole all-through school. The majority of the overarching headteachers had come from a secondary teaching/leadership background, which reflects the fact the over half of the respondent all-through schools were formed by a secondary school becoming an all-through school. Whilst leadership structures are bespoke to individual schools, just over a third of leaders at stage one described their senior and middle leadership structures as having all-

through reach, while nearly two thirds described them as the same or similar to those in stand-alone schools. In the three case study schools, two had overarching headteachers for the whole all-through school. School C had previously had this arrangement, but after the original headteacher had left the school it had moved to a co-headship model, with heads of primary and secondary. Leadership structures in all three schools had roles and structures which resembled those in stand-alone schools. However, some roles had an all-though remit.

All-through vision and values

The case study reports in chapter seven endeavour to convey a sense of the particular vision and values of each case study school and how these relate to their 'all-throughness'. Across the three schools there were aspirations to contribute to social justice and to be pivotal in their communities, as well as the aims of supporting pupils' well-being and progress. At each school, leaders and practitioners had a sense of how 'all-throughness' contributes to these aims.

At stage one of the research participant responses conveyed a strong sense of moral purpose in relation to all-through working and a clear vision that all-through education is, or could be, something distinct from standard separate primary and secondary education. There is, therefore, an extent to which leaders' vision relates to a conscious attempt to challenge the separatist mindsets and working of the wider system and develop new practice.

RQ2: How do all-through schools plan and teach the curriculum?

The curriculum (EYFS to KS5) and the informal curriculum

In each case the case study schools taught a curriculum that covered NC content. At each key stage, content and approaches are recognisably similar or the same as those in stand-alone schools. However, all-through schools are able to plan their curriculum on an all-through basis. The case study schools' approaches suggest that the extent to which they do this varies between schools. Case study School C had a completely aligned all-phase curriculum, which mapped every individual subject's content from EYFS to KS5. Schools A and B have planned a detailed all-through curriculum strategy for some subjects.

The deployment of generalist and specialist teachers and cross-phase teaching

All-through schools are able to deploy a blend of specialist and generalist teachers across KS2 and KS3. All stage one respondent school leaders reported using some specialist teachers at KS2, in addition to the generalist class teacher. KS2 MFL was taught by subject specialist teachers at all three case study schools. Across the three schools music, PE, ICT and mathematics were also taught or partly taught by specialist teachers at KS2. The stage two case study schools did not use generalist teachers in the secondary phase of the school. In the stage one research questionnaire half of the school leaders reported using some generalist provision at KS3, for example, in offering nurture provision for some learners.

The choice of teaching methodologies and pedagogies

The pedagogical practices within the case study schools are not noticeably different to those seen in other schools. Where discernible differences or all-through practices seem to be emerging are across KS2 and also to an extent at KS3. These are inter-related to specialist and generalist teaching blends, as the deployment of subject specialists at KS2 complements generalist teaching. There were also practices in all three case study schools which indicated that cross-phase working has facilitated a cross-phase professional dialogue, which has led to changed pedagogical practice across the primary and secondary divide.

Pupil grouping – stage not age?

Whilst all-through schools have the possibility of placing pupils in classes in different year groups, there was no indication at either stage of the research that this affordance was being routinely utilised. This was a difference between the findings of this research and the NCSL (2011) report, where the possibilities of 'stage not age' learning had been highlighted by leaders as a potential of the all-through configuration. In this research, the questionnaire respondents and the case study schools all adhered to NC year groups and grouped learners with their chronological peers. However, each of the case study schools viewed their extra-curricular programmes, particularly in sport and performing arts, as a vehicle for cross-phase contact, which did allow for an element of 'stage not age' development.

The provision of formal and informal cross-phase learning opportunities

Two of the case study schools and 81 percent of the stage one respondent schools indicated that they would sometimes arrange cross-phase learning activities (e.g. themed project days) which enabled students of all ages to work together. In addition, all of the case study schools used extra-curricular sport and/or performing arts as an opportunity for cross-phase student contact.

RQ3: How do all-through schools approach the KS2-3 transition?

The research has shown that both practitioners and students perceive that there are clear advantages at the KS2-3 transition for the all-through cohort. All-through schools have the capacity to establish a degree of pedagogical and curricular alignment and a continuity of routines and learning behaviours which can benefit learners in the move to secondary education. Students and practitioners at the case study schools expressed the view that the all-through cohort have a discernible advantage in terms of their social transition.

Most all-through schools also admit additional external pupils at year seven. The research findings indicate that all-through schools should consider their transfer and induction processes for the non-all-through cohort to develop further support strategies to compensate for uneven prior learning experiences: they should recognise that the non-all-through cohort may start year seven at a disadvantage in some areas. Transfer and transition are considered further in chapters nine and ten.

RQ4; What are emerging as the affordances and opportunities provided by the all-through configuration?

The findings of both stages of this research have revealed what practitioners view as the key affordances and opportunities offered by all-through schools. The stage one findings provide an overview of areas, which have then been viewed in detail in the case study reports. Synthesising the key findings across the two stages of the research the key affordances and opportunities for all-through schools are:

Opportunities for the school/ educational practitioners:

- All-through approaches to the curriculum and pedagogy
- The capacity for blended generalist and specialist teaching at KS2-3

- Cross-phase practitioner liaison and opportunities for professional growth for teachers and leaders
- A countering of separatist primary/ secondary mindsets
- Shared staffing, resources and facilities

Advantages for the all-through cohort

- Access to specialist teachers and facilities at KS2
- Greater continuity of learning across KS2/3
- Eased transition at KS2 into KS3, particularly the social transition
- Long term work with students aids the inclusion agenda and supports student well-being

Advantages for parents/ carers/ families

- All-through family working over many years gives parents/families continuity and support
- How all-through admissions work (an advantage for the all-through cohort and their parents)

A detailed exploration of these affordances and opportunities in practice is provided in the case study reports (chapter seven).

RQ5: What are emerging as the main challenges faced by all-through schools?

As explored in detail in chapters five and seven all-through schools face a range of challenges, some of which link to wider systemic challenges and some of which are unique to all-through schools, or are particularly keenly felt by them. Whilst all state schools face a financially austere outlook, leaders perceived that all-through schools are disadvantaged by funding formulas which allocate some monies on a per institution basis, leaving them worse off than stand-alone schools with equivalent pupil numbers. All-through school leaders also felt that all-through schools' scale and scope mean that they are even more vulnerable to the systemic pressures of performativity and accountability than stand-alone primary and secondary schools. Synthesising the key findings across research stages the key challenges faced by all-through schools are:

Systemic challenges exacerbated by an all-through configuration

- Financial austerity

- Pressures of performativity
- Accountability regimes, such as OFSTED
- Pressures on school leaders (scale and scope)

All-through specific

- The integration and support of the non-all-through cohort
- Establishing an all-through ethos and institutional consistency
- Securing stakeholder/practitioner buy-in
- Challenging 'Two Tribes' mindsets
- Split-site working (in some cases)

8.3 All-through schools: updated information

As I explain further in chapter ten, a limiting factor in this research, conducted over five years as a part-time doctoral project, has been that the stage one research data were gathered in 2017 and the landscape has continued to develop in the meantime. Whilst there is not time or space in this research project to fully revisit these data, this section contains some updated headline information, which is particularly salient to the topics explored in the discussion in chapter nine and may help to frame future research. As I approached completion of this thesis, I had wanted to examine OFSTED judgements for all-through schools in 2019, to see if the position had changed since 2017. In September 2019 there were 166 all-through schools and I collated the OFSTED judgements all-through schools were holding at the very start of the school year (2019-20).

Table 8.3: OFSTED ratings of all-through schools in September 2019 benchmarked against national figures

All-through schools in England and their OFSTED ratings in September 2019	Number or %
Number of all-through schools	**166**
Number of all-through schools holding an OFSTED judgement	**143**
All-through schools with no OFSTED judgement (i.e. excluded from the calculation)	**23**
% of secondary schools at *Good* or better	**76%**
% of primary schools at *Good* or better*	**87%**
% of all-through schools at *Good* or better*	**76%**

*source OFSTED 2020

Whilst upon first examination of Table 8.3, it might appear that all-through schools have been faring better in inspections (now matching national for secondary schools for *Good* or better), the reality is more complex. What I also discovered in conducting this exercise was that since 2017 schools had come off the list of all-through schools, as well as joined it. Of the 150 all-through schools in listed on *Edubase* in 2016/17, eight were no longer listed as all-through schools (at least six as a result of some sort of disaggregation). 24 schools were completely new to the list, and were a mixture of brand new all-through schools and schools which had varied their age range to become all-through. Of the 23 schools with no judgement, five had been re-brokered since 2017 to a new academy trust, which meant they technically had no OFSTED judgement: three had been holding a judgement below *Good* prior to re-brokerage. Nationally, 20 percent of all schools were judged to be *Outstanding* (OFSTED 2020), while 17 percent of all-through schools were badged as *Outstanding* in September 2019.

9. Discussion: the potentials and constraints of all-through schools and their place in an evolving landscape

9.1 Discussion introduction

This chapter discusses the potentials and challenges of all-through schools and relates them to the literatures and theoretical frameworks explored earlier and considers further literature, where appropriate. At the beginning of this research project I had wanted to identify the key affordances and challenges of all-through schools. Whilst the narrative which has emerged in relation to challenges has shown some clear commonalities across the research questionnaire and all three case study schools, the findings related to how all-through schools are using their affordances are more nuanced. As is explored further in this chapter, whilst all-through advantages have clearly been developed in the case study schools, they are sometimes bespoke to those individual schools. This chapter also considers the extent to which the issues which have emerged through the research are unique to all-through schools or are intertwined with those in the wider system. In addition, this chapter reflects upon whether some of the perceived advantages also generate their own disadvantages. Finally, I consider all-through schools within the evolving landscape of new school groupings in England.

9.2 The primary to secondary transition: a clear all-through advantage?

This chapter section considers the bureaucratic, social and management of learning elements of the transition bridge model (Barber, 1999; Sutton, 2001). The KS2 to KS3 pedagogical and curriculum transition bridges are examined in depth in section 9.4. The bureaucratic bridge does not exist for all-through students and their parents, as they move into year seven automatically, with no need to enter the formal admissions application system. At School B, the principal and the parent governor felt that this advantage assisted families and that in their particular context it serves the principles of social justice. I would argue that the absence of a bureaucratic barrier to the transition into year seven has the potential to go some way to countering the 'risk to equity' (Rayner, 2017) in the wider secondary admissions system. In the case of School A, the move to a randomised admissions system for entry to the Reception classes (as advocated by Burgess, Greaves and Vignoles,

2020) has ensured that those acquiring this advantage come from a range of social backgrounds. However, the all-through configuration is not a panacea for admission injustices, as each school's particular context and arrangements are different. In the case of School C, for example, the catchment based admissions criteria in its locality has led to many disadvantaged children attending primary schools which find themselves in challenging circumstances (a pattern which exists in the wider system, observed by Cullinane, 2020): at School C, this seems to compound the disparities between the all-through and non-all-through cohorts at the point of entry into year seven.

Staff in the secondary phases of all-through schools have access to detailed pastoral information about the children transitioning from the school's own primary phase. Practitioners in all three case study schools spoke about the value of being able to talk to someone within their own organisation if they had concerns about a child from the all-through cohort in year seven and sometimes even calling upon that person for direct support with the child. Given the importance of a successful social transition for the most vulnerable children (Bloyce and Frederickson, 2012; West et al, 2010) this additional layer of support in all-through schools seems to be a powerful aid to pupil welfare. The eased social transition of the all-through cohort in general was perceived by staff and strongly felt by pupils in the focus groups at all three case study schools. The removal of the anxiety about making friends at the start of secondary education appears to boost pupils' confidence about their transition. A number of researchers (Lucey and Reay, 2000; Mellor and Delamont, 2011) see the transfer to secondary school as a balance between pupil's understandable social anxiety and a sense of loss at finishing their primary education, and the positive anticipation and genuine excitement about what comes next. At the case study schools, a reduction in pupil anxiety about the move to year seven seems to tip this balance in favour of a positive anticipation of their transition.

This advantage in crossing the social bridge was overwhelmingly positively perceived by staff and all-through pupils at the case study schools. Some in the secondary focus groups talked about their social comfort in year seven in not only knowing many students in their own year group, but also being acquainted with a good proportion of those in year eight and year nine too. The sense of belonging

that the all-through cohort feel chimes with the recommendation of creating a sense of community at transfer in Anderson, Jacobs, Schramm and Splittberger (2000) and the notion of 'belongingness' explored in Vaz et al (2015). In School C, however, students felt that the social advantage was not exclusive to the all-through cohort, as those coming from the largest of the other feeder primary schools had a similar degree of social comfort in that they transferred already knowing a proportion of the year group and with an existing set of friends. The importance of feeling secure in friendships at transfer highlighted in Demetriou, Goalen and Rudduck (2000) and in Chedzoy and Burden (2005) seems to be borne out by the perceptions of the student focus groups in this research.

The management of learning bridge was identified as an area often neglected at transfer in the wider school system (Sutton, 2001; Symonds 2015). In all case study schools, practitioners felt that aligned cross-phase expectations and ways of working assisted students in their work at KS3. In School C, teachers and leaders talked explicitly about the all-through cohort developing 'learning behaviours' which equipped them to prosper in year seven and beyond: this resonates with Buzza's (2015) emphasis on the development of SRL to aid success at the start of high school level studies. The heads of primary and secondary at School C considered that positive and effective learning behaviours were as significant a factor in the relative success of the all-through cohort as any knowledge deficits amongst those transferring from other primary schools. At School B, aligned ways of working, student independence and resilience were fostered amongst the all-through cohort during KS2, with a conscious consideration of what the expectations would be at KS3. Anderson et al (2000) consider that building a sense of 'preparedness' for future ways of working is an effective support ahead of school or phase transfer. At Schools A and B those teaching across phase felt that an additional benefit of cross-phase teaching in years five and six was to develop the study habits and ways of working which would be needed at KS3.

The strong focus on the KS2 into KS3 transition in this research project stems from the concern in the literature about what happens on a system-wide basis (Galton et al, 2003; Galton & McLellan, 2018; West et al. 2010) and the configuration's clear potential to approach this in different ways to the majority of schools. The KS2 into

KS3 transition was also identified as a strength of all-through schools by over half of school leaders in the stage one research questionnaire. The case study findings indicate that practitioners and pupils perceive that transition issues are considerably eased for the all-through cohort. However, what also emerges through the findings of this study is that in the majority of cases all-through schools are dealing with both an internal transition and an external transfer of students into year seven (considered in the next section).

9.3 The conundrum of how to support the non all-through cohort

As exemplified by the differentials between the progress and attainment of the all-through and non-all-through cohort at KS4 at School C, what appears to be an all-through advantage for some, can create additional challenges for staff and leaders at all-through schools. While there appears to be a strong advantage for those transitioning between year six and year seven as part of the all-through school, particularly in terms of the social transition, this does not automatically help the school to meet the needs of those transferring in from other primary schools at year seven. All-through schools almost always have additional learners joining the school at year seven, which in effect means they are managing an internal transition and an external transfer at the same time. The integration of the non-all-through cohort was also highlighted as an additional challenge faced by all-through schools in the NSCL (2011) report. External entry to the school at year seven operates in exactly the same way as transfer into stand-alone secondary schools, with all of the challenges inherent in the mass transfer of learners outlined in the literature (Galton & McLellan, 2018; Hargreaves & Galton, 2002; West et al, 2010) and considered in chapter three. All three case study schools have transfer and primary liaison arrangements in place, which support the annual external transfer of year six pupils into year seven. Some of the arrangements discussed had features of the effective practice championed by Symonds (2015), such as curriculum liaison and social support. However, the overwhelming view at both stages of the research was that the all-through cohort are advantaged in all aspects of transition.

Meeting the needs of both cohorts in year seven and beyond is not straight forward or easy, and is in fact an additional challenge faced by all-through schools. As explored later with reference to all-through schools' MFL strategy, there are practical

constraints on how students can be grouped and taught at KS3. There are also ethical and social justice ramifications of approaches designed to maintain the advantages of the all-through cohort. For example, at School C, in subjects where setting is used, pupils from the all-through cohort are sometimes over-represented in upper ability sets. The Education Endowment Foundation (2018) questions the use of setting because of its impact on disadvantaged groups and lower attaining students. Archer et al (2018) strongly challenge the use of setting in schools, which they conclude is a practice which perpetuates the advantages of more privileged students (white, middle class). All-through schools, therefore, have to consider the wider dimensions of student grouping arrangements, to ensure that by working with one group of students in a certain way, the disadvantages faced by others are not compounded.

At School B, the attempt to group students based upon prior learning for German proved to be unsustainable, as it could not be timetabled. In my final interview with the principal he talked about initiatives to be implemented by teachers in MFL and music to allow for more differentiated approaches within mixed ability classes, in year seven in particular. School A appeared to experience fewer issues in terms of the integration of non-all-through students at seven year and beyond, which the principal attributed to a fairly socially homogeneous intake across the whole of year seven (the school's deprivations levels are lower than the national average) and to the school's role in local cluster working with the other main feeder primary schools.

9.4 Blurring the curricular and pedagogical boundaries between KS2 and KS3

As explored earlier in this thesis, the separate historic evolutions of English state primary and secondary schools have led to two dominant but separate pedagogical approaches in the different phases (Alexander, 2010): that of the generalist primary practitioner as the main classteacher in primary years and the subject specialist secondary teacher, who teaches a number of different classes across the secondary age range. What was evident in both the questionnaire findings and at the case study schools, is that all-through schools have adopted a more nuanced deployment of generalist and specialist teachers, particularly across KS2 and KS3, which resonates with the recommendation in the CPR (Alexander 2010) to increase the level of subject graduate specialist teaching at KS2. The CPR highlighted the subject

knowledge deficits of those undertaking the primary PGCE, particularly in mathematics and science. The review also suggested investigating federating and/or all-through working as way of overcoming specialist knowledge shortages.

In the case study schools there was a well-considered deployment of subject specialists at KS2 (and even at KS1 in School B). All three schools used subject specialist teachers for KS2 MFL, another subject area where graduates are in short supply and which some generalist teachers might struggle to teach. Across the case study schools music, PE, ICT and mathematics were also taught or partly taught by specialists at KS2. The schools all emphasised how the extra-curricular provision at upper primary level was strengthened through teachers working across phase, in addition to enhancing the learner experience in the taught curriculum. The ability to deploy specialist teachers across phase in all-through schools is aided not only by the organisation having subject specialist teachers in its secondary phase, but also by the fact it is the same organisation. This exemplifies further how all-through schools remove some of the bureaucratic and jurisdictional barriers traditionally associated with colleagues from different educational phases working together.

There is clearly the potential for cross-phase teaching to operate both ways and for primary practice and teaching to be deployed in the secondary years. Whilst this was not evident in the three case study schools, a third of the questionnaire respondents indicated that they deployed some generalist teaching at KS3. Given the strong messages in the literature about the particular challenges faced by vulnerable students at the point of transfer to secondary school (Bloyce and Frederickson, 2012; Scanlon et al, 2016; West et al, 2010), the opportunity to provide a bespoke, supported transition seems particularly valuable. This type of provision does not only benefit the all-through cohort, but is a way of an all-through school utilising its in-house cross-phase expertise to support targeted learners on entry to KS3. This also addresses the concern of Sutton (2001) that some learners struggle to cross the pedagogical bridge, as generalist teaching at KS3 can also use pedagogical approaches familiar to the learner, such as project-based learning. Hargreaves (1986) argues for a retention of some generalist approaches in the first years of secondary education, in his examination of middle schools during the 1980s. He viewed the ‘fashion’ for the teaching of discrete subjects as being geared towards

the public examinations at 16, rather than being rooted in what is best for the learner or teacher. A more blended approach at KS3, which has meeting the learner's needs as its central aim, might be more fruitful, for at least some students, than a total switch to subject specialist teachers in year seven (Wrigley, 2006).

All-through schools are well placed to consider curricular alignment across all key stages and address the issue of discontinuity in the curriculum highlighted in the transition literature (Galton and Willcocks, 1983; Delamont and Galton, 1986; Hargreaves and Galton, 2002). The extent to which they actually do this seems to vary from school to school. Of the three case study schools, School C had carried out the most work in this area. Each subject is mapped from EYFS to KS5 and this is reviewed annually as a joint exercise involving teachers from all phases. School B had carried out some awareness raising work and had developed a shared digital space for practitioners to be able to access schemes of work and teaching materials across all phases. This has had the effect of practitioners being more familiar with curriculum content in other phases and several colleagues spoke to me about curricular 'alignment' being a key aspiration of the school.

The work undertaken by School A in relation to the English curriculum is also an interesting example of what can be achieved when practitioners consider their subject in a more holistic way. This had led to a rebalancing of reading and writing skills taught (with the aim of evening out distortions of focus created by national testing). I think it is particularly significant that after piloting a more aligned year six and year seven English curriculum within the all-through school, they have now engaged with other schools in their locality and implemented the changes on a cluster basis, with the aim of benefiting all learners coming into the school at year seven (i.e. not just the all-through cohort). This cluster model echoes the recommendations of Sutherland et al (2010), who advocate locality based cross-phase cluster work as a means of spanning the pedagogical bridge. It could also mitigate against what Galton and McLellan (2018) see as the loss of the LA's co-ordinating role in school-to-school collaboration.

9.5 Déjà vu: an underestimation of the abilities and prior learning of year seven students

> 'If you are not 100 percent aware of what is going on at primary school and what the expectations are, and how hard those kids work and how hard those SATs are, you are going to waste year seven and eight. That's the number one thing. Then you're going to complain that there isn't enough time to do your GCSE, and that's because you've been wasting time for two years' assistant principal School C.

As Galton and McLellan (2018) observe, concerns in relation to many aspects of the primary to secondary transfer have been persistent since the 1970s. A thread which has run through the literature about the KS2 to KS3 achievement dip (Galton et al 1999 and 2003) is the assertion that secondary teachers underestimate the abilities and prior learning experiences of year seven pupils (Evangelou et al 2008). The quotation from the assistant principal at School C reveals his reflections in that vein as a secondary teacher, following his first experience of teaching mathematics to year six. It also illustrates that even within all-through schools, individual practitioners can be superficial in their understanding of the work of the other phase. The consequence of this realisation has meant that at School C this particular practitioner has worked with his secondary mathematics colleagues to ensure that they have raised their expectations of year seven students and are now ensuring sufficiently challenging approaches and curriculum content.

The sort of surprise expressed by a secondary practitioner at what primary children could achieve was echoed elsewhere in the research. As mentioned in the case study report, the head of engineering at School C described some of the primary design project work as being at or near GCSE level. One of the MFL teachers at School A recounted how on her interview day at the school she had been impressed and surprised to see a year six MFL lesson where the pupils were using the future tense in Spanish. This realisation and subsequent learning curve were taking place in individual practitioners in the case study schools who were involved in cross-phase teaching/contact, i.e. 'boundary spanners' (Richter et al, 2006; Wenger, 2000). This would seem to suggest that misconceptions between educational phases still exist within all-through schools, as they do in the wider system. It also hints at a lack of cross-phase communication which leads to discontinuity, as has been happening within the English system for years (Hargreaves and Galton, 2002).

However, these examples show that cross-phase misconceptions start to be challenged and dispelled as practitioners experience working with colleagues from the other phase first-hand.

9.6 The possibilities and limitations of all-through MFL provision

In chapter three I considered the particular challenges of providing high quality MFL provision at KS2 and the long-standing system-wide issues of discontinuity as learners move from KS2 into KS3. MFL is a very obvious area where an all-through approach can address some of the challenges in the national system. All three case study schools were able to provide their own in-house MFL specialist teachers, which ensured the quality of the teaching and learning taking place and a curricular continuity between phases. Again, all-through approaches are aided by the jurisdictional alignment across all phases: the leadership team at the case study schools and their MFL departments had decided upon a language to be taught in KS2, which would also be the main MFL taught in the school at KS3. Whilst this may sound an incredibly obvious first step, in the wider system secondary schools have no direct say in which language is taught at KS2 and may have no direct liaison with primaries schools at all in relation to MFL (Chambers, 2014; Evans and Fisher, 2012).

All-through schools are able to have a coherent cross-phase strategy for MFL. In all three case study schools practitioners and/or students felt that this impacted positively on pupil confidence in languages at KS3. At School C MFL provision was raised by the secondary focus group as an example of what they perceived to be the advantages for the all-through cohort. School A deployed its secondary MFL teachers across phase to teach Spanish, which was taught as the main MFL in the secondary years. The head of MFL felt whilst some other cluster primary schools also taught Spanish, the all-through cohort displayed greater confidence in oral work and a higher degree of linguistic complexity in their written Spanish at KS3. The perception of KS2 MFL being more purposeful at School A than at some of the other primary settings, echoes what a recent study reported about students' perceptions of MFL at KS2: Chambers (2019) reports that students moving between conventional primary and secondary schools considered they made more progress and covered more challenging MFL work after transfer to secondary schooling (the opposite of

the overall trend of year seven students' abilities being underestimated). School B was in the process of implementing an ambitious strategy for MFL, by teaching German as the main MFL from KS1 to KS4. This ability to create a curricular and pedagogical alignment across different educational phases is a distinct advantage in implementing a cross-phase MFL strategy and, for the all-through cohort, overcomes some of the constraining factors which can erode the gains of prior learning in the wider system (Evans and Fisher, 2012).

All three case study schools have overcome the difficulty of staffing their primary MFL teaching. Even in an all-through context, the schools have had to be creative about how this is achieved. Schools A and C have used subject specialist teachers, who take over the KS2 classes in a peripatetic way (described as a possible model by Driscoll 1999 and seen as a common approach by Chambers, 2014); School A used MFL teachers from its secondary phase to also teach at KS2 and School C has a French specialist permanently based at the primary phase. School B's ambitious vision for German to be taught from year one has required a blended approach to staffing by deploying subject specialists, upskilling generalist teachers (made slightly easier by concentrating on one MFL) and the recruitment of native speakers and primary teachers who also have an MFL specialism. The result of this emphasis on and investment in German in School B has been to establish very strong pedagogical practice, with primary children taught largely through immersion in the target language (as advocated by Satchwell 1999). School B appears to have gone some way to reconciling the different strengths of specialist and generalist teachers in primary MFL teaching, which Chambers (2014), Driscoll (1991) and Sharpe (2001) define in terms of the balance of subject knowledge and age appropriate pedagogical expertise.

However, it would be wrong to suggest that a coherent and high quality MFL strategy in an all-through school would automatically solve all of the KS2 to KS3 subject transition problems seen in the wider system. Even the radically innovative approach of School B is a very long term strategy: whether exemplary pedagogical practice at KS1 will translate into improved standards and motivation at KS3 and KS4 will not be seen for many years. Indeed, the principal of School B reported practitioners at the school currently still observe a learner motivational dip at year

seven in MFL, as is seen in the wider system (Deckner, 2019). What also remains at most all-through schools is the conundrum of how to maintain the learning trajectory of those who have had a positive language learning experience at KS2, while at the same time catering for the needs of those who may be starting a completely new language. This is not an easy endeavour, as exemplified by School B's trialling and then abandonment of teaching the all-through cohort separately for MFL in year seven. Therefore, whilst this research shows that practitioners and learners at the case study schools perceive that in-house KS2 MFL teaching creates advantages for the all-through cohort at KS3, the secondary transfer dilemmas described by Kirsch (2008), Evans and Fisher (2012) and Chambers (2014) still persist for many (often the majority of) learners joining the school at year seven.

9.7 Is there evidence that all-through schools are developing boundary practice?

In chapter three I used Wenger's (1998, 2000, 2002) theory of CoP to theorise primary and secondary practitioners as separate professional groups. In the wider educational system these two groups may meet and liaise about pupils at the point of transfer from year six into year seven. Other typical forms of cross-phase liaison between stand-alone primary and secondary schools usually take the form of what Wenger terms 'boundary encounters'; such as visits and meetings or one-off joint events. These interactions are typically superficial and short-lived. At the start of this thesis I had wondered about the extent to which all-through schools might be able to establish 'boundary practice' which Wenger sees as being characterised by 'sustained mutual engagement' (Wenger, 1998, p114) and an altogether deeper way of working together.

When reflecting upon the case study schools I would consider each as having developed true 'boundary practices' at the level of senior leadership and governance. In each case the cross-phase nature of their strategic work has been cemented by the accountability ramifications of the institution being one school, with one DfE number. In Schools A and B, which had one overarching headteacher, it was clear that their role required them to transcend their original professional identities (in both cases as senior leaders from a secondary teaching background) to be the leader of an all-through school. Both leaders spoke about their learning

curves to become familiar with primary education. In School B both the principal and the headteacher of the primary free school talked about having to learn the language of the other educational phase as a kind of rite of passage when they first started to work in an all-through context: this echoes Wenger's identification of language and terminology as a marker between distinct CoPs (Wenger, 1998) and of mastery of the shared repertoire (including language) demonstrating competence and belonging (Wenger, 2000). Leaders at all case study schools felt that they were professionally enriched by all-through working and, to an extent, they had been transformed by it.

I consider that at a school leadership level there is evidence to suggest that a new professional identity is being forged. In the research questionnaire 97.5 percent of respondent headteachers agreed with the statement that an all-through school is not a joint primary and secondary school, it is something distinct in its own right and 95 percent agreed that they are trying to break down the barrier between primary and secondary education. As explored elsewhere in this chapter, the ability of all-through leaders and governing bodies to make decisions across educational phases is unusual and impactful, as they have the jurisdictional power to implement policy and practice across what remains a hard boundary in the wider school system.

As revealed in chapter five, all-through schools are typically large schools. Therefore, how things might appear strategically at senior leadership and governance level may be different to how they are experienced and perceived at the 'chalk-face'. All of my interviews with practitioners in the case study schools were with those who could be considered as boundary spanners (Richter et al, 2006, Wenger, 2000): i.e. those who were from one CoP, but who were now engaged in teaching and/or leading in a cross-phase way. The majority of these were teachers and leaders involved in cross-phase teaching or in managing the transition and transfer of pupils between KS2 and KS3. In the instances of those teaching across phase, many of their initial experiences might be categorised as immersive boundary encounters, as they found themselves working inside the other CoP. As has been detailed in the case study reports, often these experiences proved to be revelatory and resulted in professional reflection and learning. Those working across the boundaries between the two CoPs appear to reflect upon their own everyday

practice by firstly becoming conscious of differences between what they are used to and their new experience. For example, the head of MFL at School A who was initially taken aback by the primary children sitting on a mat at the front of the classroom, rather than being at their desks. They then adjust to the new setting and recognise the commonalities of teaching. For example, the secondary mathematics teacher at School C and the head of MFL at School A talked about how as they settled in to their cross-phase teaching they found they were making only relatively minor adjustments to their pedagogical approaches to adapt to teaching to KS2 classes.

Where I consider there are grounds to claim evidence of emerging boundary practices are in the areas where the boundary spanners have shared their experiences with members of their own CoP and new professional practice has evolved as a result. The work in mathematics at School C and in English in School A would both seem to be examples of boundary practice on the basis of a sustained engagement and in that new practice in both communities has been adopted. School C's cross-phase working and liaison in mathematics has led to changes in practice, such as increased subject specialist teaching at KS2, an increase in the challenge in the year seven curriculum and the use of the *Big Maths* scheme to support those less confident with the subject as they move into KS3. School A English work has evened the balance between the emphasis on the technical aspects of writing and the opportunities for sustained reading across upper KS2 and lower KS3.

In my view, of the three case study schools, School C has gone the furthest in breaking down tribal mindsets (Sutherland et al, 2010) and encouraging practitioners to engage with the school's 'all-throughness'. This has been achieved by the notion of 'all-throughness' being evident in the school's key documents (development plans etc.) and being integral to the school's professional meeting and training schedule. Middle leaders across phases meet regularly to review the curriculum and support each other in a variety of ways. Where the school is realising its potential for all-throughness is in developing its staff into one professional entity who work closely together. As detailed in the case study report, the joint training programme has been a vehicle for professional development of all teaching colleagues and encourages a

parity of esteem between professionals teaching in each phase. This goes some way to addressing the systemic inequities between primary and secondary practitioners outlined in Coldron et al (2015). This insistence upon 'all-throughness' as a key feature of the school's work constantly challenges separatist mindsets; the assistant principal with responsibility for teaching and learning felt that it would be impossible for a colleague to 'silo work' within their educational phase at the school.

Based upon findings at both stages of this research there is evidence to suggest that at an organisational level all-through education has the potential to morph into something distinct from the two communities it has evolved from, because its scope and scale is different and changes to practice are emerging. However, all-through schools are still a relatively new phenomenon in the English state system and it is perhaps too early to say the extent to which the stage one respondent headteachers' aspirations to break down the barriers between the two phases can or will be realised. Wenger (1998) sounds a note of caution about the instances when members of two CoPs transform into a third entity, as there is a danger the new entity is a focus in itself and the original CoP does not see the benefits of the endeavours of the new group. I examine later the extent to which learnings from all-through schools could be applied across the system, but would agree that if innovative practice is not shared, or is not accessible beyond the small number of all-through schools, then the impact of innovative boundary practice could be limited.

9.8 All-through schools: no fixed blue-print

As I argued in chapter three, there is a paucity of theory related to school configurations and the evolution of English state secondary schools since 1945, in particular, has been driven by the policy paradigms of successive governments of the day (Chitty, 2014; Jones, 2014). Alexander (2004) sees governmental educational initiatives in England as being driven by political ideology, rather than as a result of the consideration of educational theory or pedagogy. Similarly, MacBeath, Dempster, Frost, Johnson and Swaffield (2018) identify the UK educational jurisdictions as being 'highly susceptible to political caprice' (p31). What I observed in the case study schools were institutions trying to adjust and redefine, as once dominant initiatives had been discarded by subsequent political administrations. For example, in talking to school leaders about what their schools are now, they also

had to explain what they used to be: School B was a former CTC and then a specialist music college, before specialist status was phased out; School C was an early academy formed by merging three predecessor schools, which is now adjusting to an evolving local and national landscape; and School A was built as a new school under a PFI agreement, which still casts a shadow over the school's operation fifteen years after its inception. Reflecting upon my visits to these schools, it seems to me that the side of the English educational highway is littered with the burnt out wrecks of past educational policies. Schools and school leaders have found themselves having to navigate constant change over many decades (Woods and Simkins, 2014) and have had to live with the consequences of policy paradigms, long after the politicians have moved on and the thinking has changed.

The *Schools White Paper* (2010) appears to have been a catalyst for the proliferation of all-through schools in the last decade, which has to a large extent gone hand in hand with the expansion of the free school and academies programme. Therefore, one might argue, that the increase in all-through schools in the last ten years also results from a certain moment in English educational policy. Whilst the freedom to reconfigure or open as a new all-through school has been expanded in the last decade, why and how schools/leaders/governors/academy trusts might do this has been less clear. The stage one findings reveal that only a very small proportion (seven percent) of all-through schools surveyed were formed from primary schools expanding their age range. This may reflect a trend in the wider system of primary headteachers being less keen to engage with the academy agenda (Simkins et al, 2019) or reflect the inequities between primary and secondary leaders, meaning primary headteachers are less likely to have the resources, influence or organisational prestige (Coldron et al, 2014) to lead such initiatives. The case study schools and leaders are, or had been at one stage, what Coldron et al (2014) term 'well-positioned' in the system: that is to say had been well placed to take advantage of opportunities for autonomy and to join new initiatives. This is reflected in their organisations' evolutions and their academy status (School A as a converter academy and Schools B and C as early academies/MAT members).

What is interesting when considering the three case study schools in this context, is how each school has grown its all-through identity and focus in its own way. Whilst

the organisational autonomy has been there to develop all-through working, as there is no blue-print, they have developed their own, which is uniquely intertwined with their school's history, their setting and their values. School A has a focus on community and families and sees itself as hub for both learning and family support. Leaders cited the opportunity to work with children and families over 14 years as a privilege, which enables them to be particularly effective in this area. School B has a strong sense of moral purpose and became an all-through school in order to support a primary school in difficulties. It has focused its efforts on cross-phase music and MFL teaching with the intention of establishing strong all-through practice in these subjects. School C's founding vision has seen it create a mapped, coherent all-through curriculum, establishing an unbroken view of the learning journey from EYFS right through to the end of KS5. Whilst there are some commonalities in approaches, advantages established and challenges faced, each case study school has developed a unique blue-print for its own all-throughness.

9.9 System-wide challenges compounded in all-through schools

Some of the main challenges for all-through schools which emerged at stage one of the research related to financial challenges in the system, how these are compounded for all-through schools and how all-through schools fare in terms of school performance and within the accountability regimes. Findings in the case study schools supported the view that these are major concerns, which are not easily overcome, as they are part of the fabric of the wider system. Given the strong calls from headteachers' professional associations (Adams, 2019, Harden, 2019) for a fairer funding deal for all schools in England, there is clearly not currently a convenient or quick solution to this thorny issue. However, there may be some benefit in all-through schools sharing their experiences and budgeting approaches. Some respondent schools at stage one mentioned economies of scale and shared resourcing as advantages of the all-through configuration. However, having notional economies of scale is the not same as being able to realise them. This research reveals that financial pressures are a key barrier preventing all-through schools from realising the full benefits of cross-phase working.

The impact of performativity, which is arguably a system-wide blight (Fielding, 2001; Alexander, 2010), is clearly felt in all-through schools as acutely as in stand-alone

schools, if not more so, due to their wider age range. The case study schools all experienced pressures related to school performance. The principal of School A spoke about how the necessity of securing student outcomes had an impact on staffing decisions: strong teachers have to be deployed where impact is most needed, which leaves little capacity for activity which is non-essential (no matter how desirable it might be). KS2 SATs also emerge as a huge obstacle to cross-phase working at the very moment when it could be most valuable. Whilst the negative impact of SATs is clear in the literature, with Alexander (2010) particularly critical of how national testing dominates the year six experience, the case study field work demonstrates that this is also the case in all-through schools. The focus on SATs in year six reduces the time available for internal transition work, as well as for work to support the transfer of external students. As explained by the head of primary at School C, the all-through school's capacity to work with other primary schools is also limited by the other institutions' available time and willingness to engage. Due to the high stakes nature of the KS2 SATs School C's primary leader's perception was that some of its feeder schools could not 'risk' time taken out to be involved in bridging work etc.: this was the same situation and rationale reported by Galton, Hargraves & Pell (2003).

The free school programme, of which some all-through schools have been a part, was intended to bring educational innovation into the school system (DfE 2019a). The extent to which this has happened in reality has not been properly researched, but Greany (2018) suggests that it is probably limited. His analyses indicate that the 'high-autonomy-high-accountability' model in the English system means that innovation is not prized, as the ways schools are judged reinforce conventional expectations of schools' outcomes. All-through schools are an interesting case in point. The findings of this research suggest that all-through schools have the potential to develop innovative practice. However, the findings also concur with Greany's view, that attempts at genuine innovation are curtailed by over-riding performative pressures in the system.

The impact of performativity was also very evident amongst the secondary student focus groups at all three case study schools. Recollections of their time in primary education were largely fond memories of a less pressurised time when there was

more fun to be had in their learning and more time to spend on the things they enjoyed. Students in Schools A and C, some two hundred miles apart, spoke of their feelings of 'nostalgia' in remembering their earlier years at the school. The exception to this was their recollection of year six, which they remembered as a pressurised year and an unpleasant rite of passage and the time immediately after SATs, which they recalled as dead time ahead of the transition to year seven. This would seem to confirm the view that SATs cast a long shadow over year six, even at all-through schools, and are a major obstacle to effective bridging work.

Schools in the English system are in an incredibly difficult situation in relation to the pressures of performativity. In a system where outcomes are still published in a league table and national outcomes form the focus of school inspection, headteachers have no choice but to engage with the system and take all necessary steps to try to optimise students' outcomes. The testing regime at year six in its current form is now unique to England. However, despite calls from a number of respected quarters (Alexander, 2010; Wyse and Torrance, 2009) for the abolition or at least major reform of KS2 tests, the system remains in place. This is not to say that high outcomes are incompatible with creative and cross-phase approaches, but the pressure to perform well does appear to make school leaders risk averse. Concerns about maintaining positive performance data across all key stages is a particular concern for all-through leaders, who worry about how a dip in outcomes in one age range will be perceived by OFSTED.

Public judgements about schools, such as OFSTED ratings, can have an enormous impact upon how they are perceived by parents and their community (Gray and Wilcox, 1995). Leaders at all three case study schools had reservations about the fairness of the inspection system in relation to all-through schools. Leaders at Schools A and C felt that their most recent inspection judgements and reports had not done justice to the scale, scope and quality of what went on at the school. Leaders at both schools felt having learners from EYFS to KS5 meant that there would always be an area perceived to be not quite as strong as the rest of the school, which could distort the overall judgement for the school.

School B had been holding a judgement of *Outstanding* for some years, but the principal was similarly pessimistic that as an all-through school maintaining the *Outstanding* 'badge' would be impossible going forward. This realisation, together with the financial situation, was leading School B to apply to disaggregate into two separate schools. This resonates strongly with descriptions of the currency bestowed by a strong OFSTED judgement described in Coldron et al (2014) and where the subsequent 'precariousness of prestige*'* is felt as an enormous pressure by headteachers. As part of my re-examination of OFSTED data in September 2019, I discovered that School B was re-inspected during 2018-19 and was downgraded from *Outstanding* to *Good*, just as the principal had feared. Nationally, 20 percent of schools were rated as Outstanding in during 2018-19 (OFSTED, 2020) and 17 percent of all-through schools were holding this judgement at the start of this school year (2019-20). It is expected that OFSTED will re-inspect more schools currently rated as *Outstanding* from September 2020, so seeing how all-through schools compare with national trends in school inspection going forward could be an interesting focus of future research.

School C, which had most recently been judged to be a *Good* school by OFSTED, had decided to give up chasing the elusive *Outstanding* judgement and instead concentrate on developing what it deemed to be areas of exceptional practice. In my final interview with the heads of primary and secondary at School C in March 2019, we were able to discuss what were emerging as suggested changes to the OFSTED inspection framework for September 2019. They welcomed the proposed switch in emphasis away from a fixation with school performance outcomes, supposedly in favour of a more holistic assessment of the quality of education at each school. Leaders at School C felt a cautious optimism about the new focus on curriculum 'intent, implementation and impact' (OFSTED 2019). Having developed an all-through view of every subject from EYFS to KS5 and worked intensively with teachers to ensure that they all have an understanding of curriculum content across all phases, they felt that the school could be well placed to demonstrate a cohesive all-through curriculum intent and implementation strategy. They speculated that there might be a glimmer of hope that all-through schools could be assessed more favourably in the future.

9.10 Can new school groupings achieve the same advantages as a single institution all-through school?

The decision by School B to seek to disaggregate raises a number of questions. In this research I have used the DfE definition of an all-through school as a school with a mixture of both primary and secondary aged learners on its roll, that is a single institution, with a single DfE number. School B's decision to disaggregate is a very pragmatic one: in one action it will solve both the accountability risk of absorbing a primary phase which is not as high performing as its secondary phase and the particular financial disadvantages faced by all-through schools. At the point the school reverts to being two separate institutions it will be funded and inspected as two separate schools. The principal's view was that nothing else would change and the all-through vision and working would remain. The move to disaggregate will also be contingent upon agreeing a new admissions policy, which would guarantee the link between the two schools and maintain the automatic transfer of students from year six into year seven. If the school is able to proceed on this basis, it will arguably solve some of the main all-through challenges, whilst simultaneously maintaining the configuration's main advantages.

School B's plans are linked to its position within a MAT and other developments which have occurred in recent years. The school sponsored a sister primary free school in 2014, which is located on a site immediately adjacent to the all-through school's KS4/5 campus. This is a separate school and legal entity, but is part of the original all-through school's leadership and governance structures. Although it is technically a separate school, when it's first pupils reach year six, in a couple of years' time, they too will be admitted automatically into year seven. School B could potentially secure an even higher degree of all-through advantage in the future, as four of the six forms of entry at year seven will then come from primary phases/schools which are part of the same organisation and MAT. The same jurisdictional advantages which exist within all-through schools (decision making powers, a common employer for all staff, unified policies, curricular alignment etc.) are also evident within MATs.

The case of School B is particularly interesting: as one of the earliest all-through state schools in England it has been an advocate of all-through approaches, and yet

within a couple of years may cease to be an all-through school. It is a school which has been considered a trailblazer and has always been at the forefront of educational initiatives in recent decades (a CTC, then a specialist status music school, then an academy and most recently an all-through academy as part of a MAT). School B would certainly fulfil Coldron et al's (2014) criteria of a 'well-positioned' school, forging its own destiny by taking advantage of new initiatives. Therefore, does this move suggest that all-through schools, whose proliferation has been linked to the policy paradigm of the *Schools White Paper 2010,* are themselves destined to become another footnote in post-war educational evolution? What is particularly interesting, is that over the three years since stage one of this research was conducted, whilst there are 24 new all-through schools, eight schools have ceased to be all-through (souces: Edubase 2017 and GIAS 2019). Therefore, the story of all-through schools during the time-frame of this research project is not entirely one of constant expansion of the configuration. My own view is that something more subtle is happening and is linked to the development of cross-phase MATs in the wider English system. Simkins (2015) considered emerging new school groupings, concluding at the time that it was too soon to see where the expansion of academisation would ultimately lead. Similarly, I feel that it is still too early to gauge whether the numbers of single all-through schools will continue to rise, as the whole educational landscape is still evolving.

School B's decision to disaggregate has implications for the findings of this research: can groups of schools working together achieve the same affordances as a single institution all-through school? Galton has a firm view that transition arrangements and joint working between KS2 and KS3 in England have dwindled as a result of the decline of local authorities and the marketisation of the secondary school transfer, intensified by the rise of academies and free schools (Galton & McLellan, 2018 and Galton's introduction to Symonds, 2015). Whilst I would concur that the system is now more fractured, I would argue that the current range of schools and school groupings still provides the opportunity for close cross-phase working, should schools want it, and that the advent of MATs, particularly those that are locality based, provides for a greater potential for cross-phase and cross-institutional working than we have seen for some time.

The academy and free school sector is sometimes presented negatively and portrayed as operating in a moral vacuum. Controversies about MAT leaders' salaries and high-profile instances of institutional failure have attracted media coverage even beyond the educational sphere (Dorrell, 2017; Northern Echo, 2017). Whilst scrutiny is essential in relation to the education of children and young people, I would argue that the counterbalance of the positive potentials of MAT working, and the uncontroversial, everyday functioning of the majority of schools in the academy sector in England, does not receive equal attention. The Confederation of Schools Trusts has sought to redress this balance and has recently called for school trusts (its preferred term for MATs) to be recognised as a new form of civic structure. It has published its own position paper, calling for coherence in the system and a recognition of the role of school trusts as a force for social good (Confederation of School Trusts, 2019). Given that the outcome of the December 2019 General Election suggests that the policy of academisation will continue, in the medium term at least, an examination of ways of optimising new school groupings and exploring the role school trusts can play in the system, would seem a sensible way forward. The future of all-through schools and all-through ways of working appears to be inextricable linked to developments in the wider landscape.

10. Conclusion

10.1 Intent and scope of this study

This study was conceived as a two stage, mixed methods research project in order to firstly create an overview snapshot of all-through schools in the English state system and to then explore key issues in depth at the case study schools. The over-riding intent of the research has been phenomenological, that is to say I have sought to narrate participants' lived experiences and to share their views of their professional context. Care has been taken to analyse participant contributions in great depth, in order to be faithful to their perspectives and represent them accurately in this thesis. The stage one research results are the responses of the 42 all-through headteachers who completed the questionnaire in the spring of 2017. At stage two, my data corpus is comprised of approximately 17 hours of audio-files from interviews and focus groups with practitioners and students at the case study schools, together with my field notes and some materials gathered in the field.

The stage one respondent sample of 42 captured the views of just under a third of all-through school leaders in 2017. The purpose of stage two, the case study element of the research, has been to consider the research questions through the in-depth examination of how each of the three schools has approached aspects of their all-through working. I do not claim that the three schools are typical or that the practice described is exemplary. However, the schools were selected on the basis of their longstanding all-through working, with the intention of finding and discussing embedded practice, which would be of interest to other schools and educationalists. The spirit of the case study research is to offer a candid insight into each school's approaches and to detail both what practitioners feel is effective practice and share aspects of all-through working which have proved to be difficult.

10.2 Limitations of this study

The research was constrained by being a part-time study conducted over five years. Unavoidably, the stage one research findings are now nearly three years old at the point the final thesis is ready for submission. However, these findings still provided the context for the stage two case research and remain of value and interest in

themselves. They were also the stimulus for discussion with all-through school leaders at dissemination events during the doctoral project (as detailed in chapter six).

The breadth of the research is also a limiting factor, in terms of the level of detail I have been able to provide in the findings. I made the design decision to conduct a mixed methods study (explored in chapter four), which I consider to be a strength of the research. However, one of the consequences of this choice is that the need to report on two stages has constrained the space which could be assigned to each research phase in the findings chapters. An example of this constraint is how some sub-areas within research questions (e.g. leadership considered within research question one) may only have a paragraph or two devoted to them in each case study report.

Similarly, the case study interviews and focus groups generated large datasets in the form of many hours of audio recordings and written transcripts. The use of IPA approaches in the analysis of these data generated thematic findings, rooted in the words of individual participants. In chapter seven, I have endeavoured to include thick description, with some of the narrative including the participants' own words. However, the need to synthesise findings across participants meant that I had to limit the use of direct quotation and could not entirely do justice to the richness of each individual's response. Ideally, I would have liked an even higher degree of idiographic detail in the case study findings chapter. This is something I would wish to aim for in future research.

10.3 Why this study is an important step in the examination of all-through schools

Literature and research which pertains specifically to all-through schools in the English state system is very rare. In 2011, the National College for School Leadership published a report about the opportunities and challenges of leadership in all-through schools. Other references to all-through schools in the literature are mostly short passages, considering their potential in supporting the development of effective practice in the primary to secondary transition (Howe, 2011; Sutherland et al, 2020) or in developing the balance of generalist/specialist teaching blends at

KS2/3 (Alexander, 2010). Coldron et al (2015) recommend a consideration of the relative status of primary and secondary practitioners and leaders in all-through schools, to see whether the deep inequities present in the wider system might be alleviated by all-through working. Therefore, this research, and any subsequent publications stemming from it, will be a beginning in addressing a clear gap in the research. As the configuration has gained in popularity, I estimate we are already at a point where the numbers of pupils being educated in all-through state schools in England is around 150,000 and is rising. We owe it to the learners and practitioners within these schools to ensure that that their experiences are understood.

An examination of all-through schools is also important because it not only considers the specifics of a small group of schools, but in so doing shines a light on the wider system. Current school configurations have evolved over time and as I have argued earlier in this thesis, have not been sufficiently theorised or reflected upon. Secondary and primary schools operate as stand-alone institutions in the English state system because of the historical and political circumstances (Chitty, 2014; Jones, 2014; McCulloch, 2002) explored in chapter two. The shortcomings of the current arrangements, particularly of the management of children as part of the mass transfer between primary and secondary schools, have been widely criticised in the literature (McLellan and Galton, 2015; Galton and McLellan, 2018). I believe that this research highlights both the potential of all-through schools to address some of these shortcomings and showcases cross-phase practices, which could be adapted and used more widely in the system.

10.4 How significant are the learnings from all-through schools for the wider education system?

The research provides those considering becoming or opening as an all-through school with practitioner perspectives on the potentials and challenges of all-through schools. It is intended that the detailed case study profiles would also provide those currently working in all-through schools with examples of effective practice which might be adapted to their setting, and indications of some pitfalls which could be avoided. The research clearly has a particular relevance for those working in all-through schools, but I would contend that it has a significance beyond this niche area

of focus. Aspects of the research have a much wider resonance because they touch upon two very important areas, which have been shown in the literature to be persistently problematic in the wider system:

- The research covers how primary and secondary practitioners might be supported to work more effectively together and develop a better mutual professional understanding and;
- It considers how pupils can be supported to move through the different stages of their education in a way with minimises disruption to their learning and takes due account of their well-being.

The research findings point to potentials in all-through schools, which could be applied in principle across the system, or at least in parts of the system, such as within MATs or locality based clusters.

As all-through schools on split-sites demonstrate, it is not necessary (although it may be desirable) to share the same school campus in order to establish all-through practices. Therefore, key aspects of all-through working which relate to curriculum, pedagogy and practitioner liaison, deployment and development could be employed across primary and secondary schools which remain separate institutions. This might be most easily facilitated within a MAT, which would have the same cross-phase jurisdictional advantages as an all-through school. However, it would still be possible for two or more completely separate, unaffiliated schools or groups of schools across the primary and secondary divide to work together in a genuinely cross-phase way. In that context, many of the practices detailed at all stages of this research would be useful starting points for primary and secondary practitioners considering how they might move forward together. This type of network of schools of both phases, linked by locality and with learners in common who progress between member schools, is exactly the sort of arrangement envisaged by Sutherland et al (2010) and advocated by them as a way of overcoming the systemic primary/secondary disconnect at the point of school transfer.

10.5 Recommendations based upon research findings

Based upon the findings of both stages of the research, I would recommend that:

<u>For all-through schools</u>

- All-through schools revisit their procedures for the transfer and induction of students joining the school at year seven (i.e. the non-all-through cohort); which was also identified as an all-through leadership challenge in NCSL (2011). This would include developing strategies to ensure that any advantages for the all-through cohort, do not inadvertently disadvantage those joining the school as new pupils in the secondary phase.
- They consider ways of working in partnership with other primary schools in their localities to develop a cross-phase approach to curriculum and pedagogy (as recommended by Sutherland et al, 2010).
- All-through schools create opportunities to network with each other to share effective practice and lobby jointly on key issues which affect them (such as all-through school finance).
- They review whether they are fully utilising the affordances of their all-through configuration for the benefit of staff and pupils.

<u>For stand-alone schools and policy makers</u>

- Schools consider the advantages of the generalist and specialist teaching blends in all-through schools, which could be achieved in the wider system through MAT or partnership working. This echoes recommendations in the CPR (Alexander, 2010)
- Schools consider cluster working to develop a cross-phase approach to curriculum and pedagogy (as recommended by Sutherland et al, 2010)
- The professional contact between primary and secondary practitioners and leaders is increased. This research suggests that cross-phase teaching and joint professional development appear to be effective ways in which some all-through schools innovate practice and deepen the professional understanding between the two professional groups. This resonates with the findings of Swaffield, Rawi and O'Shea (2016).
- Policy makers review the arrangements for the end of KS2 assessments (SATs) (as recommended by Alexander, 2010 and Wyse and Torrance, 2009). Current arrangements add to performative pressures in schools and compound the systemic disconnects between primary and secondary education. A revised approach to end of KS2 assessment could create the

capacity in the system to design truly cohesive curriculum models across educational phases.

10.6 Recommendations for future research

- The findings of stage one of this research are already dated and could be revisited as part of future research. There is further work to be done in tracking all-through schools as a distinct group within the wider system (in terms of student outcomes and OFSTED ratings etc.) The updates provided in 8.3 suggest it would also be valuable for future research to track the rate of expansion of the configuration and the rate of disaggregation.
- The focus of this research has been all-through schools. However, schools are increasing part of wider school groupings, such as MATs. I would see research which focuses on all-through approaches, including but also beyond all-through schools, as being the natural next step in research. Over the time-frame of this project increasing numbers of schools are working as part of MATs, which in turn are having an increasingly all-through reach.

10.7 Final Reflections

At the start of this doctoral research project I set out to examine a school configuration and consider its affordances and challenges. At the end of the research project I realise that what I have largely been examining is two distinct groups of professionals and how their practices align and diverge. Within this thesis, I have concentrated on the KS2/3 transition and cross-phase curricular and pedagogical developments at KS2/3 in all-through schools. I think this has partly been because this is where I forged my theoretical foundation and where I found the richest seam in the educational literature to support and challenge my thinking. With hindsight, it is also a very natural point of focus: if all-through schools are a primary and secondary school in one institution, then KS2/3 is the point of the join. In England year six into year seven is where one teaching paradigm meets another (Alexander, 2010) and is the point of the greatest professional disconnect and discontinuity in the wider educational system (Galton, Hargreaves and Pell, 2003). In all-through schools it is the interface between the two professional groups, in contact that is much more sustained than in the wider system.

The research findings suggest that more nuanced specialist and generalist teaching blends can operate across KS2 and KS3, which ease the learners' transition to secondary education, by softening the pedagogical divide. All-through schools also demonstrate the possibilities created by a curricular alignment, which genuinely builds upon prior learning. Exciting possibilities exist in the kinds of cross-phase teaching and liaison seen in the practice at the case study schools, where there are emerging examples of innovative boundary practice, which have impacted upon the curriculum content and pedagogical approaches of teachers across the primary/secondary divide. The focus in this research on practitioners who are boundary spanners reveals the potential for all-through working to be professionally enriching and even transformative for some practitioners.

At the beginning of my research project I had argued that over seventy years on from the introduction of state secondary education a re-examination of the possibilities of how we configure English state schools is long overdue. I still believe that this is the case and that all-through schools offer an alternative configuration which is worthy of serious consideration. However, I see now that change in the system could be impactfully actioned if focus were to be given to developing the liaison and professional understanding between primary and secondary practitioners. All-through education could be developed as a way of working, rather than seen solely as a fixed school configuration. Perhaps 'all-throughness' is as much a mindset as the 'Two Tribes' separatist attitudes which have been a barrier to meaningful cross-phase working for so long. I would hope that as we move into the 2020s and beyond new professional identities might be forged, and new ways of working embedded, which have the pupils' learning and well-being at their centre: it is time that we viewed the learning journey from early years education through to early adulthood as an unbroken continuum.

References

Adams, R. (2019).*https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/mar/08/damian-hinds-faces-criticism-from-head-teachers-worth-less-parents-letter.* Retrieved from The Guardian: www.theguardian.com

Aldrich, R. (2006). *Lessons from History of Education. The selected works of Richard Aldrich.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Alexander, R. (2001). *Culture & Pedagogy: international comparisons in primary education.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Alexander, R. (2004). Still no pedagogy? Principle, pragmatism and compliance in primary education. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 7-32.

Alexander, R. (2008). *Essays on pedagogy.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Alexander, R. (2010). *Children, their world, their education: final report and recommendations of the Cambridge Primary Review .* London: Routledge.

Almalki, S. (2016). Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Data in Mixed Methods Research - Challenges and Benefits. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 5(3), 288-296.

Anderson, L., Jacobs, J., Schramm, S., Splittberger, F., (2000). School transitions: beginning of the end or a new beginning? *International Journal of Educational Research*, 33, 325-339.

Andrew, N., Tolson, D., & Ferguson, D. (2008). Building on Wenger: Communities of Practice in Nursing. *Nurse Education Today*, 28, 246-252.

Archer, L., Francis, B., Miller, S., Taylor, B., Tereshchenko, A., Mazenod, A., Travers, A-C. (2018). The symbolic violence of setting: a Bourdieusian analysis of mixed methods data on secondary students' views about setting. *British Educational Research Journal*, 44 (1), 119-140.

Attlee, C. (1951). *New Jerusalem* . Scarborough.

Ball, S. (2000). Performativities and Fabrication in the Education Economy: Towards the Performative Society. *Australian Educational Researcher*, Vol 27, no. 2 , 1-23.

Ball, S. J. (2001). Labour, learning and the economy: A 'policy sociology' perspective. In F. M (Ed.), *Taking Education Really Seriously: Four Years' Hard Labour* (pp. 45-56). London: Routledge.

Ball, S. (2013). *The Education Debate* (Second ed.). Bristol: The Policy Press.

Bangs, J., Macbeath, J., & Galton, M. (2011). *Reinventing Schools, Reforming Teaching: From Political Visions to Classroom Reality.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Barber, M. (1999). Taking the tide at the flood: transforming the middle years of schooling. *Education Today, 49* (4), 3-17.

Barber, M. (1994). *The Making of the 1944 Education Act.* London: Cassell.

Bartunek, J. (2011). The importance of cross-disciplinary work: intergroup relationships and quality improvement in healthcare. *BMJ Qual Saf*, Vol 20: i62-i66.

Bash, L. (1989). Education goes to market. In L. Bash, & D. Coulby, *The Education Reform Act : Competition and Control* (pp. 19-30). London: Cassell Education Limited.

Bassey, M. (2007). Case Studies. In Briggs. A, & M. Coleman (Eds.), *Research Methods in Educational Leadership* (2nd ed., pp. 142-156). Sage.

Batho, G. (1989). *Political issues in Education.* London: Cassell.

Benn, M. (2011). *School Wars: The Battle for Britian's Education.* London: Verso.

BERA. (2015). *Revised ethical guidelines for Educational Research.* Retrieved August 2016, from British Educational Research Association: www.bera.ac.uk/publications/pdfs/ETHICA1.pdf

British Educational Research Association (BERA). (2018). *Ethical gidelines for Educational Research, Fourth Edition.* Retrieved from bera.ac.uk: https://www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/publications/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018

Biggerstaff, D., & Thompson., A. R. (2008). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA): A Qualitative Methodology of Choice in Healthcare Research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 5, 173-183.

Bloye, J., & Frederickson, N. (2012). Intervening to improve the transfer to secondary school. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 28:1, 1-18.

Boden, Z., & Eatough, V. (2014). Understanding More Fully: A Multimodal Hermeneutic-Phenonmenological Approach. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 11:2, 160-177.

Bolster, A. (2009). Continuity or a fresh start? A case study of motivation in MFL at transition KS2-3. *Language Learning Journal*, 37:2, 233-254.

Bolster, A., Balandier-Brown, C., & Rea-Dickins, P. (2004). Young learners of modern foreign languages and their transition to secondary phases: a lost opportunity? *Language Learning Journal*, 30:1, 35-41.

Bourdieu, P. (1980). *The Logic of Practice.* Stanford CA: Stanford University Press.

Braund, M. (2007). 'Bridging Work' and Its Role in Improving Progression and Continuity: An Example from Science Education. *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol 33, No.6, 905-926.

Brighouse, T. (2006). Collegiality: The Way Forward. In M. Hewlett, R. Pring, & M. Tulloch (Eds.), *Comprehensive Education: Evolution, Achievement and New Directions* (pp. 171-176). Northampton: The University of Northampton Press.

Briggs, A., & Coleman, M. (2007). *Research Methods in Educational Leadership and Management.* London: Sage.

Brinkman, S., & Kvale, S. (2015). *Interviews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing. Third Edition.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Brown, A. (2008). A Review of the Literature on Case Study Research. *Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education*, 1:1, pp1-13.

Bryman, A. (2016). *Social Research Methods, 5th Edition.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Burke-Johnson, R., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed Methods Research: a research paradigm whose time has come, *Educational Researcher, 7* (33), 14-26.

Burgess, S., Greaves, E., & Vignoles, A. (2019). School choice in England:evidence from national administrative data. *Oxford Review of Education*, 45:5, 690-710.

Burgess, S., Greaves, E., & Vignoles, A. (2020). *School Places: a fair choice? School choice, inequality and options for reform of school admissions in England.* London: The Sutton Trust.

Burgess, S., Greaves, E., Vignoles, A., & Wilson, D. (2014). What parents want: school preferences and school choice. *The Economic Journal*, vol. 125, 1262-1289.

Burton, A., Hughes, M., & Dempsey, C. (2017). Quality of life research: a case for combining photo-elicitation with interpretatvie phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 14.4, 375-393.

Busher, H., & James, N. (2007). Ethics of research in education. In A. R. Briggs, & Coleman, M (Eds.), *Research Methods in Educational Leadership* (pp. 106-125). London: Sage.

Butler, R. (1971). *Art of the Possible.* London: Hamish Hamilton.

Buysse, V., Sparkman, K., & Wesley, P. W. (2003). Communities of Practice: connecting what we know with what we do. *Exceptional Children*, 69 (3), pp 263-277.

Buzza, D. (2015). Supporting Students in the Transition to High School: The Role of Self-Regulated Learning. In S. Elliott-Johns, & D. H. Jarvis, *Perspectives on Transition in Schooling and Instructional Practice* (pp. 215- 241). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Byrne, A., Sampson, C., Baillie, J., Harrison, K., Hope-Gill, B., Hubbard, R., & Nelson, A. (2013). A mixed-methods study of the care needs of individuals with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis and their carers - CaNoPy: a study protocol. *BMJ Open*, 3: 1-8.

Campbell, A., & McNamarra, O. (2007). Ways of telling: the use of practitioners' stories. In A. Campbell, & S. Goundwater-Smith, *an Ethical Approach in Practitioner Research.* London: Routledge.

Chambers, G. (2014). Transition in modern languages from primary to secondary: the challenge of change. *The Language Learning Journal*, 42:3, 242-260.

Chambers, G. (2019). Pupils' reflections on the primary to secondary school transition with reference to modern language learning: a motivational self-system perspective. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 13:3, 221-236.

Chedzoy, S., & Burden, R. L. (2005). Making the move: assessing student attitudes to primary-secondary school transfer. *Research in Education*, 74, 22-VI.

Chen, W., & Gregory, A. (2010). Parental Involvement as a Protective Factor During the Transition to High School. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 103: 53-62.

Chitty, C. (2014). *Education Policy in Britain* (Third ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research Methods in Education* (7th ed.). Abingdon: Routledge.

Clare, J., & Jones, G. (2001, Feb 13). *Blair: Comprehensives have failed*. (The Daily Telegraph) Retrieved Feb 20, 2015, from The Daily Telegraph: www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1322418/Blair-Comprehensives-have-failed-htmil

Clough, A., Lee, V., Menter, I., Trodd, T., & Whitty, G. (1989). Restructuring the Education System? In L. Bash, & D. Coulby, *The Education Reform Act: Competition and Control* (pp. 31-53). London: Cassell Education Limited.

Coldron, J., Crawford, M., Jones, S., & Simkins, T. (2014). The restructuring of schooling in England: The responses of well-positioned headteachers. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 42(3),387-403.

Coldron, J., Crawford, M., Jones, S., & Simkins, T. (2015). The positions of primary and secondary schools in the English field: a case of durable inequality. *Journal of Education Policy*, 30:5, 671-687.

Confederation of School Trusts. (2019). *Future shape of the education system in England. A sector led 'white paper'.* Nottingham: CST.

Cotton, D., Stokes, A., & Cotton, P. A. (2010). Using Observational Methods to Research the Student Experience. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 34:3, 463-473.

Council of the European Union and European Parliament. (2016). *General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)*.

Cowen, N. (2008). *Swedish Lessons: How schools with more freedom can deliver better education.* London: Civitas -The Institute for the Study of Civil Society.

Coyle, D., Hood, P., & Marsh, D. (2010). *Content and Language Integrated Learning.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cresswell, J., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research.* Sage.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process.* London: Sage.

Cuddapah, J., & Clayton, C. D. (2011). Using Wenger's Communities of Practice to Explore a New Teacher Cohort. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 62(1) 62-75.

Cullinane, C. (2020). *Fairer School Admissions. Social segregration in schools: the view from parents and teachers.* London: The Sutton Trust.

Deakin Crick, R., Jelfs, H., Symonds, J., Ren, K., Patton, A., & Grushka, K. (2010). *Learning Futures Evaluation Report.* Bristol: University of Bristol/ Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

Deckner, S. (2019). Quantitative evidence of the occurence of a motivational dip in languages in Year 7. *The Language Learning Journal*, 47:5, 625- 641.

Delamont, S., & Galton, M. (1986). *Inside the Secondary Classroom.* London: Routledge/ Paul Kegan.

Demetriou, H., Goalen, P., & Rudduck, J. (2000). Academic performance, transfer, transition and friendship: listening to the student voice. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 33, 425--441.

Denscombe. (2010). *The Good Research Guide for Small-scale Social Research Projects* (Fourth ed.). Maidenhead: Open University Press.

DES (Department of Education and Science). (1965). *The Organisation of Secondary Education (Circular 10/65).* London: HMSO.

DES. (1987). *The National Curriculum 5-16: A Consultation Document.* London: DES.

DfE. (2010). *The Importance of Teaching: The Schools White Paper 2010.* London: HMSO.

DfE. (2011). *SFR12 - 2011 - Schools, pupils and their characteristics.* Department for Education, London.

DfE. (2014). *School Admissions Code. Statutory guidance for admission authorities, governing bodies, local authorities, schools adjudicators and admission appeals panels.* London: Department for Education. Crown Copyright.

DfE. (2015). *DfE - SFR16- 2015 Schools, Pupils and their characteristics.* Department for Education, London.

DfE/DH. (2015). *Special Educational needs and disability: 0-25 years. Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities.* London: Department for Education & Department for Health. Crown Copyright.

DfE. (2018). *Schools, pupils and their characteristics January 2018.* Sheffield: Crown Copyright.

DfE. (2019a). *How to apply to set up a mainsream free school.* London: 00181- 2019 Crown Copyright.

DfE. (2019b). *Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2019.* Sheffield: Crown Copyright .

DfE. (2019c). *Keeping Children Safe in Education. Statutory guidance for schools and colleges.* London: Department for Education.

DfES. (2002a). *Language Learning.* London: DfES.

DfES. (2002b). *Languages for All: Languages for Life. A Strategy for England.* London: DfES.

DfES. (2003). *Excellence and enjoyment: a strategy for primary schools.* London: Department for Education and Skills.

DfES. (2004). *Curriculum Continuity. Effective transfer between primary and secondary schools.* Nottngham: Crown Copyright.

DH. (2000). *A Health Service of all the Talents.* London: Department of Health.

Dilley, P. (2000). Conducting Successful Interviews: Tips for Intrepid Research. *Theory into Practice*, 39:3, 131-137.

Dillman, D., Smyth, J., & Christian, L. M. (2014). *Internet, Phone, Mail and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method. fourth Edition.* New York: Wiley.

Docking, J. (Ed.). (2000). *New Labour's Policies for Schools. Raising the Standard?* David Fulton Publishers.

Dorrell, E. (2017, November). *The academy system needs to self-administer an urgent fix. Times Educational Supplement*.

Drake, P., & Heath, L. (2008). Insider researchers in schools and universities: the case of the professional doctorate. In P. Sikes, & T. Potts, *Researching education from the inside: investigating instituitions from within* (pp. 127-148). London: Routledge.

Drake, P., & Heath, L. (2011). *Practitioner Research At Doctoral Level: Developing Coherent Research Methodologies.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Driscoll, P. (1999). Teacher expertise in the primary modern foreign language classroom. In P. Driscoll, & D. Frost, *The Teaching of Modern Foreign Languages in the Primary School* (pp. 27-49). London: Routledge

Eccles, J., & Midgley, C. (1989). Stage/environment fit: developmentally appropriate classrooms for young adolescents. In R. Ames, & C. Ames (Eds), *Research on motivation and education: goals and cognitions (Vol 3)* (pp. 282-331). New York: Academic Press.

Edmunds, H. (1999). *The Focus Group Research Handbook.* Chicago, IL: American Marketing Association.

Education Endowment Foundation. (2018). *Setting or streaming.* London: Education Endowment Foundation .

Egbert, J., & Sanden, S. (2014). *Foundations of Education Research: understanding theoretical components.* New York: Routledge.

Evangelou, M., Taggart, B., Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., & Siraj-Blatchford, I. (2008). *What makes a successful transition from primary to secondary school?* DCSF, London.

Evans, M., & Fisher, L. (2012). Emergent communities of practice: secondary schools' interactions with primary school foreign language teaching and learning. *The Language Learning Journal*, 40/2, 157-173.

Evans, N. (2014, Feb 28). *All-through Schools offer way to bridge the transition from primary to secondary school*. Retrieved Nov 16, 2014, from TES Connect.

Farnsworth, V., Kleanthous, I., & Wenger-Trayner, E. (2016). Communities of practice as a social theory of learning: A conversation with Etienne Wenger. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 64.2, pp 139-160.

Fielding, M. (2001). Target setting, policy pathology and student perspectives. Learning to labour in new times. In F. M (Ed.), *Taking Education Really Seriously, Four Years' Hard Labour* (pp. 143- 154). London: Routledge.

Firestone, W., & Herriott, R. (1984). Multisite qualitative policy research: some design and implementation issues. In D. E. Fetterman, *Ethnography in educational evaluation* (pp. 63-88). Beverley Hills, CA: Sage.

Fitzwilliam College. (2019, December 18). *https://www.fitz.cam.ac.uk/about/history/40-years-women/helen-both-student-and-teacher-fitz*. Retrieved from Fitzwilliam College Cambridge: www.fitz.cam.ac.uk

Flutter, J. (2016). Connecting the voices, journeyings and practices of the doctorate for professionals. In P. Burnard, T. Dragovic, J. Flutter, & J. Alderton, *Transformative Doctoral Research Practices for Professionals* (pp. 157-161). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Floyd, J., & Fowler, J. (2014). *Survey Research Methods. Fifth Edition.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Fogelman, K. (2006). A brief history of comprehensive education in England and Wales. In M. Hewlett, R. Ping, & M. Tulloch (Eds.), *Comprehensive Education: evolution, achievement and new directions* (pp. 29-41). Northampton.

Foster, P. (1996). *Observing Schools - A Methodological Guide.* London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Galletta, A. (2013). *Mastering the Semi-Structured Interview and beyond.* New York: New York University Press.

Galton, M. (2010). Moving to secondary school: what do pupils in England say about the experience? In D. Jindal-Snape (Ed.), *Educational Transitions.* London: Routledge.

Galton, M. P., Hargreaves, I., Pell, T.(2003). Progress in the middle years of schooling: continuities and discontinuities at transfer. *Education 3-13*, 31:3, 9-18.

Galton, M., Gray, J., & Ruddock, J. (2003). *Transfer and transitions in the middle years of schooling (7-14).* Department for Education and Science, Nottingham.

Galton, M., Gray, J., & Rudduck, J. (1999). *The impact of school transitions and transfers on pupil progress and attainment.* Research report RR131ort, DfEE, Nottingham.

Galton, M., & McLellan, R. (2018). A transition Odyssey: pupils' experience of transfer to secondary school across five decades. *Research Papers in Education*, 33:2, 255-277.

Galton, M., & Morrison, I. (2000). Transfer and Transition in English Schools: Reviewing the Evidence. *International Journal of Educational Research*, Vol 33:4, 341-363.

Galton, M., & Willcocks, J. (1983). *Moving from the Primary Classroom.* London: Routledge/ Paul Kegan.

Gau, W. (2011). Public servants' workplace learning: a reflection on the concept of communities of practice. *Qual Quant*, 47: 1519-1530.

Gillham, B (2000). *Developing a questionnaire.* London: Continuum.

Gillham, B. (2005). *Research Interviewing. The Range of Techniques .* Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Gonzalo, J., Thompson, B. M., Haidet, P., Mann, K., & Wolpaw, D. R. (2017). A constructive reframing of student roles and systems learning in medical education using a Communities of Pratice Lens. *Academic Medicine*, Vol 92, No.12, 1687--1694.

Gorard, S., & Taylor, C. (2004). *Combining Methods in Educational and Social Research.* Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Gorard, S., & Huat See, B. (2011). How can we enhance enjoyment of secondary school? The student view. *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol 37, No.4, 671-690.

Gorard, S., Siddiqui, N., & Huat See, B. (2017). What works and what fails? Evidence from seven popular literacy 'catch up' schemes for the transition to secondary school in England. *Research Papers in Education*, 32:5, 626-648.

Gorman, S. (2007). Managing research ethics: a head-on collision? In A. Campbell, & S. Groundwater-Smith, *An Ethical Approach to Practitioner Research* (pp. PP8-23). Abingdon: Routledge.

Gray, J., & Wilcox, B. (1995). *'Good School, Bad School' evaluating performance and encouraging improvement.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Greany, T. (2018). Innovation is possible, it's just not easy: improvement, innovation and legitimacy in England's autonomous and accountable school system. *Educational Manangement Administration & Leadership*, Vol. 46(1) 65-85.

Grenfell, M., & Harris, V. (1999). *Modern Languages and Learning Strategies: In Theory and Practice.* London: Routledge.

Groundwater Smith, S. (2007). Student Voice. Essential testimony for intelligent schools. In A. Campbell, & S. Groundwater Smith, *An Ethical Approach to Practitioner Research* (pp113-128). London: Routledge.

Harnden, J. (2019, March 2019). *The true cost of education. An evidence-based assessment of the level of funding needed by schools in England.* Retrieved from ASCL - Association of School and College Leaders: www.ascl.org.uk

Hargreaves, A. (1986). *Two Cultures of Schooling: The Case of the Middle School.* Lewes: The Falmer Press.

Hargeaves, L., & Galton, M. (2002). *Transfer from the Primary Classroom: 20 Years on.* London: Routledge.

Hennessy, E., & Heary, C. (2006). Exploring Children's Views through Focus Groups. In S. Greene, & D. Hogan (Eds.), *Researching children's experiences* (pp. 236-252). London: Sage.

HM Government. (2018). *Working Together to Safeguard Children.* London: HM Government.

HMSO. (1944). *The Education Act 1944.* London: HMSO.

HMSO. (1988). *Education Reform Act 1988.* London: HMSO.

Hood, P. (2019). *Teaching Languages Creatively.* Routledge .

Howe, A. (2011). Managing primary-secondary transfer. Lessons learned. In A. Howe, & V. Richards (Eds.), *Bridging the transition from primary to secondary school* (pp. 153-165). Abingdon: Routledge.

Howe, A., & Richards, V. (Eds.). (2011). *Bridging the transition from primary to secondary.* London: Routledge.

Hunt, M., Barnes, A., Powell, B., & Martin, C. (2008). Moving on: The challenges for foreign language learning on transition from primary to secondary school. *Teaching and Teacher Eduation*, 24. 915-926.

Hyde, P., McBride, A., Young, R., & Walshe, K. (2005). Role redesign: new ways of working in the NHS. *Personnel Review*, 34 (6), p697-712.

Jewson, N. (2007). Cultivating network analysis: rethinking the concept of 'community' in 'communities of practice.'. In J. Hughes, N. Jewson, & L. Unwin, *Communities of Practice: Critical Perspectives* (pp. 30-40). Abingdon: Routledge.

Jindal-Snape, D., & Foggie, J. (2008). A holitstic approach to primary-secondary transition. *Improving Schools*, Vol 11, No.1, 5-17.

Johnstone, R. (1989). *Communicative Interaction: a guide for language teachers.* London: Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research.

Jones, A. (2004). Involving Children and Young People as Researchers. In S. Fraser, V. Lewis, S. Ding, M. Kellett, & C. Robinson (Eds.), *Doing Research with Children and Young People* (pp. 113-130). London: Sage.

Jones, J. (2010). The role of Assessment for Learning in the management of primary to secondary transition: implications for language teachers. *The Language Learning Journal*, 32.2, 175-191.

Jones, K. (2014). *Education in Britain 1944 to the present.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Jones, K. (1989). *Right Turn : The Conservative Revolution in Education.* London: Hutchinson Radius.

Kamberelis, G., & Dimitriadis, G. (2013). *Focus Groups; From Structured Interviews to Collective Conversations.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Kirsch, C. (2008). *Teaching Foreign Languages in the Primary School.* London: Continuum.

Kitchen, R. (2016). Whose stone is it anyway? Articulating the impact of exploratory doctoral research for professional educators. In P. Barnard, T. Dragovic, J. Flutter, & J. Alderton, *Transformative Doctoral Research Practices for Pofessionals* (pp. 127-139). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Kitzinger, J., & Barbour, S. (1999). The challenge and promise of focus groups. In J. Kitzinger, & S. Barbour (Eds.), *Developing focus group research.* London: Sage.

Lahelma, E., & Gordon, T. (1997). First Day in Secondary School: Learning to be a 'Professional Pupil'. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 3:2, 119-139.

Larkin, M., Shaw, R., & Flowers, P. (2019). Multiperspectival designs and processes in interpretative phenomenological analysis research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 16:2, 182-198.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Likert, R. (1932). *A Technique for the Measurement of Attitudes.* New York: Colombia University Press.

Littlewood, W. (1981). *Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lodge, C. (2009). About face: visual research involving children. *Education 3-13*, 37:4, 361-370.

Lucey, H., & Reay, D. (2000). Identities in Transition: Anxiety and excitement in the move to secondary school. *Oxford Review of Education*, 26:2, 191-205.

Macbeath, J., Dempster, N, Frost, D., Johnson, G., and Swaffield, S. (2018). *Strengthening the Connections between Leadership and Learning. Challenges to Policy, School and Classroom Practice.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Marshall, P. (1988). *Transition and Continuity in the Educational Process.* London: Kagon Page.

Marion, J., & Crowder, J. W. (2013). *Visual Research: A concise introduction to thinking visually.* London: Bloomsbury.

Mason, J. (2006). *Six strategies for mixing methods and linking data in social science research.* University of Manchester: ESRC National Centre for Research Methods, NCRM Working Paper Series.

Masterson, A. (2002). Cross-boundary working: a macro-political analysis of the impact on professional roles. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, Vol 11: 331-339.

Mayoh, J., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2013). Towards a conceptualisation of mixed methods phenomenological research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 9(1), 91-107

Mayoh, J., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2014). Surveying the landscape of mixed methods phenomenological research. *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches*, 8(1), 2014.

McLellan, R., & Galton, M. (2015). *The Impact of Primary-Secondary Transition on Students' Wellbeing. Final report to the Nuffield Foundation.* Cambridge: Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge

McCulloch, G. (1994). *Educational reconstruction: the 1994 Education Act and the Twenty-First Century.* Ilford: The Woburn Press .

McCulloch, G. (2002). Secondary Education. In *A Century of Education.* London: Routledge/Falmer.

McCluskey, G. (2008). Exclusion from school: what can 'included' pupils tell us? *British Educational Research Journal , 34* (4), 447-466.

McIntyre, D., Pedder, D., & Rudduck, J. (2005). Pupil voice: comfortable and uncomfortable learnings for teachers. *Research Papers in Education, 20* (2), 149-168.

McNess, E., Arthur, L., & Crossley, M. (2016). 'Ethnographic Dazzle' and the Construction of the 'Other': shifting boundaries between the insider and the outsider. In M. Crossley, L. Arthur, & E. McNess, *Revisiting Insider-Outsider Research in Comparative and International Education.* Oxford: Symposium Books Ltd

Mellor, D., & Delamont, S. (2011). Old anticipations, new anxieties? A contemporary perspective on primary to secondary transfer. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 41:3, 331-346.

Mickelwright, J, Jerrim, J. Vignoles, A, Jenkins, A, Allen, R. Illie, S., Hein, C. (2014). *Teachers in England's Secondary Schools: Evidence from TALIS 2013.* London: Department for Education.

Mitchell, C. (2011). *Doing visual research.* London: Sage.

Mitchell, R. (1994). The communicative approach to language teaching. In A. Swarbrick, *Teaching Modern Languages.* London: Routledge.

Montacute, R., & Cullinane, C. (2018). *Parent Power 2018 : How parents use financial and cultural resources to boost their chidlren's chances of success.* London: The Sutton Trust.

Moonesinghe, S. R. (2016). Innovation good...evaluation essential: A plea for formal evaluation of new pathways of care and ways of working. *British Journal of Anaesthesia*, 116(2), p151-3.

Morgan, D. (2019). Commentary - After Triangulation, What Next? *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 13(1), 6-14.

Morley, D. (2016). Applying Wenger's communities of practice theory to place learning. *Nurse Educaton Today*, 39, 161-162.

Mortari, L., & Harcourt, D. (2012). 'Living' ethical dilemmas for researchers when researching with children. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 20:3, 234-243.

Morton, J. (2012). Communities of practice in higher education: A challenge from the discipline of architecture. *Linguistics and Education*, 23, 100-111.

Munn, P., & Drever, E. (2004). *Using questionnaires in small-scale research.* Glasgow: SCRE Centre, University of Glasgow.

Nardi, P. (2018). *Doing Survey Research. A Guide to Quantitative Methods. Fourth Edition.* New York: Routledge .

National College for School Leadership. (2011). *The opportunities and challenges of all-through leadership.* Nottingham: NCSL.

Northern Echo. (2017, 11 22). *Ofsted places second free school in region into special measures just one day after Durham Free School closure announcement.*

OECD. (2014). *Teacher and Learning International Survey 2013.* OECD.

OFSTED. (2015). *Key Stage Three: The Wasted Years?* Manchester. Crown Copyright

OFSTED. (2017). *The annual report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2015/16.* London: Crown Copyright.

OFSTED. (2019). *The Education Inspection Framework.* Manchester: Crown Copyright.

OFSTED. (2020). *The annual report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2018/19.* London: Crown Copyright.

Opie, C. (2004). *Doing Educational Research.* London: Sage.

Pellegrini, A., & Long, J. D. (2002). A longitudinal study of bullying, dominance, and victimization during the transition from primary school through secondary school . *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 20, 259-280.

Peterson, R. (2000). *Constructing Effective Questionnaires.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Pietkiewicz, I., & Smith, J. A. (2012). A practical guide to using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in qualitative research psychology. *Czasopismo Psychologiczne, 18(2)*, 361-369.

Plowright, D. (2011). *Using Mixed Methods.* London: Sage.

Porter, S. (2004a). Pros and Cons of Paper and Electronic Surveys. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, Vol 121, p 91-97.

Porter, S. (2004b). Raising Response Rates: What Works? *New Directions for Institutional Research*, Vol 121, p 5-21.

Potter, J., & Hepburn, A. (2005). Qualitative interviews in psychology: problems and possibilities. *Qualitative research in Psychology*, 2, 281-307.

Price, H. (2012). *Using teacher coaching and co-coaching techniques to improve positive behaviour managment: a study at an urban comprehensive school in East Anglia.* Unpublished Master of Education thesis. University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK

Pring, R. (1989). *The New Curriculum.* London: Cassell Education Limited.

Pring, R. (2015). *Philosophy of Educational Research* (Third ed.). London: Bloomsbury Academic.

QCA. (2002). *Transition Units (Engish and Mathematics).* London: Qualification and Curriculum Authority.

Rae, T. (2014). *Supporting Successful Transition from Primary to Secondary School. A Programme for Teachers.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Rayner, S. (2017). Admissions policies and risks to equity and educational inclusion in the context of school reform in England. *Management in Education*, Vol 31(1), 27-32.

Ribbons, P. (2007). Interviews in educational research: conversations with a purpose. In A. Briggs, & M. Coleman, *Research Methods in Educational Leadership .* London: Sage.

Richter, A., West, M. A., Van Dick, R., & Dawson, J. (2006). Boundary spanners identification, intergroup contact and effective intergroup relations. *The Academic Management Journal*, Vol 49; 1252-69

Robson, C., & McCartan, K. (2016). *Real World Research (Fourth Edition).* Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Rose, G. (2014). *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Methods. 3rd Edition.* London: Sage.

Roulston, K. (2010). *Reflective Interviewing: A guide to Theory and Practice.* London: Sage.

Rudduck, J., & McIntyre, D. (2007). *Improving learning through consulting pupils.* London: Routledge.

Rudduck, J., Chaplain, R., & Wallace, G. (Eds.). (1996). *School Improvement - what can pupils tells us?* London: David Fulton Publishers.

Sahlberg, P. (2015). *Finnish Lessons 2.0. What can the world learn from educational change in Finland?* New York: Teachers College Press: Columbia University .

Saldana. (2016). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (3rd ed.) London: Sage.

Sapsford, R., & Jupp, V. (2006). *Data Collection and Analysis* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Satchwell. (1999). Teaching in the Target Language. In P. Driscoll, & D. Frost, *The Teaching of Modern Foreign Languages in the Primary School* (pp. 88-98). London: Routledge.

Scanlon, G., Barnes-Holmes, Y., McEnteggart, C., Desmond, D., & Vahey, N. (2016). The experiences of pupls with SEN and their parents at the stage of pre-transition from primary to post-primary school. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 31:1, 44-58

Schagen, S., & Kerr, D. (1999). *Bridging the gap? The National Curriculum and progression from primary to secondary school.* Slough: National Foundation for Educational Research .

Shih, T., & Fan, X. (2009). Comparing Response Rates in E-mail and Paper Surveys: A Meta-analysis. *Educational Research Review*, Vol 4, pp26-40.

Scholes, J., & Vaughan, D. (2002). Cross-boundary working: implications for the multi-professional team. *Journal of clinical Nursing*, Vol 11: 399-408.

Sharpe, K. (2001). *Modern Foreign Languages in the Primary School: the what, why & how of early MFL teaching.* London: Kogan Page Limited.

Shirey, M., & White-Williams, C. (2015). Boundary Spanning Leadership: Practices for Population Health. *Strategic Leadership for Organizational Health*, pp411-415.

Sikes, P. (2004). Methodology, Procedures and Ethical Concerns. In C. Opie (Ed.), *Doing Educational Research* (pp. 15-33). London.

Simkins, T. (2015). School restructuring in England: New school configurations and challenges. *Management in Education*, Vol. 29(1) 4-8.

Simkins, T., Coldron, J., Crawford, M., & Maxwell, B. (2019). Emerging schooling landscapes in England: how primary system leaders are responding to new school groupings. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, Vol. 47(3), 331-348.

Simola, H. (2015). *The Finnish Education Mystery: historical and sociological essays on schooling in Finland.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Simon, B. (1981). Why no pedagogy in England? In B. Simon, & W. (. Taylor, *Education in the eighties: the central issues* (pp. 124-144). London: Batsford.

Simons, H. (1996). The Paradox of Case Study. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 26:2, 225-240.

Simons, H. (2009). *Case Study in Practice.* London: Sage.

Simpson, M., & Tuson, J. (2003). *Using observations in small-scale research.* Glasgow: The SCRE Centre, University of Glasgow.

Silverman, D. (2006). *Interpreting Qualitative Data* (Third ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Smith, D. (2000). *From Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3: Smoothing the Transfer for Pupils with Learning Difficulties.* Tamworth: NASEN.

Smith, J., & Osborn, M. (2008). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. In J. Smith, *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods* (pp. 53-80). London: Sage.

Social Mobility Commission. (2017). *State of the Nation 2017: Social Mobility in Great Britain.* London: Social Mobility Commission - Crown Copyright.

Stake, R. (1995). *The Art of Case Study Research.* Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: Sage.

Stake, R. (2006). *Multiple Case Study Analysis.* London: The Guilford Press.

Sutherland, R., Ching Yee, W., McNess, E., & Harris, R. (2010). *Supporting learning in the transition from primary to secondary schools.* Retrieved August 29, 2013, from University of Bristol online: http:/www.bristol.ac.uk/education/news/2010/transition-bristoluniversity.pdf

Sutton, R. (2001). *Primary to Secondary. Overcoming the Muddle in the Middle.* Salford: Trinity Press.

Sutton Trust. (2013). *Selective Comprehensives: the social composition of top comprehensive schools.* Sutton Trust, London.

Swaffield, S., Rawi, R, & O'Shea, A. (2016). Developing Assessment for Learning Practice in a School Cluster: Primary and Secondary Teachers Learning Together. In D. Laveault, & L. Allal, *Assessment for Learning: Meeting the Challenge of Implementation. The Enabling Power of Assessment 4.* (pp. 199-217). Springer International Publishing.

Symonds, J. (2015). *Understanding School Transition: what happens to children and how to help them.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Symonds, J., & Galton, M. (2014). Moving to the next school at age 10-14 years: an international review of psychological development at school transition. *Review of Education*, Vol 2, No.1, 1-27.

Symonds, J., & Hargreaves, L. (2016). Emotional and Motivational Engagement at School Transition: A Qualitatve Stage-Environment Fit Study. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, Vol 36 (1) 54-85.

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (1998). *Mixed Methodology. Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2009). *Foundations of Mixed Methods Research: Intergrating Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches in the Social and Behavioral Sciences.* Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: Sage.

Thomas, G. (2011). *How to do your Case Study.* London: Sage.

Thomson, P. (2008). Children and young people: voices in visual research. In P. Thomson (Ed.), *Doing visual research with children and young people.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Thomson, P., & Gunter, H. (2011). Inside, outside, upside down: the fluidity of academic researcher 'identity' in working with/in school. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 34:1, 17-30.

Tight, M. (2010). The curious case of case study: a viewpoint. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 13:4, 329--339.

Topping, K. (2011). Primary-secondary transition: difference between teachers' and children's perceptions. *Improving Schools*, 14:3, 268-285.

Townsley, J., & Andrews, J. (2017). *The economic benefits of joining, establishing or growing a multi-academy trust.* London: Education Policy Institute.

Tuffour, I. (2017). A Crticial Overview of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: A Contemporary Qualitative Research Approach. *Journal of Healthcare Communications*, Vol 2, No 4. 52.

Undervisningsministeriat (Danish Ministry of Education). (2008). *The Folkeskole.* Copenhagen: UVM.

Van der Brande, J., Hillary, J., & Cullinane, C. (2019). *Selective Comprehensives: Great Britain. Access to top performing schools for disadvantaged pupils in Scotland, Wales and England.* London: The Sutton Trust

Van Manen, M. (2007). *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy.* Ontario: The Althouse Press

Vaz, S., Falkmer, M., Ciccarelli, M., Passmore, A., Parsons, R., Black, M.,Falkmer, T. (2015). Belongingness in Early Secondary School:

Key Factors that Primary and Secondary Schools Need to Consider. *PLoS ONE*, 10(9), 1-27.

Venkatesh, V., Brown, S. A., & Bala, H. (2013). Bridging the qualitative-quantitative divide: guidelines for conducting mixed methods research in information systems. *MIS Quarterly*. 37(1), pp21

Verschuren, P. (2003). Case study as a research strategy: some ambiguities and opportunities. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 6:2, 121-139.

Walford, G., Miller, H. (1991). Researching the City Technology College, Kingshurst. In G Walford, *Doing Educational Research.* London: Routledge.

Walford, G. (2005). Research ethical guidelines and anonymity. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 28:1, 83-93.

Wall, K., Higgins, S., Hall, E., & Woolner, P. (2013). 'That's not quite the way we see it': the epistemological challenge of visual data. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 36:1, 3-22.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Wenger, E. (2000). Communities of Practice and Social Learning Systems. *Organization Articles*, 7(2): 225-246.

Wenger, E., McDermott, R., & Snyder, W. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice: a guide to managing knowledge.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

West, A. (2006). School Choice, Equity and Social Justice: The Case for More Control. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 54.1. pp14033.

West, P., Sweeting, H., & Young, R. (2010). Transition matters: pupils' experiences of the primary-secondary schools transition in the West of Scotland and consequences for well being and attainment. *Research Papers in Education*, 25:1, 21-51.

Wilcox, A. (2013). *The Transition Tightrope. Supporting Students in Transition to Secondary School.* London: Routledge.

Willis, P. (2001). The 'Things Themselves' in Phenomenology. *Journal of Phenomenology*, 1:1, 1-12.

Woods, P., & Simkins, T. (2014). Understanding the Local: Themes and Issues in the Experience of Structural Reform in England. *Educational Mananegment Administration & Leadership*, Vol.42(3) 324-340.

Wrigley, T. (2006). *Another School is Possible .* London: Bookmarks Publications & Trentham Books.

Wyse, D., Brown, C., Oliver, S, & Poblete, X. (2018). *The BERA Close to Practice Research Project.* London: British Educational Research Associsation. Retrieved from: http://www.bera.ac.uk/researcher-resources/publications/bera-statement-on-close-to-practice-research

Wyse, D., & Torrance, H. (2009). The development and consequences of national curriculum assessment for primary education in England. *Educational Research*, 51:2, 213-228

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case Study Research - Design and Methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: Sage

Yip, J., Ernst, C., & Campbell, M. (2016). *Boundary Spanning Leadership: Mission Critical Perspectives from the Executive Suite.* Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership .

Zeedyk, S., Gallacher, J., Henderson, M., Hope, G., Husband, B., & Lindsay, K. (2003). Negotiating the Transition from Primary to Secondary School. Perceptions of Pupils, Parents and Teachers. *School Psychology International*, Vole 24 (1): 67-79.

Appendix A: Research questions mapped to participants, research stage, methods and questionnaire questions

Research Question	Participants	Research Stage & Method	Question/ interview theme/ data source
1. What are the characteristics of English all-through schools? In relation to: - School organization/type - Leadership structures - School vision and values	Headteachers	**School Organization** **Stage one:** questionnaire to all all-through schools **Stage two**: semi structured interviews at the case study schools	Questionnaire Q1-9 Headteacher/Teacher Topic: Your School
		Leadership Structures **Stage one:** questionnaire to all all-through schools **Stage two**: Case study schools - Semi-structured interviews	Questionnaire Q10-15 (structures) Questionnaire Q25- 27 (Head Biography) Headteacher Topic: Leadership Structures School documents
		School Vision and Values **Stage one**: questionnaire to all all-through schools	Questionnaire Q19 - 21
	Head teachers/ teachers	**Stage two**: case study schools Semi-structured interviews	Headteacher/Teacher/Governor Topic: Your School & Values (linked to questionnaire)

	Students Students Students/staff	Focus groups Visual methods Observations	Focus Group Topic: What we like/would change about our school & descriptions of their experiences Focus Groups: presentation and explanation of digital images of their school Field notes of observed practice
Contextual Commentary **Links to RQ1, but also provides information for the contextual narrative in the thesis.**	Headteachers Comparison with national datasets	**Stage one:** questionnaire to all all-through schools Edubase/ Ofsted/ KS2/KS4 results	Questionnaire Q1-9 National/ public domain datasets
2. How do all-through schools plan and teach the curriculum? Considering: • The curriculum continuity • The deployment of generalist and specialist teachers and cross phase teaching	Headteachers Headteachers/ teachers Students	**Stage one:** questionnaire to all all-through schools **Stage two**: Case study schools- Semi-structured interviews, Focus groups,	Questionnaire Q16-17 (staffing) Questionnaire Q18 (student grouping) Questionnaire Q24 – examples Headteacher / Teacher/Governor Topics: Cross Phase teaching and staff deployment. Student grouping, pedagogy & curriculum

• Pupil grouping • The provision of formal and informal cross-phase learning opportunities • The choice of teaching methodologies and pedagogies	Students Students/ teachers	Visual methods Observations	Focus Group Topic: Examples & experience of cross phase practice Focus Groups: Some images/ artefacts related to cross phase practice Field notes of observed practice School documents
3. How do all-through schools approach the KS2-3 transition?	Headteachers Headteacher/ transition leader/ teachers Students	**Stage one:** questionnaire to all all-through schools **Stage two**: Case study schools – Semi structured interviews Focus groups	N/A Headteacher topic: KS2-3 transition Transition leader interview Secondary Focus Group Topic: Transition into Year 7
4. What are emerging as the affordances and opportunities provided by the all-through configuration?	Headteachers Headteachers/ teachers Students	**Stage one:** questionnaire to all all-through schools **Stage two**: Case study schools – Semi structured interviews Focus groups	Questionnaire Q23 Headteacher/ teacher/Governor Topic: Opportunities (& link to questionnaire) Focus Group Topic: Their perceptions of the opportunities and

	Students/ teachers	Observations	positive aspects of their school's all-through nature Field notes of observed practice
5. What are emerging as the main challenges faced by all-through schools?	Headteachers Headteachers/ Teachers Students Students/ teachers	**Stage one:** questionnaire to all all-through schools **Stage two**: Case study schools – Semi structured interviews Focus groups Observations	Questionnaire Q22 Headteacher/ teacher Topic: Challenges (& link to questionnaire) Focus Group Topic: Their perceptions of the challenges and any negative aspects/improvement suggestions in relation to their school's all-through nature Field notes of observed practice

Appendix B: Letter to parents/carers of students participating in the research focus groups

Dear Parent/Carer,

Your son/daughter has been selected to be part of a student focus group (of 8 students), who will talk to a researcher about our school. The researcher (Helen Price) is from the Faculty of Education at Cambridge University and is completing a doctorate which is looking at all-through schools in England.

During the focus group activity students will have the opportunity to share their views about learning and mixing with students of different ages and working with staff from different phases of the school. Those students who are already in Year 7 or above, will be able to talk about how they experienced their transition into secondary phase, either from Year 6 at School A or another primary school. Students will also have the opportunity to have taken some images of the school in advance and to present and discuss how they think their pictures represent the school.

The school and individual students will not be identified in the research. Some of the focus group discussions will be recorded, so that student responses can be analysed later. The recordings and any pictures taken by or of the focus group will be for the research purposes only and will not be used or published elsewhere.
The focus group will take place on **Friday 19 January 2018** and will last approximately one hour.

I would be very grateful if you could complete the reply slip below, to indicate that you give permission for your son/daughter to take part.
Yours faithfully,

Focus Group Activity Return to:

Student Name_____Class/tutor group_____

I give permission for my son/daughter to take part in the focus group activity on 19 January 2018

Signed_____ Date _____

Appendix C: Adult participant consent form

Participant Consent – All-through School Research 2017-18
Thesis title: More than the sum of its parts: exploring the characteristics, affordances and challenges of all-through schools in the English state system.

This project is being supervised at the Faculty of Education at Cambridge University and appears on the list of current approved doctoral research on the Faculty's website.

Informed consent:
This research operates within the principles of informed consent and confirms to the ethical guidelines issued by BERA (the British Educational Research Association). This means that your participation is voluntary, that you have the right to withdraw at any stage and that it is explained to you how your/ your school's data will be used.

- All individual participants and schools remain anonymous in the thesis and in any subsequent publications. Only the RSC region of the school is given

- The audio recordings made of interviews/ focus groups are for the purposes of the research only and are later transcribed for analysis

- No image taken will be used for any purpose other than research. (If the opportunity arises for the research to feature in publications at a later date, a subsequent permission would be sought from participants/schools/parents/carers to use an image.)

Participant Name _____

I agree to take part in the research and for my data to be used for the purposes described

Signed _____ Date_____

Appendix D: All-through School Questionnaire

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

QUESTIONNAIRE

ALL-THROUGH SCHOOLS IN THE ENGLISH STATE SYSTEM

TIME TO COMPLETE: APPROXIMATELY 25 MINUTES

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY

RESEARCH RATIONALE:

Whilst the vast majority of English state schools still function as stand alone primary or secondary schools there is a significant and growing minority of state schools which have a mixture of primary and secondary aged learners on their rolls. This questionnaire will be sent to all English all-through state schools, to gather data to help understand the following:

- Why there is a current proliferation of all-through schools
- To find out more about these schools, their leadership, their staff, student groupings and pedagogy
- To see what are emerging as the key opportunities and challenges for all-through schools

SURVEY

This is the first stage in a piece of research, which will go on to look at at least three schools in depth as research case studies. If you might be willing for your school to be the subject of a case study, please indicate this at the end of the survey. This places your school under no obligation but does mean you might be contacted at a future date to be asked whether you would like to participate.

HOW TO COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE

- Ideally, the person who completes the questionnaire should be the Head teacher of the all-through school. However, depending upon your school or trust arrangements, the questionnaire could also be completed by a Head of School or Head of Phase for either of the Secondary or Primary phases in your school.
- Many questions require you to tick a box, giving the response which best fits your situation or viewpoint. Sometimes the questions allow you to tick more that one response.
- There are some free text questions, which allow you to explain your school's context or give fuller answers. You will sometimes also be asked to rank or rate statements.
- Should you require further explanation of any one of the questions or have a query about the questionnaire, please emai[illegible]. using 'all-through questionnaire' as your reference.

CONFIDENTIALITY & PARTICIPANT ANONYMITY - All information collected in this survey will be treated confidentially. No school or individual will be identified in any way or in the research findings.

SCHOOL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1 Age range: _____ Total number on Roll: _____

2 Numbers in each key stage:

EYFS	KS1	KS2	KS3	KS4	KS5

3 Type of school:
tick those that describe your school, you can tick more than one

- (a) LA community:
- (b) Academy:
- (c) Foundation School:
- (d) Voluntary Aided:
- (e) Free School:
- (f) Part of a multi-Academy Trust:
- (g) Other:

4 Other information about my school:
tick as applicable

- (a) A Teaching School
- (b) Part of a SCiTT
- (c) A member of SSAT
- (d) A member of Leading Edge
- (e) A member of PiXL
- (f) A university partner school for initial teacher training

Other affiliations: please list

5 Which best describes this school's location:

- (a) Hamlet (1000 people or fewer)
- (b) Village (1000 - 3000)
- (c) Small Town (3001 - 15,000)
- (d) Town (15,000 - 100,000)
- (e) City (100,000 - 1,000,000)
- (f) Major City (1 million people+)

BECOMING AN ALL-THROUGH SCHOOL

6 Type of school:
tick as applicable

- (a) We were a secondary school and have added a primary age children
- (b) We were a primary and have added secondary aged learners
- (c) We have always been an all-through school

7 In which year did your school become or open as an all-through school:

8 Why did your school become an all-through school:
tick as applicable, you can tick more than one

- (a) We have always been an all-through school
- (b) We had a vision about all-through education and therefore were keen to make this a reality when an opportunity presented itself
- (c) We responded to, or were approached to respond to a school place shortage in our area
- (d) We were a successful school and took the opportunity to expand and vary our age range
- (e) We are part of a Multi-Academy Trust which operates across the primary and secondary sectors

9 Your building/campus:
tick as applicable, you can tick more than one

part A

- (a) Our primary and secondary phases are housed on entirely separate sites
- (b) Our primary and secondary phases are in separate buildings, but on the same learning campus or on neighbouring plots
- (c) Learners of all ages are in the same building/ set of buildings

part B

- (a) We have had a full new build for the all-through school
- (b) We have new buildings for our primary phase
- (c) We have new buildings for our secondary phase
- (d) We are operating in existing accommodation

Other, please explain:

ABOUT YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

10 Do you have a school leadership team?

'School leadership team' refers to a group within the school that has responsibilities for leading and managing the school in decisions such as those involving teaching and learning, the use of resources, curriculum, assessment and evaluation, and other strategic decisions related to the functioning of the school.

please mark ***one*** *choice:*

☐ yes - *continue*

☐ no - *go to Question 12*

11 Do you have a school leadership team?

tick as applicable, you may tick as many as applicable from the list below

(a) ☐ We have a senior leader with an over-arching responsibility for the whole all-through school

(b) ☐ We have a 'Head of School' / phase leader for our primary phase

(c) ☐ We have a 'Head of School' / phase leader for our secondary phase

(d) ☐ Deputy headteacher(s) in the primary phase

(e) ☐ Deputy headteacher(s) in the secondary phase

(f) ☐ Deputy headteacher(s) across the all-through school

(g) ☐ Assistant headteacher(s) in the primary phase

(h) ☐ Assistant headteacher(s) in the secondary phase

(i) ☐ Assistant headteacher(s) across the all-through school

(j) ☐ Department Heads/ Heads of Subject

(k) ☐ Pastoral Leaders

(l) ☐ Phase Leaders

(m) ☐ Teachers

(n) ☐ Parents

(o) ☐ Governors

12 Please tick which statement best describes the leadership structures at your school

(a) ☐ Within our primary/ secondary phases we have senior and middle leadership structures which are the same as or very similar to stand alone primary and secondary schools

(b) ☐ Our senior and middle leadership structures are substantially different to stand alone primary and secondary schools

13 If you feel your senior and middle leadership structures are very different to traditional 'stand alone' primary and secondary schools, please describe briefly below

14 Regarding this school, who has a significant responsibility for the following tasks:

A 'significant responsibility' is one where an active role is played in decision making. Please tick as may choices as appropriate in each row

	Head of all-through	Executive Headteacher (leads more than one school)	Director of Finance/ Business Manager	Heads of Primary or Secondary phase	other SLT	other Teachers	Govenors	LA Academy Trust/Trust
Hiring Teachers								
Establishing teachers salaries and pay scales								
Deciding budget allocations across the all-through school								
Setting the curriculum								
Choosing courses								

15 Please indicate how frequently you as Head engaged in the following in this school during the last 12 months

A I collaborated with teachers to solve classroom behaving management issues:

NEVER / RARELY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ OFTEN ☐ VERY OFTEN ☐

B I observed lessons:

NEVER / RARELY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ OFTEN ☐ VERY OFTEN ☐

C I took actions to support cooperation among teachers to develop new teaching practices:

NEVER / RARELY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ OFTEN ☐ VERY OFTEN ☐

D I took actions to ensure that teachers take responsibility for improving their teaching skills:

NEVER / RARELY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ OFTEN ☐ VERY OFTEN ☐

E I took actions to ensure teachers feel responsible for their student's learning outcomes:

NEVER / RARELY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ OFTEN ☐ VERY OFTEN ☐

F I provided parents or guardians with information on the school and student performance:

NEVER / RARELY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ OFTEN ☐ VERY OFTEN ☐

15 *continued...*

G I provided governors/trustees with information on the school and student performance:

☐ NEVER / RARELY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ OFTEN ☐ VERY OFTEN

H I collaborated with headteachers/school leaders from other schools:

☐ NEVER / RARELY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ OFTEN ☐ VERY OFTEN

STAFF DEPLOYMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

16 Please tick as applicable for your all-through school
choose best fit response

part A

- ☐ All teachers teach learners of all ages
- ☐ Many teachers teach learners of all ages
- ☐ Some teachers teach learners of all ages, but most teach in either the primary or secondary phases of the school
- ☐ Teachers all work in either the primary or secondary phase of the school

part B

- ☐ teaching assistants teach learners of all ages
- ☐ Many Teaching Assistants teach learners of all ages
- ☐ Some teaching sssistants teach learners of all ages, but most teach in either the primary or secondary phases of the school
- ☐ Teaching Assistants all work in either the primary or secondary phase of the school

part C

- ☐ All support staff support across both phases
- ☐ Many support staff support across both phases.
- ☐ Some support staff support work across phases, but most work in either the primary or secondary phase
- ☐ support staff all work in either the primary or secondary phase of the school

17 Please rate your agreement with the following statements on a scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree:

A We are able to deploy teachers across the all-through school to optimise students' learning:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

B We use some specialist teachers in our primary phase in addition to the generalist class teachers:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

C We believe that learners' experiences and outcomes are improved by specialist teacher inputs in primary phase:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

D We also use some generalist teachers in the secondary phase:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

E We believe that learners' outcomes are improved by generalist teacher inputs in the secondary phase (eg nuture group work):

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

F We achieve cost effective provision by deploying teachers across phases:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

G We achieve cost effective provision by deploying teacher assistants across phases:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

H We achieve cost effective provision by deploying support staff across all phases:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

I We believe learners' needs are better met by deploying teachers across all phases:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

H We believe learners' needs are better met by deploying teaching assistants across phases:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

LEARNER GROUPING AND 'STAGE NOT AGE' OPPORTUNITIES

18 Please rate your school's approach to the following statements about grouping and learning opportunities, on a scale from always to never:

Please choose the best fit answer. For this question 'usually' means in the majority of cases or often and 'sometimes' means on occasion or in the minority of cases

A We use traditional learner age year groupings (eg Reception to Year 13):

☐ ALWAYS ☐ USUALLY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ NEVER

B Students are placed in a year group based on chronological age:

☐ ALWAYS ☐ USUALLY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ NEVER

C We offer the opportunity for learners to be in a year group based on ability not age:

☐ ALWAYS ☐ USUALLY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ NEVER

D We provide the opportunity for learners to be with a different year group for part of their provision (e.g. for a more advanced maths class):

☐ ALWAYS ☐ USUALLY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ NEVER

E We provide extra curricular opportunities which span age ranges:

☐ ALWAYS ☐ USUALLY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ NEVER

F We provide extra curricular opportunities which go across the primary/secondary age ranges:

☐ ALWAYS ☐ USUALLY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ NEVER

G We plan learning opportunities which allow learners to mix with younger/old learners:

☐ ALWAYS ☐ USUALLY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ NEVER

H We plan learning opportunities which allow learners to mix across the primary/secondary age ranges:

☐ ALWAYS ☐ USUALLY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ NEVER

I We plan projects and activities to allow learners of different ages to work together (e.g. collapsed days, project days etc):

☐ ALWAYS ☐ USUALLY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ NEVER

18 *continued...*

J We plan projects and activities to allow learners across the primary/secondary age ranges to work together (e.g. collapsed days, project days etc):

☐ ALWAYS ☐ USUALLY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ NEVER

K Older students assist and lead learning opportunities for younger students:

☐ ALWAYS ☐ USUALLY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ NEVER

L Older students assist and lead learning opportunities for younger students across the primary/secondary phases:

☐ ALWAYS ☐ USUALLY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ NEVER

M Younger learners enhance the learning opportunities of older learners:

☐ ALWAYS ☐ USUALLY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ NEVER

N Younger learners enhance the learning opportunities of older learners across the primary/secondary phases:

☐ ALWAYS ☐ USUALLY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ NEVER

19 How strongly do you agree or disagree with these statements as applied to this school?

Please mark one choice in each row

A We believe that having learners of all ages enhances our sense of being a community:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

B Our learners are encouraged and supported to mix with learners of different ages:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

C We are not a joint primary and secondary school: we are an all-through school, which is something distinct, in its own right:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

D We believe in stage not age learning:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

19 *continued...*

E We work harder to foster an all-through ethos and to build a sense of the school as a **whole** community:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

F We are aware of all-through configurations in other countries (e.g. Scandinavia) and aspire to replicate aspects of those school systems:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

G We are trying to break down the barriers between primary and secondary education:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

H We are trying to support our teachers to develop a professional identity as educators which transcends the traditional primary and secondary divide and fixed primary/secondary teacher identities:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

I We are an all-through school due to our firm educational conviction:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

J We are an all-through school due to our firm educational conviction and we subscribe to the views of a particular educationalist (e.g. R Steiner, A S Neill etc.) If so, please state which educationalist::

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

Please add alternative points here, if you feel the above does not describe your aspirations/values

20 How strongly do you agree or disagree with these statements applied to this school?

A This school provides staff with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

B This school provides parents and carers with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

C This school provides students/children with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

D I make important decisions on my own:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

E There is a collaborative school culture which is characterised by mutual support:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

21 How strongly do you agree or disagree with these statements as applied to this school?

Please mark one choice in each row

A The staff share a common set of beliefs about schooling/learning:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

B The relationships between teachers and children/students are good:

☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE ☐ DISAGREE ☐ AGREE ☐ STRONGLY AGREE

ALL-THROUGH SCHOOLS - THE CHALLENGES

23 Please state what you see as the THREE MAIN CHALLENGES in being an all-through school

ALL-THROUGH SCHOOLS - THE OPPORTUNITIES

23 Please state what you see the THREE MAIN OPPORTUNITIES in being an all-through school

24 List three things or examples of effective practice, which you are proud of about your school, which are linked to it being an all-through school

PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION *please complete*

25

☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Age *years*

26 What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?

please mark one choice

☐ Bachelors Degree

☐ Masters Degree

☐ Doctorate

27 How many years of work experience do you have?

Please write a number at the beginning of each row. Write 0 (zero) if none. Count part of a year as 1 year.

☐ Year(s) working as a head teacher at this school

☐ Year(s) in working as a head teacher in total

☐ Year(s) working as head teacher in a solely primary setting

☐ Year(s) working as head teacher in a solely secondary setting

☐ Year(s) working as head teacher in an all-through setting

☐ Year(s) working in other school leadership roles (do not include years working as a head teacher)

☐ Year(s) working as a teacher in total (include any years of teaching:

Of those:

☐ Years in primary education

☐ Years in secondary education

☐ Years in all-through education

☐ Years working in other jobs

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Finally, would you be interested in your school becomming a case study in the main research study? If yes, please give the name and contact details below

☐ Yes ☐ No

Name of School

email Address

Address of School

Telephone Number

Reference only

No. *School name*

Appendix E: Covering letter to pilot schools (questionnaire)

31 January 2017

Dear

I am the Executive Headteacher of the … Trust in…. Our first school,…, is an all-through school (4-19). I am also a part-time student in the Faculty of Education at Cambridge University on the EdD (Doctor of Education) programme. My research interests are very much intertwined with my professional life: …. School was founded in 2005 as a secondary school, became an all-through school in 2012, and we are now in the process of growing our own cross phase multi-academy trust.

In 2016 you were kind enough to complete a questionnaire for me, as part of the pilot study completed ahead of my main doctoral research project. I am extremely grateful for your help: the data generated from the pilot study has proved to be very valuable, as has the feedback relating to the questionnaire design and contents.

Please find enclosed a copy of the newer version of the questionnaire and a copy of your return in the pilot study. You will notice that in the new version I have removed the work-force data question, as head teachers in the pilot study commented that it was the most time consuming question to complete. The new version is going to all all-through schools in England (147 schools) this term.

Given how busy we are as head teachers, and that you have already been kind enough to complete a questionnaire once, my suggestion is that I use your responses from the pilot questionnaire towards my main study. If you are happy with this, **you do not need to do anything,** I will automatically copy over your data from the pilot study. However, should you wish to change or add to any of your original answers you can do this by emailing me any updates or by completing and returning a new questionnaire form. If you no longer wish to be part of the study, please email me and I will delete your data.

I would be very grateful if you could return any updates by email or new completed questionnaires by **31 March 2017**, in the pre-paid envelope provided. I am also happy to receive scanned completed questionnaires via email. I can accept late returns, but it will help me considerably to have the vast majority of returns by the end of the spring term.
The research project will also focus on three case study all-through schools in greater depth. If you might be interested in becoming a case study school, you are/were able to indicate that at the end of the questionnaire or via email. In the meantime, should you have any further questions about the research or the questionnaire, you can contact me directly via email:

Thank you very much for supporting this research project.
Yours sincerely

Ms Helen Price
EXEXCUTIVE HEADTEACHER

Appendix F: Covering letter to schools (questionnaire)

31 January 2017

Dear

I am the Executive Headteacher of the …. Trust in…. Our first school,…, is an all-through school (4-19). I am also a part-time student in the Faculty of Education at Cambridge University on the EdD (Doctor of Education) programme. My research interests are very much intertwined with my professional life: …. school was founded in 2005 as a secondary school, became an all-through school in 2012, and we are now in the process of growing our own cross phase multi-academy trust. I have contacted you, as a fellow school leader in an all-through setting and hope that you will share my desire to gather some research data about all-through schools. All-through schools are a small, but rapidly growing proportion of state schools in England and yet to date, very little research has focused on all-through configurations. I would, therefore, be extremely grateful if you could find the time in your busy schedule to complete and return the enclosed questionnaire.

The data generated from this questionnaire forms part of my doctoral research, which is looking at the current proliferation of all through schools in the English state system and trying to establish the main challenges and opportunities which arise from the all-through configuration. The research follows the ethical guidelines issued by Cambridge University's Faculty of Education and none of the participating individuals or institutions will be identified in any way when the research is written up.

The questionnaire is intended for those leading all-through schools. If it is not possible for the head teacher to complete the questionnaire in the time frame, it could be completed by the Head of Primary or Secondary Phase or another leader at Deputy Head teacher level at your school.

I would be very grateful if you could return the completed questionnaire by **31 March 2017** and post it back to me in the pre-paid envelope provided. I am also happy to receive scanned completed questionnaires via email. I can accept late returns, but it will help me considerably to have the vast majority of returns by the end of the spring term.

The research project will also focus on three case study all-through schools in greater depth. If you might be interested in becoming a case study school, you are able to indicate that at the end of the questionnaire. In the meantime, should you have any further questions about the research or the questionnaire, you can contact me directly via email:

Thank you very much for supporting this research project.
Yours sincerely

Ms Helen Price
EXEXCUTIVE HEADTEACHER

Appendix G: Data checking and cleaning procedures

Stage One Questionnaire

I approached the data checking process in a systematic way. Firstly, I double checked that I had a hardcopy version of each of the returned questionnaires and then arranged and filed these in questionnaire number order. I then selected every fourth questionnaire for an entry by entry check. I created a checking copy of the excel spreadsheets and checked each entry against the hardcopy questionnaire. Where the data were correct I coloured the cell green. I coloured the cell orange where either an error was corrected or data were added or false data deleted. This system also allowed me to then quantify the accuracy rate of the data entries and analyse any errors made, to then initiate further checks across the whole dataset.

Table to show distribution of collated questionnaire data and the number of data cells

Spreadsheet	**Questions**	**Data cells per school per excel spreadsheet**
1	1-5	19
2	6-9	11
3	10-13	19
4	14	41
5	15	9
6	16	4
7	17	11
8	18	16
9	19	23
10	20-21	8
11	22	4
12	23	4
13	24	4
14	25-26	16
	Total	189

Based on 189 excel cells per school, the entire raw e-data corpus of the questionnaire returns consisted of 7938 individual cells of data. I checked 2079 cells of inputted data (26% of the total data) against the hardcopies of the questionnaires.

Table to show errors found in checked questionnaire data sample

Spreadsheet	**Questionnaire no.**	**Error/issue**	***Input by**	**Type of error**
1	1	Extra annotation 'rising' not recorded	A	Omission
1	13	7 errors. Student numbers in wrong column	R	Transcription error
2	124	Option E not recorded for Q8	A	Omission
3	13	Q11, letter entered in wrong cell	R	Transcription error
4-9	N/A	No errors found		
10	42	7 errors – data for this questionnaire not entered for this Q20-21	R	Omission
11-12	N/A	No errors found		
13	19	Y11 corrected to Y1. In the context of the sentence Y1 makes better sense.	A	Original not clear – crossing out/smudged
S14	N/A	No errors found		
	Total	18 errors		

*A = Administrator, R= Researcher

Therefore, the overall error raw rate in the checked sample was 0.86%. However, 14 of the 18 errors were either where correct data had been entered in the wrong column on the first spreadsheet (seven errors) or where the data for one school had been not input for a specific question. I was able to double check that similar errors had not been made elsewhere by a) checking each

questionnaire had an entry for each question (or else 'missing' had been entered to show where the data had not been supplied) and a close check of all of the school numbers data on the first spreadsheet. I found that the data from one other school (school 82) had also been input into the wrong columns for school numbers. I corrected this mistake. I also established that all questionnaires had had data entered for each question.

The majority of inputting errors (15 of 18) were made by me. The checks demonstrated the administrator to have been highly accurate, perhaps not surprisingly as she is a professional transcriber. I had also made the types of error (data entered into wrong column and not recording the responses of one question for one school) which a professional would not. However, the further checks undertaken should have eliminated similar errors (to 14 of the 18 found), which would reduce the overall error rate down to around 0.19%. The checked sample would suggest that there would be very few errors in the unchecked data and that these would be omission or transcription mistakes. Given the error level of around just one fifth of one percent, I was then happy to proceed with the data analysis process.

'Typos'

As I checked the sample data I automatically corrected typing errors as I came across them. These 'typos' were almost entirely in the data of the questionnaires I had inputted myself. I have never learnt to touch type and had clearly made mistakes as I had been typing. These errors were largely missing letters or letter inversions. As part of my follow up procedures, I then carefully proof read and corrected any errors in the free text response questions in the questionnaire.

Missing data

Where a respondent headteacher had left a particular question or part of a question blank, the word 'missing' was entered into the cell. I spent time at the checking stage ensuring that this was consistent and entering the word 'missing', where necessary. Where there was any ambiguity about whether this was genuine missing data or a piece of data had been overlooked by the inputter, I double checked against the hardcopy questionnaire.

Appendix H: Semi-structured interview question schedule

All-through Teachers /Transition Leaders

Welcome and thank the participant and then give an explanation of the how the interview will work (recording etc.) how the data will be used, the participant's right to withdraw and anonymity in the process etc.

Topic	Prompts
About you – your professional experience	• Your current teaching role • Primary/secondary • Time in teaching • Your CPD in relation to all-through/ cross phase teaching • Your confidence in teaching beyond your phase
Your school & its all-through journey	• Tell me about your school • When it became all-through • Why? (do you know?) • Your view • Did you choose to work here because of all-through?
Cross phase teaching and staff deployment	• Your cross phase teaching – explain • What IMPACT do you think it has? • IMPACT – Seen/felt/measured? • Advantages/ disadvantages • Generalist vs specialist blend in the school • Teacher identities – how do you see yourself? Primary or Secondary? • Cross phase projects • Cross phase extra curricular • Are you involved? • IMPACT • TA & Support staff across phase? • IMPACT • Challenges or rewards of all-through teaching
Student grouping	• Conventional year groups? • Stage not age? Your view • Nurture provision? Your view?
Pedagogy and Curriculum	• 'Continuity of learning' - questionnaire • 4-19 Curriculum at this school? • Curriculum audit? • Your involvement • Timetabling • Pedagogical approaches

	• Generalist/specialist • Projects/ cross phase projects • Informal approaches
Transition KS2-KS3	The most frequently listed advantage in the questionnaire responses: • (Describe your role - transition coordinator) • Describe transition in your school • Arrangements • Approaches • IMPACT – seen/felt/measured • Evidence • Other transitions
Links to the headteacher questionnaire responses – areas of focus	• Describe the school ethos • 3 most important values at this school • 3 challenges for all-through schools • 3 opportunities for all-through schools • Up to 3 areas of effective all-through practice in your school
Applications and implications for the wider school system?	• What could other schools learn from all-through schools? • Applications of all-through practice • Transferable practice?

Appendix I: Focus Group Activities (adapted form McCluskey, 2008)

Activity One – Presentation and discussion of digital images of the school

In advance of the focus group session, the students have had the opportunity to produce images on an iPads/phones which show activities in their all-through school. The idea is that their image sums up their view of their school or shows something which is typical in their view. This conversation is recorded so that the children's/students' attribution of meaning to their images is captured verbatim and keeps the interpretation of the visual methods rooted in the children/students' own perceptions. Activities two and three are adapted from McCluskey, 2008.

Activity Two – concentric circles

Students sit down facing each other. Facilitator poses first question and the prompts. Participants have a couple minutes to discuss it. At the end of the discussion about each of the questions each pair of participants writes the main points of their discussion on Post-its and puts them on the wall-mounted flipchart sheets.

After question 1 the facilitator asks outer circle to rotate one person to the right. After question 2 the facilitator asks the outer circle to rotate one person further to the right, and so on, until everyone had spoken to someone different.
Final feedback—Facilitator notes feedback on flipchart paper.

Concentric conversations questions:

1. *Can you think of examples of when you have worked or been involved in an activity with students/children from the primary/secondary phases?*
*(*Could give examples to get them thinking, e.g. primary readers, netball club etc.)

2. *Do you think you learn new things when you work with, or are involved in a project with students/children from the primary/secondary phases?*
(Why? Can you explain? Can you give examples? Do you get other things from those activities?)

3. *What do you like best when you work with or are involved in activities with students/children from the primary/secondary phases?*
(Give examples of things you found fun. How does it make you feel when you see older/younger students doing well?)

4. *Is there anything you do not enjoy when working with or in activities with students/children from the primary/secondary phases?*
*(*Are you ever bored/ worried/ embarrassed when in those situations?)

Thinking now about when you moved from Y6 into Y7. Who was here for Y6 and who joined in Y7?

5. Can you think of any activities or visits you took part in BEFORE you joined Y7, to help you prepare? Were they helpful?
(e.g. Move Up Day, visits to secondary building, joint projects)

6. How is Y7 different to Year 6? How did you feel when you first started because of those differences?
(…settling in, more subjects, many more students, moving around the building)

7. Do you think there are any advantages for students who were at this school in Y6?

8. Did you think your Y7 teachers understood your abilities/ what you were able to do when you started in Y7 (different if in Y6 here? Do the teachers talk to each other? Y7 too easy/hard?)

9. *Did you know that most schools do not have a primary/secondary phase like we do at XXXX school? What do you think at the advantages of our school having children and young people from 4-18?*
(Are there good things which we have not yet talked about?)

10. *Are there any disadvantages of having a school with children 4-18?*
(Has anyone had any negative experiences?)

11. *Do you think we are one school?*
(..or two schools next door to each other? What does it mean to be one school? Does that matter at all?)

Activity Three - Discussion cards
Each of the following sentence starts are transferred to a flipchart sheet. The students write their own answers on post-its, which are collated on the flipchart. A collective answer (or small range of answers) is then agreed through discussion, using 'nominal group technique' to arrive at top answer each time.

- The best thing about this school having learners of all ages is...
- I like working with children/students of different ages because….
- One thing I would change about working with students from different phases is ...
- When I see older students doing something really well (like playing guitar in assembly) it makes me……
- When I can work with younger students, I feel……
- When I visit the sec/primary (other)building, I usually…..
- One thing about this school which is really good is...

Appendix J: Observation Schedule /Field Notes Proforma

Date A/B/C	Case Study School
Teacher/ adults	
Ages of children/ young people	
Duration of activity/observation of activity (minutes)	
Physical setting/location of the activity	

Description of observed activity: what are the children/students doing?

Description of observed activity. What are the teachers/adults doing?

Description of how children/students of different ages are interacting

Description of how teachers/adults and children/students are interacting

Accounts of any child/ student views gathered

Account of any teacher/ adult views gathered

List any additional materials gathered during the observation (e.g. learning resources/ digital images taken etc.)

Appendix K: Example of communication with case study schools, in preparation for field work visits

Email to the Headteacher's PA at School A

Dear ,

Thank you so much for your help so far. I had a very good conversation with X on Friday and he has asked me to liaise with you directly about scheduling my visits and the activities I would like to undertake on each visit.

Ideally, my first visit will be before Christmas and my second visit would be in the New Year, at some point before February half term. Dates which would work for me are:

Visit One – Friday 8 Dec, Monday 11 Dec, Thurs 14 Dec and Friday 15 Dec
Visit Two – Friday 19 Jan, Monday 29 Jan, Wednesday 31 Jan, Friday 9 Feb

Let me know if any of the above might work for the school.

Below are suggested programmes for the two days. Of course, you will be able to schedule the times to be convenient for the school and the staff/pupils I will be talking too.

Visit One to include:

- Interview with X. He has said it would be useful if Y the primary leader joined that conversation. We would need at least an hour
- Interviews with two teachers who have cross phase experience. I would need 45mins -1 hour with each (X/Y may advise who best to approach)
- Interview with the person who leads on KS2-3 transition (again 45 mins to one hour)
- A tour of the school, to see the secondary and primary phases

The above can be scheduled in any order
Visit two to include:

- Observations of all-through activities (eg paired reading, joint extra-curricular activities, cross phase curriculum projects). X and Y would probably be the best to advise what the school would like to showcase in this area.
- Two student focus groups of 8 students, each session to last up to one hour. One focus group to cover the primary age range and one secondary. Ideally within each group the students would be a mixture of year groups and genders and students would have experience of cross-phase activities. In the secondary group, I will be asking them about transition – so it would help if the majority have been at School X from your primary phase into secondary.

- The student focus groups would ideally have prepared for the activity in advance. Firstly, I will provide you with a letter for parents, which explains the activity and the research and seeks their consent. Secondly, it would help if each student had taken a photograph on an ipad/tablet, which they feel shows their school as an all-through school/shows cross-phase working. At the beginning of the focus group they will show their photos and explain why they think it reflects their school's all-through work.

Again, the above can be scheduled in any order on the day.
My logic for scheduling the days as above, is to allow more time to prepare/schedule the Day 2, which is a bit more involved, and being conscious of how busy we all are in the run up to Christmas. The suggested Day 1 programme does not involve any advance preparation for the people I am interviewing.

For the school's information, I will be making an audio recording of the interviews, which will be typed up later. This allows me to have a proper conversation and not have to take notes at the same time. On the second day, I would also like to bring an iPad and would ideally like to take a small number of pictures of the all-through activities in progress and the focus groups working. Please let me know if you think that would be possible. I am very happy to share with the school any image taken and for you to veto the use of any picture. A small number of images may be used in the final thesis. If there were to be any possibility of an image taken at the school being used in any subsequent publications, I would of course seek the school's permission before proceeding.

I have an enhanced DBS and have QTS, so am happy to lead the focus groups on my own. However, I am equally happy for a member of school staff to be present.

There will be a third visit, which may not need to be a full day, when I will interview X again and share with him some interim feedback/findings
Please do get back to me if you have any questions or need any clarifications.
Kindest regards,

Helen

Appendix L: Data summary - School A

REDACTION – Detailed summary of interviews with participants at a case study school and the data gathered - removed for confidentiality reasons

REDACTION – Detailed summary of interviews with participants at a case study school and the data gathered - removed for confidentiality reasons

REDACTION – Detailed summary of interviews with participants at a case study school and the data gathered - removed for confidentiality reasons

REDACTION – Detailed summary of interviews with participants at a case study school and the data gathered - removed for confidentiality reasons

REDACTION – Detailed summary of interviews with participants at a case study school and the data gathered - removed for confidentiality reasons

REDACTION – Detailed summary of interviews with participants at a case study school and the data gathered - removed for confidentiality reasons

REDACTION – Detailed summary of interviews with participants at a case study school and the data gathered - removed for confidentiality reasons

Appendix M: Example of IPA template and extract from analysis of a semi-structured interview

REDACTION – Annotated interview transcript with research participant – removed for confidentiality reasons

REDACTION – Annotated interview transcript with research participant – removed for confidentiality reasons

REDACTION – Annotated interview transcript with research participant – removed for confidentiality reasons

REDACTION – Annotated interview transcript with research participant – removed for confidentiality reasons

REDACTION – Annotated interview transcript with research participant – removed for confidentiality reasons

REDACTION – Annotated interview transcript with research participant – removed for confidentiality reasons

REDACTION – Annotated interview transcript with research participant – removed for confidentiality reasons

REDACTION – Annotated interview transcript with research participant – removed for confidentiality reasons

REDACTION – Annotated interview transcript with research participant – removed for confidentiality reasons

REDACTION – Annotated interview transcript with research participant – removed for confidentiality reasons

REDACTION – Annotated interview transcript with research participant – removed for confidentiality reasons

REDACTION – Annotated interview transcript with research participant – removed for confidentiality reasons

REDACTION – Annotated interview transcript with research participant – removed for confidentiality reasons

REDACTION – Annotated interview transcript with research participant – removed for confidentiality reasons

Appendix N: Focus group starter activity

My School – My View

I am in year _____

- The best thing about this school having learners of all ages is...
- I like working with children/students of different ages because….
- One thing I would change about working with students from different phases is ...
- When I see older students doing something really well (like playing guitar in assembly) it makes me……
- When I can work with younger students, I feel……
- When I visit the sec/primary (other)building, I usually…..
- One thing about this school which is really good is...

Appendix O: Research Newsletter July 2017

All-through Schools Research - Emerging Findings

JULY 2017

Helen Price hep38@cam.ac.uk

All-through Schools - a very broad church

Current school organization is dominated by the binary primary/secondary system, established in the post-war years. In 2017 there were 151 state schools in England which were designated as all-through, while there remained over 17,000 'stand alone' primary schools and approximately 3600 secondary schools.

Whilst all-through schools are a small proportion of the schools in the system, the diversity of schools which have chosen all-through configurations is striking: Academies; Free Schools; Local Authority maintained schools; former independent schools; Steiner schools and schools with a religious foundation (Catholic, Church of England, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh).

Data collection

Data collection for this doctoral project is taking place between February 2017 and February 2018. This document shares with research participants very early findings based on comparison work with the national datasets and an initial review of the returned research questionnaires. More detailed findings will be shared as the project progresses.

80% of respondent schools became an all-through or opened as an all-through school after 2010.

Proliferation of All-through Schools

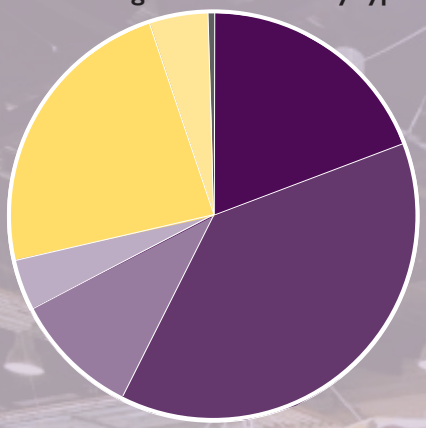
I started the research with a hypothesis that the number of all-through schools was growing as a result of the policy paradigm associated with the 2010 Schools White Paper and the academies and free schools movement. This seems to be borne out to a high degree, in that of the 151 all-through schools listed on Edubase in January 2017, 19% are converter academies, 38% sponsored academies and 23% are Free schools (total 80% from the academy/free school sector).

The profile of the survey respondent group is similar to the national picture, with 76% of the schools taking part being academies or free schools. The questionnaire findings also underline that the proliferation of all-through schools has occurred overwhelmingly in the last 6 years: 80% of respondent schools became an all-through or opened as an all-through school after 2010.

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

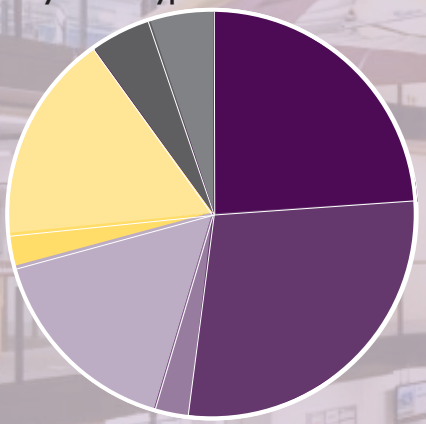
All-through Schools location, school type and buildings

All-through state schools by type in England by type



Academy (converter)	19%
Academy(sponsor led)	38%
Community School (LA)	10%
Foundation	4%
Free School	23%
Voluntary Aided	5%
Voluntary Controlled	1%

All-through Schools represented in the survey sample, by school type



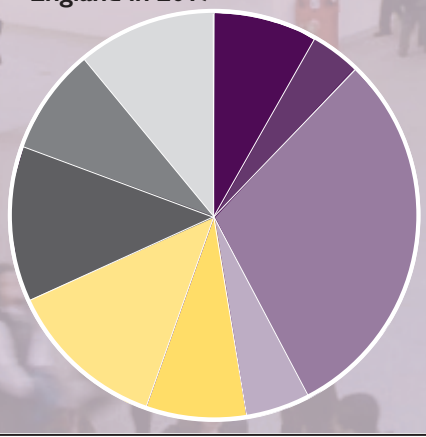
Academy	24%
Academy/MAT	28%
Academy/VA	2.5%
Community School (LA)	16.5%
Foundation	2.5%
Free School	16.5%
Free School/MAT	5%
Voluntary Aided	5%

All-through School Buildings

60% of respondent schools have had a full or partial new build to accommodate their primary and secondary age pupils.

69% of respondent schools have learners of all ages in the same school building or in separate buildings on the same learning campus.

Location of all-through schools in England in 2017



	NATIONAL FIGURE	SCHOOLS IN SAMPLE
East Midlands	8%	7%
East	4%	10%
London	30.5%	19%
North East	5%	7%
North West	8%	10%
South East	13%	7%
South West	12%	16.5%
West Midlands	8.5%	7%
York & Humber	11%	16.5%

Early headlines from the research questionnaire: what you said

Emerging Opportunities:

- Overwhelmingly, you identified the **continuity of learning** and greatly **enhanced transition** KS2 to KS3, as significant opportunities provided by all-through schools.
- The opportunities to develop and **deepen relationships with families** and communities, by working with them over a longer period at all-through schools.
- The benefits of cross-phase work and the **sharing of effective** practice across all phases of education.

Emerging Challenges:

- **Funding and resourcing**. Issues such as only receiving one lump sum and the costs of operating a split site were cited. However, 'economies of scale' were mentioned positively by a number of respondents.
- **Leadership** challenges and the difficulties in ensuring leadership structures in all-through schools are fit for purpose and equitable. 60% of respondent schools currently have leadership structures similar to those in traditional primary and secondary schools.
- The **lack of appreciation of the challenges** of running an all-through school from outside bodies such as Ofsted/DfE.

All-through Schools and Ofsted in 2017

Compared with 'stand alone' primary and secondary schools, a smaller proportion of all-through schools are rated currently as *Good* or better by Ofsted (approx. 70%). According to the 2015-16 Ofsted Annual Report, 90% of primary schools and 78% of secondary schools are rated *Good* or better.

Three of the participant headteachers mentioned Ofsted as an issue in the questionnaire, citing the challenge of being seen to maintain standards from EYFS to KS5 as a demand unique to all-through schools, which is perhaps under-estimated by external agencies.

However, I share this finding with the following caveats:

- A significant proportion of all-throughs are new schools, not yet inspected. The overall figures for all-throughs could easily swing back to exceed the current figure for secondaries as these schools are inspected.
- A number of all-throughs are holding a judgement which pre-dates their all-through status or reflects very early all-through work.
- The picture is constantly changing, as schools are being re-inspected all the time.

For further information, contact:

Next steps in the research

- Detailed textual analysis of the free text responses in the questionnaire.
- To complete a final audit of all-through schools current Ofsted ratings at the end of the school year 2017.
- To compare these figures with the Ofsted Annual Report for the school year 2016/17, when published.
- To ask school leaders at the case study schools about their experiences of Ofsted.

Appendix P: Fully collated response to question 18 of the questionnaire

18. Please rate your school's approach to the following statements about grouping and learning opportunities, on a scale from always to never.
Please choose the best fit answer. For this question 'usually' means in the majority of cases or often and 'sometimes' means on occasion or in the minority of cases.

Responses shown in per cent

A. We use traditional learner age year groupings (eg Reception to Y13)

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
62	**35.5**	**2.5**	**0**

B. Students are placed in a year group based on chronological age

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
50	**47.5**	**0**	**2.5**

C. We offer the opportunity for learners to be in a year group based on ability not age

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
0	**0**	**43**	**57**

D. We provide the opportunity for learners to be with a different year group for part of their provision (e.g, for a more advanced Maths class)

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
2	**5**	**55**	**38**

E. We provide extra curricular opportunities which span age ranges

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
20	**40**	**40**	**0**

F. We provide extra curricular opportunities which go across the primary/ secondary age ranges

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
12	**12**	**67**	**9**

G. We plan learning opportunities which allow learners to mix with younger/ old learners

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
7	**12**	**81**	**0**

H. We plan learning opportunities which allow learners to mix across the primary/

secondary age ranges

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
5	**14 (+ 2 in middle)**	**74**	**5**

I. We plan projects and activities to allow learners of different ages to work together (e.g. collapsed days, project days etc.)

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
10	**12**	**76**	**2**

J. We plan projects and activities to allow learners across the primary/ secondary age ranges to work together (e.g. collapsed days, project days etc.)

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never	blank
5	**7**	**69**	**17**	**2**

K. Older students assist and lead learning opportunities for younger students

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never	blank
5	**29**	**64**	**0**	**2**

L. Older students assist and lead learning opportunities for younger students across the primary/secondary phases

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never	blank
5	**21**	**67**	**5**	**2**

M. Younger learners enhance the learning opportunities of older learners

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never	blank
5	**21**	**69**	**2.5**	**2.5**

N. Younger learners enhance the learning opportunities of older learners across the primary/secondary phases

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never	blank
5	**19**	**71**	**2.5**	**2.5**

Appendix Q: Coding frame for question 22 of the questionnaire

Code	Code		Theme	
0	Missing		**N/A**	
1A	Establishing all-through ethos	1	**Ethos/ school culture**	
1B	Maintaining all through ethos	1		
IC	Being all-through not just in name (action matches rhetoric)	3		
1D	Clashing cultures (primary vs secondary)	1		
1E	Spilt site / Separate building impact on ethos	3		
1F	Fostering all-through ethos with staff	4		
1G	Getting all staff and students to see us as one school	5		
1H	Tension between common goals and needs of each phase	1		
1I	Ensuring parents still experience the community ethos associated with primaries	1		
1J	Getting parents to buy in to all-through vision	4		
1K	Appropriate tone/focus for cross phase acts of worship	1		25
2A	Budget constraints	4	**Finance/ resourcing**	
2B	Funding is less	1		
2C	Small all-through - funding less	4		
2D	limited economy of scale	3		
2E	Resourcing in secondary (e.g. specialist teachers)	1		
2F	Funding - treated like middle school	1		
2G	One phase 'subsidises' the other (especially when not full school)	1		
2H	Economies of scale not as anticipated	2		
2I	Funding is reducing	2		

2J	Only one lump sum (disadvantaged compared to separate primary/secondary)	1		
2K	Overall funding is disadvantaged compared to separate primary/secondary	1		**21**
3A	Leadership Structure	1	**Leadership**	
3B	Establishing all through leadership structure	1		
3C	Head/Exec Head decision conflict	1		
3D	Leadership Structure being understood by stakeholders	1		
3E	Leadership Team is secondary dominated (due to pupil numbers)	1		
3F	Keeping all-through mindset across SLT	1		
3G	Scope of challenge means increased leadership challenge	1		
3H	Leadership capacity to influence across all phases	1		
3I	Leadership consistency	1		
3J	Lack of contact with other all-through leaders/ sources of support	1		
3k	Status & accountability of Heads of Phase/School, when not in charge of whole school	1		
3L	Leadership sufficiently knowledgeable to support & challenge at all phases	4		
3M	Governance sufficiently knowledgeable to support & challenge at all phases	1		
3N	Middle leadership expertise to operate across phase (e.g. subjects)	1		
3O	Convincing others (potential partners/Trust) of challenges and opportunities of all-through	1		
3P	Developing understanding of all-through in all stakeholders/partners	5		
3Q	Balancing the needs of all phases when making whole school decisions	1		24
4A	Establishing an all through curriculum	3	**Curriculum & Pedagogy**	
4B	Curriculum audit/ avoiding repetition	5		

4C	Ensuring student progression	3		
4D	Establishing cross-phase learning	1		
4E	Maintaining cross-phase learning	1		
4F	Breaking down barriers between prim/sec approaches	1		
4G	Establishing fully integrated provisions	1		
4H	Timetabling	3		
4I	Challenge to share effective practice across phases	2		
4J	Risk of de-skilling primary teachers when use secondary specialists in primary phase	1		
4K	Sharing effective practice difficult when the organisation is so large	1		
4L	Other learners join in Year 7 - so minority get the all-through benefit	2		
4M	Demands of phase assessment	1		
4N	Demands of phase curriculum provision	1		
4O	Genuine cross phase collaboration (not one-sided)	1		**27**
5A	School site	1	**Accommodation**	
5B	Spilt Site (distance)	2		
5C	Spilt site practicalities	2		
5D	Lack of outdoor space for Sport	1		
5E	Pressure on shared resources/areas - hall etc	1		**7**
6A	Safeguarding- keeping everyone safe	1	**Well being, inclusion, and conduct**	

6B	Managing the needs of all students (establishing all-through)	1		
6C	Managing the needs of all students (maintaining all-through)	1		
6D	Behaviour management skills are different for different age learners	1		
6E	EHA and family support being brought in early	1		
6F	Older students modelling poor behaviours	1		
6G	Parents think older students provide model poor behaviours	1		**7**
7A	Staff buy in	2	**Staff**	
7B	Primary vs secondary	1		
7C	Sell opportunities to staff	1		
7D	Staff seeing beyond their traditional primary/secondary role	3		
7E	Encouraging staff to work cross phase	3		
7F	Fostering mutual respect of each phase's talents and skills	2		
7G	Staff in sec phase seeing the benefit of all-through	1		
7I	Staff developing cross-phase skill sets/understanding different phase pedagogies	3		
7J	Training to meet needs of prim and sec	2		
7K	Attracting 'right' staff	3		
7L	Ensuring parity of esteem in relation to staff at both phases & equal say	5		
7M	Higher salaries and greater promotion prospects in sec (some prim resentment)	1		**27**
8A	External agencies understanding all-throughs & their challenges	3	**External agencies (OFSTED, DfE etc)**	

8B	Ofsted - being outstanding at all phases	1		
8C	Ofsted - one judgement nursery to 16+	1		
8D	Ofsted - more challenging than stand alone prim/sec	1		**6**
9A	Handling pick up/ drop off/ parking of all through	1	**Practicalities**	
19B	Getting staff together in one place	1		**1**
10C	Managing over-subscription	1	**Admissions**	
10D	Admissions issues specific to all-through (Y6 into Y7 places held until rejected)	1		**2**
11A	Consistency	1	**Consistency/policy**	
11B	Balancing consistency with recognition of the needs of each phase	1		
11C	Managing expansion (and maintaining the quality of the provision)	2		
11D	Developing common policies	4		
11E	Retaining separate policies when that is appropriate	4		**12**

Appendix R: EdD conference poster June 2015

REDACTION – Poster contains images not cleared for online publication

Appendix S: All-through conference flyer – conference January 2018

REDACTION – Poster contains images not cleared for online publication

Appendix T: All-through conference flyer – conference September 2018

REDACTION – Poster contains images not cleared for online publication

Appendix U: Table to show themes generated by data analysis mapped across all three case study schools

Over-arching themes	Sub-theme	School A	School B	School C
School's all-through evolution	Evolution and unique story			
	Professional biographies			
Challenges/ barriers	Finance			
	OFSTED			
	Performativity			
	Leadership challenges			
	Time constraints			
	Scale and scope			
	Realising the potential of all- through			
	Impact of system-wide challenges			
	Integration of the non all-through cohort			
	Uneven prior learning at year seven			
	Overcoming challenges			
	Staff buy-in			
	Staff turnover after merger/becoming all-through			
	Countering social disadvantage			
	Disaggregation considered to counter the challenges			
	Split site			
Advantages/ opportunities	Students - Overall advantage			
	Students - Admissions			
	Students - Learning/progress gains			
	Students - SEND/vulnerable students			
	Students - Relationships with staff			
	Cross-phase student collaboration			
	Inclusion/countering short-termism			
	Staff - Contact with students across phase			
	Support staff deployment across phase			
	Staff - Professional learning and CPD			
	Parents/families - Admissions			
	Parents - Continuity			
	Links to families and community			

Curriculum and Pedagogy	Aligned curriculum/ curricular links			
	Pedagogy and approaches			
	All-through English			
	All-through mathematics			
	All-through MFL			
	All-through PE			
	All-through music/performing arts			
	All-through engineering			
	All-through art			
	Extra-curricular music/performing arts			
	Extra-curricular PE/Sport			
	Cross-phase learning projects			
	Cross-phase practice and influence			
	Cross-phase teaching (specialist)			
	Cross-phase teaching (generalist)			
	Discussion of specialist versus generalist inputs			
	Regular cross-phase teacher collaboration			
Values and Ethos	School ethos/vision and values			
	Trust/MAT values			
	All-through linked to moral purpose			
	SMSC/values curriculum			
	Cultural capital			
Leadership and Governance	All-through Leadership			
	All-through Governance			
Pastoral	Vertical house system across phase			
KS2-KS3 Transition and Transfer	Perceived enhanced transition of all- through cohort			
	Social transition			
	Pedagogical transition			
	Teachers' underestimation of year seven pupils			
	Internal cross-phase liaison			
	External cross-phase liaison			
	Combating the Wasted Years			
	Combating KS3 progress dip			

Stage not age	Stage not age - discussed			
	Stretch and challenge			
Two Tribes	Professional Identities			
	Breaking down Two Tribes mindsets			
	Teachers choosing to work in all- through			
Cluster all-through work	Cluster all-through working			
All-through application	Lessons for the wider systems			