To compare the creation and development of school culture in amalgamated schools and multi-academy trusts from a teacher perspective; a longitudinal, mixed methods multiple case study.

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Abstract

The English educational landscape has, over the last 25 years, been dominated by structural and system innovation. Local management of schools, grant-maintained schools, federations and, more recently, the creation of academies and multi-academy trusts, large and small have brought increasing autonomy to UK schools against a backdrop of high accountability. Centrally-driven, these developments have been pursued as potential game-changers. The impact of such profound change upon the culture of UK schools has received little attention. Indeed, the potential of that culture, a culture which can be created or moulded to deliver school and policy objectives, has hitherto been overlooked.

The purpose of this study is to compare the creation and development of school culture, from a teacher perspective, in three English secondary schools. The research is set in case study schools that are either part of a multi-academy trust or the product of an amalgamation. This study analyses the components of school culture over time in order to understand how school culture develops. It assesses the impact of leadership strategies and other factors on that development. The format is a longitudinal, multiple case study using a concurrent mixed methods design in which quantitative and qualitative data is mixed to produce a 'measure' of cultural ‘health’ through a teacher questionnaire and paired interviews with participants grouped according to role.

Researchers have found school culture to define. This study finds that teachers recognise and value the culture in their schools. They were able to identify cultural components and the factors which shaped them, including the actions of school leaders. This study confirms the central role of school culture in the creation of a climate for change, one which is significantly influenced by school leaders. It finds evidence that school culture is vulnerable in the face of challenge and that a damaged culture negatively impacts the ability of school leaders to improve student outcomes. The study concludes by offering a cause and effect

diagram that might help school leaders or policy-makers seeking to strengthen school culture in a single setting or across a multi-academy trust.

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. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, 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.

Acknowledgements

Studying for a doctorate, rather like headship, can be a solitary pursuit. Fortunately, this has not been my experience. As a member of Cambridge University's first Ed D cohort, I was attracted by the idea of the professional doctorate; a means of exploring a topic of particular educational interest whilst remaining in full time employment. It was important to me that I was part of a group that were Ed D pioneers, in the same way I had been cohort one of the headteacher qualification NPQH over twenty years ago. Then, as now, I owe a huge amount to those who have supported, advised, consoled and challenged me through the Ed D experience. Each of my thanks is heartfelt and warmly given, but also insufficient for the support received.

First, I wish to thank my advisor Dr Panayiotis Antoniou and my supervisor, Dr Sue Swaffield. Panayiotis made statistical analysis easy and Sue guided, challenged and supported me throughout the doctoral process. In particular, Sue understood the plight of the part-time research student, always fitted around my headteacher schedule and was kind and generous with her time. I am indebted to them both.

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I would like to thank the leaders of the Ed D 'research communities' and in particular, Dr Tatjana Draovic and Dr David Frost. Tatjana and David provided a forum where theory and practice could come together, where debate would stimulate ideas and share good practice; not easy to achieve on a Saturday morning or after a full day at work on a Thursday evening. My warmest thanks go to my fellow Ed D students, too many to mention individually, for their companionship, inspiration, humour and support over the years.

I could not have embarked upon or, completed, this thesis without the unreserved, and loving support of my family. To our children, now all grown up, I thank you for your patience when I was not available because I was working and for your comments on sections of the text.

Huge thanks also to my wife, Carin, who has been by my side every step of the journey and whose constant love, support and patience kept me going when I doubted myself. Without her encouragement and feedback, this thesis might not have reached completion.

Finally, I am indebted to my dearest late mother and father who both left school at 14 and whose sacrifice gave me the opportunity to gain my family's first honours and MA degree. I wish you were still here to share my love and thanks.

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List of Abbreviations

A Level	General Certificate of Education Advanced Level
BERA	British Education Research Association
CPD	Continuing professional development
DfE	Department for Education
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid
EEI	Educational Effectiveness and Improvement
EER	Educational Effectiveness Research
ET	Experienced teacher
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HOD	Head of Department
ICSEI	International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement
JDP	Joint development practice
LMS	Local Management of Schools
MAT	Multi-academy trust
ML	Middle leader
NPQH	National Professional Qualification for Headship
NQT	Newly qualified teacher
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
QUAL	Qualitative
QUAN	Quantitative
PILT	Postgraduate Induction to Learning and Teaching
PIRLS	The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PiXL	Partners in Excellence
SEIS	school effectiveness and school improvement
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SSAT	Specialist Schools and Academies Trust

TEEP	Teacher Effectiveness Enhancement Programme
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

Chapter 1

Introduction and professional purpose

1.1 Introduction

This thesis is the culmination of a career in secondary education. It is a mixed methods longitudinal study of school culture based upon investigations in three English secondary schools. But it is much more than that. A combination of a life's work in schools and careful research into a concept undervalued and underexploited in the English education system, the choice of topic was not accidental. This study links directly to my personal experience of school leadership and an unwavering determination to contribute to school and system wide improvements for young people. It is a modest contribution to the field of school improvement at a time when school leaders face multiple challenges in a complex and fast-moving educational system.

1.2 Professional purpose: educational philosophy and rationale for research into school culture

Accountability and comparison between schools in England have significantly increased in a generation and the combined effect of these levers has caused schools to scrutinise their performance and look for ways to improve outcomes. Few would deny that school improvement is desirable but the pressure upon school teachers, leaders and governors has become particularly acute as accountability has increased (Greany & Waterhouse, 2016). The current political climate has transformed how schools operate and while there is consensus that low standards and complacency are unacceptable, the desire and capacity to become an 'outstanding'[1] school is assumed for all schools whatever the locality, context, history or challenge. The price of failure is likely a change of school leadership and possibly a take-over or even school closure. The imperative to succeed is all embracing.

This context has been the political landscape of my educational journey through three secondary headships and 36 years as a teacher. It provides the backdrop for this research.

[1] The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) has four school 'judgements': outstanding; good; requires improvement; special measures.

Students, parents and teachers working in schools determined to improve, are on an emotional rollercoaster, and the consequent collective sense of moral purpose has encouraged me to reflect upon my experience of school improvement strategies, and particularly on the importance of school culture. My research has been inspired by the students, leaders and teachers who have accompanied me through a range of improvement measures, systems, strategies and structures that have littered 23 years in senior education leadership. The inadequacy of many strategies, the lack of sustainability and limitations of national policy initiatives have encouraged me to examine those parts of school improvement measures which, from my experience, have had a positive impact but where research has been more limited.

First, I unpack the rationale for my research. I reflect on a generation of school improvement strategies, distil my experiences from leading and amalgamating two secondary schools and highlight the importance of strategies to build effective school cultures at the heart of school improvement. This study focuses on culture within schools: how culture is identified, grows and develops; how it impacts on the actions of school leaders. At times it is a highly personal journey, but as the thesis unfolds, I hope to identify key components central to sustainable improvement and to present ideas that other school leaders and educational policy-makers may find of interest.

My research complements the work of others; academics and practitioners. Virtually everyone with whom I have worked has been sincere in their desire to improve standards and outcomes for young people and provide greater opportunities to prosper. Academics, school leaders and politicians may have disagreed about how standards can be improved but few would argue the sincerity of their intentions. It is often philosophy that divides policy strategists, although economics and the cost of education have also played a significant part. Ultimately, my career as a school leader and more recently 'insider researcher' provides a reference point from which various strategies can be evaluated in the light of my experience of school development, pupil progress and improvement.

The journey metaphor is often used to describe career or strategy development. 'Journey' differentiates long term strategy from the 'short' termism created by the five-year life of a parliament or government. It provides its own chronology and seeks to establish purpose and direction. 'Journey' tends to be used as a reflective tool rather than satellite navigation. I do

not remember setting out on my ‘educational journey’ in 1983 after completing my PGCE and MA with a plan to become a school leader, nor actively to seek to influence school development. The fact that I can now reflect requires me to concede a degree of self - indulgence. However, I hope my research offers a modest contribution to our understanding of school dynamics and stimulates further efforts to find effective, collaborative and profound routes to sustainable school improvement.

I began teaching nearly 36 years ago and have both witnessed and participated in many changes within the English secondary school system. My career which began as a teacher of history and economics in Staffordshire in 1983 and will conclude as headteacher of a large Lincolnshire secondary academy on two campuses, itself the product of a four school amalgamation, has been full of colour, change and expectation. 12 years ago, in 2006, I along with leading school governors, successfully amalgamated two large secondary schools. One was an 11 -14 school, then judged by Ofsted to require special measures; the other a more successful 14 – 19 community school where I was already headteacher. Ethical considerations prevented me from using my own amalgamated schools as a case study. However, my colleagues there helped test instruments for use in other schools.

The changes I have witnessed over a long career and my practical experience in school leadership have had a deep impact on my educational philosophy. I was still in primary school in the West Midlands when Coleman (1966) cast doubt on the assumption that schools made a difference to the life chances of young people. Today, parents compete to obtain places for their sons and daughters in the ‘best’ state schools. There is wide acceptance, by the general public at least, that schools do make a difference and we now have a comprehensive array of measuring techniques and league tables to demonstrate relative effectiveness. My desire to contribute to the debate surrounding school improvement has been central to my decision to undertake academic research.

My professional purpose has been influenced by a number of factors. Key has been the people who work in schools, their values and their impact on learning, attitudes and behaviour. Whilst the focus of much educational policy has rested on school structures and systems, I believe the culture of a school has a profound effect, not only on student outcomes but on the value attached to learning, the motivation of teachers and the independence students achieve in their learning. As Southworth suggests, it is all about ‘values’:

> underneath all the high energy and activity which characterises school leaders at work, lies a set of values which constructs their visions and generates their passions. These values sustain them, give them a compass to progress by and provide meaning to their daily and seemingly disparate actions (Southworth, 2008, p. 172).

Leading a school requires passion and "passionate leadership is about energy, vision, commitment, a belief that every child can learn and will learn, a concern with social justice and the optimism that we can make a difference" (Davies, 2008, p. 1). I began as a passionate teacher with a love of history and economics; I have evolved into a passionate leader who believes that schools and their staff exist to serve the interests of the students, parents and community. I still believe that teachers and headteachers can make a difference to the life chances of the students in their charge and I believe that "passion must be the driving force that moves vision into action" (Davies, 2008, p. 2).

That passion described above is an essential component of leadership (Fullan, 1997; Hopkins, 2007). Without it, schools have no direction. That passion need not be extrovert but for many school leaders 'passion' manifests itself as resolve; an uncompromising determination to succeed:

> the leader operates on the emotional and spiritual resources of the organization, on its values, commitment and aspirations....leaders often inspire their followers to high levels of achievement by showing them how their work contributes to worthwhile ends. It is an emotional appeal to some of the most fundamental of human needs, to be part of a successful and worthwhile enterprise (Bennis & Nanus, 1985).

My interest in school culture and how schools operate has evolved as my experience of leadership has developed; it is also linked to an interest in general organisational theory. I like to know how organisations function, and teaching history and economics has served to simulate this interest. The importance of organisational culture is not limited to schools, and later in this study I refer to Schein (2010) and Handy's (1985) work on organisational culture and consider the links between schools and commercial companies regarding culture and organisational development.

Individual educational policy-makers have also had a significant influence on my educational philosophy. Key amongst these has been Professor Tim Brighouse with whom I briefly worked at Keele University. I taught History methods to PGCE students whilst teaching full time as a head of history. Brighouse is a visionary with a moral purpose. He

challenged me to teach, write and ultimately become a headteacher. Under his guidance I came to see the importance of people and culture in organisations and to appreciate how culture affects outcomes. Brighouse's influence and work continues to resonate and highlights the importance of school culture in organisational development (Davies & Brighouse, 2008). Michael Barber, who succeeded Brighouse as Chair of Education at Keele University, was also instrumental in guiding my educational philosophy. Barber's work has challenged me to think in terms of world class schools and to consider how we move schools from being 'good' to 'great' (Barber,1997). Central to 'greatness' are the people and the culture at the heart of the organisation. These two educational titans have deeply influenced my philosophy and helped me negotiate the rapids of headship and changing government policy.

My chosen area of study is the creation and development of school culture in secondary schools which have been subject to mergers, amalgamations, federations or, more recently, multi-academy trusts (MATs). Surprisingly perhaps, school amalgamations are nothing new. For years, local education authorities merged schools in response to demographic change and the drive to rationalise resources in stringent economic times. More recently, the creation of school federations and multi-academy trusts, where schools remain distinct units but are governed by a single body, have become a feature of the education landscape in England. A product of the current government's academies programme, these schools are funded directly by central government and form clusters or chains within a single over-arching Trust.

I embarked upon my research with specific and substantial experience of leading three large secondary schools that have undergone significant change. As Stoll has suggested "real improvement cannot come from anywhere other than within schools themselves" (Stoll, 1998, p. 13). In three different contexts it has been clear to me that sustained school improvement is complex and challenging. School culture has a profound effect. I now outline how this thesis is organised.

1.3 Organisation of chapters

This thesis is divided into eleven chapters. Chapter 1 considers my professional purpose and rationale for the study whilst Chapter 2 discusses the literature on school culture. In Chapter 3, I consider the role of school culture in the school effectiveness, improvement and

educational effectiveness research traditions, and the theoretical implications for locating the research in amalgamated schools or schools part of a MAT. Chapter 4 outlines the research design and methodology whilst Chapter 5 explores how the data was collected and analysed. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 present the findings from three case study schools and Chapter 9 examines the combined case study data. Chapter 10 discusses the findings, the implications of the findings and the contribution to the field of research. Finally, Chapter 11 presents overall conclusions, examines the limitations of the research and provides suggestions for further research before final reflections. Chapter 11 also offers a school culture development tool based on the findings of my research and years of leadership experience.

Chapter 2

School Culture; a review of the literature

2.1 Introduction

Scholars and researchers agree on the importance of, and need for, greater understanding of school culture (Deal & Peterson, 2009; Pritchett, 2012; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015). There is less consensus about a definition of the concept of school culture or its constituent elements (Seashore Louis & Lee, 2016). This is hardly surprising. Although school culture is often referenced and has been studied extensively, particularly in North America, it remains something of a conundrum. Like the weather, school culture does not seem within human control. It has, therefore, featured less significantly as a potential vehicle for school improvement (Prosser, ed., 1999). However, as the urgency to improve standards in school continues and the need to understand organisational development becomes more apparent, the role of school culture has emerged both as a field of study and potential lever, as school leaders look for new ways to improve student outcomes and the effectiveness of their organisations (Gruenert, 1998; Prosser, 1999; Ohlson, Swanson, Adams-Manning & Byrd, 2016).

In this chapter, I argue that whilst research into school culture has grown globally in recent years (Barr, 2011; Miravet, 2013; Hongboontri, 2014; Glusac, Tasic, Nikloc, Terek & Gligorovic, 2015; Ohlson et al., 2016; Karadag & Oztekin-Bayir, 2017; Harris, 2018), it remains less well-researched in the English context. I also suggest that now is a helpful time to extend research into school culture, and to properly understand its development and potential role in school effectiveness and school improvement. First, I outline my search strategy, examine how school culture has been defined and how those definitions have evolved and perhaps caused confusion. In particular, I examine the components and classifications of school culture, the various research traditions and the recent political and educational trends which may affect school culture. I also consider the relationship between culture, school culture and school climate and suggest, by adopting Schoen and Teddlie's (2008) definition, that merging research communities throws new light on how schools develop as organisations. Finally, I conclude by asserting that school culture plays a key, if

not crucial role, in shaping improvement and can be influenced and manipulated as Hofstede (1997) suggests, by changing practice, systems and polices.

2.2 School culture: a problem of definition and understanding

The search strategy used in this thesis was based on an evaluation of literature at three levels: background material with broad relevance to school culture; literature closely associated with school culture and finally literature on research methodology and data collection techniques. In meeting these criteria, my search strategy followed four steps. First, the identification of concepts and key words: school culture, culture, school climate, ethos, school ethos and research design. Second, a determination of which search features might apply, including proximity or Boolean operators. Third, the selection of relevant databases including The British Education Index and ERIC. Finally an evaluation of the literature based on its currency, authority and relevance. In this way, I was able to evaluate all relevant: books, articles, reports, conference literature, official / legal publications and reviews and determine their importance and significance to this study. (Hart, 2001; Wilson, 2009)

As a key ingredient in understanding school leadership and improvement strategies, school culture has increasingly attracted the attention of education scholars throughout the world and provided a basis for debate, discussion and policy initiatives (Deal & Peterson, 2009; Prosser ed., 1999). The link between culture and schools is well established and can be traced historically. During the early part of the twentieth century, for example, Waller (1932) noted identities distinct to each school with rituals, folk laws and moral codes. In an even earlier era, Perry (1908) referred to the 'esprit de corps' of students who shared loyalty and pride in the reputation of their school (Perry, 1908). In more recent times, Tlusciak-Deliowska (2017) has identified "patterns of culture" that are "important components of school" (Tlusciak-Deliowska, 2017, p. 48) whilst Glusac et al., (2015) observed the same phenomena with which most of us identify: "everyone who visits a school can sense its culture at every given step" (Glusac et al., 2015, p. 257). Gruenert and Whitaker go further and refer to culture as a "social narcotic to which practically all of us are addicted" (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015, p. 7). Academics have long agreed that 'culture' is evident in schools.

School culture is enigmatic. In its simplest terms, it represents the norms, values, beliefs, rituals and traditions shared, in varying degrees, by staff, students and wider community

(Schein, 2010). In reality however, it is more complex and difficult to categorise but, nonetheless, clearly linked to the notion of 'identity' (Islam & Zaphur, 2009; Karadag, et al., 2017). Schein, a leading author on organisational culture and leadership, has produced an updated edition of his highly influential 1992 publication 'Organisational Culture and Leadership'. His definition of school culture focuses on "shared basic assumptions" [2] which can also be seen in the work of other writers (Schein, 2010, p. 6). Hollins (1996) suggested that "schools are shaped by cultural practices and values and reflect the norm of the society for which they have been developed" (Hollins, 1996, p. 31). In attempting to link school culture to learning, Barth (2002) considers that "school culture is a complex pattern that consists of norms, attitudes, beliefs, values, ceremonies, traditions, and myths that are deeply ingrained in the very core of the organisation" (Barth, 2002, p. 6). Smey-Richman (1991) agrees that school culture is concerned with a common set of values, beliefs and practices but revealingly, linked it to the quality of student learning: "by influencing behaviour, culture affects productivity or how well teachers teach and how much students learn" (Smey-Richman, 1991, p. 4).

Smey-Richman's work illustrates that the very absence of an agreed definition may be a key reason why development of school culture remains comparatively unused as a school improvement strategy. As Deal and Peterson (2009) suggest, "this ephemeral, taken for granted, aspect of schools is often overlooked and consequently is usually absent from discussions about school improvement" (2009, p. 6). The problem of defining school culture, therefore, is almost universally accepted and there is no consensus of "one best definition" (Deal & Peterson, 2009 p. 7). According to Daly (2008), by 1952 there were 156 different definitions of school culture, a list which has grown considerably in the intervening 70 years (Daly, 2008).

More recent attempts to produce a generalised definition of school culture have been attempted (Pritchett, 2012). Pritchett's (2012) meta-analysis of 26 studies into school culture claimed that "according to Nagelkerke's formula, the school culture theory presented in this study has a fit of 98.3%" (Pritchett, 2012, p. 182). However, unlike other researchers who have attempted to go beyond a definition and identify components of school culture that may

[2] "A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way you perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" (Schein, 2010, p. 6).

be measured, Pritchett's definition, whilst claiming 'best fit', makes no mention about if, or how the health of a school's culture may be measured. Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991) also recognise the problems of definition and attempted to provide an umbrella description to capture the essence of culture centred on "procedures, values and expectations" (Hargreaves, Leask & Hopkins, 1991, p. 17). Similarly, Stoll and Fink (1996) conclude that school culture is "difficult to define" (p. 81). Their analysis considers the link between school improvement and school effectiveness by examining the component parts that make up effective schools. They argue "culture describes how things are and acts as a screen or lens through which the world is viewed" and "defines reality for those within a social organisation" (Stoll & Fink, 1996, p. 82). Their work mirrors Schein's approach by identifying the fluidity of school culture. They argue that culture is not fixed: "schools are shaped by their history, context and people within them" (Stoll & Fink, 1996, p. 82). Ultimately, it could be argued that research into school culture has been limited by the conventions of academic writing which stress the importance of having a clear definition of the concept under investigation. School culture has different meanings for different authors and even a broad definition may be too general and therefore of little practical use.

2.3 Culture and school culture

Any definition of school culture is inevitably clouded by the concept of 'culture' as an umbrella term. If school culture is seen as a subset of culture, it is not surprising that culture is also difficult to define. It is important for the purposes of this study, therefore, to briefly explore the meaning of culture and examine how this shapes our understanding of school culture and its constituent elements.

Following Redfields (1948) post-war definition of culture as a shared meaning (Malinowski & Redfield, 1948) and Weber's 1946 analysis of culture as values (Swindle, 1986), researchers have tended to view culture from a sociological or anthropological perspective (House, 2004; Hofstede, 2001). Bruner (1990) for example, takes an anthropological view of culture and argues that it is a product of a collective history where individuals have little influence. By contrast, Bryant and Charmaz (2007) suggest that a collective culture is influenced by the attitudes, values and opinions of individuals and their particular perspective.

As with ‘school culture’, ‘culture’ has many different definitions; it is an abstract concept born of multiple traditions. The functionalist tradition of Durkheim, for example, suggests that a shared culture creates an orderly society and although he has been criticised for exaggerating the importance a cultural consensus, Durkheim rightly argues that many people identify a societal culture, whether tribal, communal or national (Lincoln, 2004). Vaisey’s (2009) response to this confusion over culture was to produce a dual process which attempted to bring together different theories. Using the metaphor of a rider on an elephant, Vaisey suggests the rider represents how our understanding of culture can shape behaviour whilst the elephant represents the cultural influences of which we may not be aware, and which are out of our control (Vaisey, 2009).

No doubt, the multiple definitions and traditions into which culture fits, compound the difficulties of understanding what culture is. This has led some researchers to categorise culture according to theme, location or language (Baldwin, 2006). Culture is often subdivided into a variety of categories such as organisational culture, school culture, community culture, national culture or tribal culture. These large cultural groups are sometimes further divided into sub-cultures. It is with this in mind that the following sections examine the methodological traditions underpinning school culture research, the importance of organisational culture and its relationship with school culture.

2.4 School culture types and methodological traditions

There are different types of school culture. Whilst most researchers share a general understanding of school culture, differences occur in meaning and key features. According to Elias (2015), most studies of school culture can be divided into two theoretical perspectives; structural functionalist and interpretative. The structural functionalist suggests that culture reflects different features of an organisation and the extent to which it is functional or dysfunctional. Here, researchers are usually interested in the part that different features play in creating and sustaining a specific culture. The interpretative tradition, on the other hand, sees culture as a ‘foundation’ metaphor where the organisation is a culture (Elias, 2015) and where culture is the DNA of the organisation. For structural functionalist researchers, the key is the cultural patterns that make organisations more effective, whilst interpretivist researchers look for cultural factors that make an organisation unique (Fullan, 2001; Schein, 2010).

School culture researchers usually select one of two methodological approaches; an anthropological design or a quantitative design. Anthropological studies tend to take an ethnological approach and use observations and interviews (Deal & Peterson, 2009; Ohlson et al., 2016; Barr, 2011) whilst quantitative researchers usually rely on surveys and attitudinal scales (Maslowski, 2001; MacNeil et al., 2009) which give an empirical measure of cultural 'strength' or 'health.' Increasingly, however, there are examples of a mixed methods approach to school culture research where both quantitative and qualitative data is collected to provide a deeper and richer base for analysis (Hongboontri, 2014).[3] Whatever the validity and significance of these findings, researchers continue to highlight the importance of further investigations into all aspects of school culture and its apparent influence on teachers and their classrooms.

Additional evidence shows that research into school culture often falls into one of two types of classification. The first is the construction of typologies that catalogue school culture according to the possession of certain traits. The second classification organises cultural elements at various levels or layers. This has been championed by authors such as Schein (2010) and Handy (1985, 1986) to explain how organisations work and function. Both these classifications have made important contributions to school culture analysis and the investigations which fall into these categories provide a better understanding of how culture affects schools and other organisations.

2.4.1 Organisational culture

Schein (2010) identifies that leadership is central to organisational culture and cites artefacts and espoused values as critical elements of culture.

> There is the possibility under emphasised in leadership research, that the only thing of real importance that leaders do is to create and manage culture and that the unique talent of leaders is their ability to work with cultures (Schein, 2010, p. 6).

As with organisational culture, Schein argues that school culture, created and managed by school leaders, exists simultaneously at three levels: basic assumptions; values and norms;

[3] In an earlier study, Rosenholtz (1991) identified two types of school culture; nonroutine / certain and routine / uncertain. In the non-routine / certain environment, teachers worked collaboratively, and student performance was maximised whilst in the routine / uncertain environment, teachers worked in isolation and student performance was minimised. (Quoted in Hongboontri 2014, p.66).

artefacts and practices. Whilst Schein's cultural levels provide a mechanism for organisational structure, the basis of his analysis primarily rests on the values or beliefs of those working in and for the organisation. "Culture" he concludes, "evolves through the entry of people with new assumptions and from the different experiences of different parts of the organisation" (Schein, 2010, p. 296). Schein's reliance on influencing values, rather than determining specific tasks to affect cultural change, will be examined later when I consider the relationship between culture and leadership.

The forces created from organisational culture are powerful, asserts Schein (2010), "if we don't understand the operation of these forces, we become victim to them" (2010, p. 3). He continues, "once we see the world through cultural lenses, all kinds of things begin to make sense that initially were mysterious, frustrating or seemingly stupid" (2010, p. 7). Schein's conclusion, along with other leading writers on organisational theory, provides a rationale for further research and underlines the importance of seeing school culture in the context of its broader cousin, organisational culture. As an organisational psychologist, Schein approaches his research without reference to school performance, school improvement or student outcomes. He sees culture as a critical component in any organisation and a factor that requires understanding, analysis and more importantly, respect. Understanding "this abstraction" (Schein, 2010, p. 7) and the way groups of people behave and relate to each other, is necessary, if any leader or manager is to guide their organisation to success.

In similar fashion to Schein, and whilst not specifically analysing the work of schools, Handy's (1985, 1986) work on organisational culture has clearly shown that leaders and managers of large institutions need to understand the dynamics and effects of culture on outcomes, performance and improvement. Handy identifies four main types of culture: power, role, task and person. He considered the influencing factors on these cultures and the implications for organisational design. Whilst Handy's research did not focus on schools, his analysis of organisations requires serious consideration by educators. The cultural groups Handy identifies are visible in schools and therefore his analysis is central to our understanding of how schools and the people working within them operate. Handy concludes his initial findings with a warning about conflict within organisations and reinforces Schein's view that culture is a force to be treated with respect. Thus, much of the current work to influence culture relies more on influencing process, practice and habits rather than any attempt to change their values or beliefs. This change of emphasis, but recognition of the

importance of culture, is exemplified by Hofstede (1997) who considers it "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" (Hofstede, 1997p. 180). Controversially, however, Hofstede considers that "talking about the 'culture' of a company or organisation has become a fad among managers, amongst consultants and, with somewhat different concerns, among academics" (Hofstede,1997, p. 179). He continues by suggesting that work on "organisational (or corporate) culture" has become "an immensely popular subject about which a lot on nonsense has been written…" (Hofstede,1997 p. xiii).

Hofstede's research examines a variety of institutions including IBM and his work led to the identification of six dimensions of national cultures (Hofstede, 1997): Power Distance; Uncertainty Avoidance; Individualism versus Collectivism; Masculinity versus Femininity; Long Term versus Short Term Orientation and Indulgence versus Restraint. Hofstede concluded that practices rather than values were the key change agent of culture, including school culture. He argued that changing the values of people within organisations is almost impossible suggesting that it is possible to change the habits, routines and practices of people within an organisation. It is these changes which, in turn, bring about cultural change in a school.

The work of Schein, Handy and Hofstede illustrate, in a non-educational environment, that an understanding of all organisational cultures is crucial to understanding how schools as organisations improve. It follows therefore that the improvement of schools and leadership in schools, also requires a thorough understanding of school and organisational culture. Before I consider this in more detail however, it is important to clarify the distinction between these key interrelated terms: school culture, school climate and ethos.

2.5 School culture; climate and ethos

The lack of a universal definition has hindered research into school culture and made its measurement more difficult (Van Houtte, 2005; Schoen & Teddlie, 2008; Pritchett, 2012). The use of similar terms in different national contexts also causes confusion. Any definition of school culture is further clouded if we consider concepts such as school climate and school ethos. Such expressions are often considered in the same context as school culture, but little work has been done explaining how they may be similar or different at the same time.

Torrington and Weightman (1993) consider that "the concept of organisational culture and ethos are very similar" but note a slight difference (1993, p. 44). They argue that the "ethos of a school is a more self-conscious expression of specific types of objective in relation to behaviour and values" (1993, p. 44). Importantly, they suggest that the use of the term culture is more common in management circles whereas ethos is used more often in education (Torrington & Weightman, 1993).

Even more confusion exists when we consider the difference between school culture and school climate (Ramsey, Spira, Parisi & Rebok, 2016). If we return to the view that school culture is like the weather, beyond our control, a similar perspective has been offered about school climate by Freiberg (1999): "much like the air we breathe - it tends to go unnoticed until something is seriously wrong" (Freiberg,1999, p. 1). Perry's 'esprit de corps', has been used as much to describe climate as well as culture. This ambiguity continues. Freiberg and Stein (1999) suggested that school climate was the "heart and soul of the school. It is about the essence of a school that leads a child, a teacher, an administrator, a staff member to love the school and to look forward to being there each day" (Freiberg & Stein, 1999, p. 11). Stevens and Sanchez (1999) see school climate in terms of people's perceptions of a school. Yet the measures they use are remarkably similar to those cultural indicators used by Schein and others.

> Climate combines beliefs, values and attitudes of students, teachers and administrators, parents, office personnel, custodians, cafeteria workers, business partners, community members and others who play important roles in the life of the school (Stevens & Sanchez, 1999, p. 124).

One explanation for the overlap between culture and climate, and for the confusion in definition, is that whilst both concepts emanate from different research communities, they remain part of the same construct (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). For example, school culture research generally produces studies of a qualitative design and from an anthropological viewpoint whilst, by contrast, school climate research has historically produced quantitative studies "typically viewed from a psychological perspective" (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008 p. 133). The culture /climate debate has extended beyond a mere suggestion of overlap. Van Houtte (2005) for instance, argues that school culture is a component of climate, whilst Schoen and Teddlie (2008) assert that climate is only one level within school culture. Other researchers see school culture as more comprehensive than climate (Eller & Eller, 2009) and,

even though the conceptual distance between the two is small, Hoy and Feldman argue that it is nonetheless real (Hoy & Feldman,1999). From my scrutiny of the literature, therefore, I agree that school culture is an all-inclusive concept into which more specific climate studies would conveniently fit.

Attempts to merge culture and climate research traditions have led to the creation of new definitions and models of school culture. For the purpose of this study, I intend to use the definition created by Schoen and Teddlie which identifies school culture as:

> the shared basic assumptions and espoused beliefs that exist in the Professional Orientation, Organisational Structure, Quality of a Learning Environment, and Student-Centred Focus of the school that determine and sustain the norms of behaviour, traditions and processes particularly to a specific school (2008, p. 139).

The Schoen and Teddlie (2008) school culture model is broken down into the following sections:

- professional orientation: the activities and attitudes that characterise the degree of professionalism present in the school. For example: *efficacy, professional behaviour,* autonomy, formality, *collaboration, partnerships.*[4]

- organisational structure: the style of leadership, communication and process that characterise the way the school conducts its business. For example: *collegiality, vision / unity of purpose,* planning, communication, *collaborative leadership, professional development,* external support, efficiency

- quality of the learning environment: the intellectual merit of the activities in which students are typically engaged. For example: innovation, *self-esteem, recognition,* traditions, stories, myths.

- student centred focus: the collective efforts and programmes offered to support student achievement. For example: student learning, achievement, goals, *participation.*

Their definition allows for the integration of culture and climate research methodologies (quantitative and qualitative) and is consistent with other major studies. This, together with Schein's levels of organisation, provides a basis from which to identify common concepts and to diagnose culture and potentially measure its strength.

[4] Text in italics explained on page 18

2.6 School culture; concepts and components

Since there are multiple definitions of school culture (Sarson, 1996; Prosser, 1999; Barth, 2002; Deal & Peterson, 2009; Pritchett, 2012), it follows that agreement on what constitutes school culture is equally difficult to achieve. Several studies in the last twenty years have described concepts central to the make-up of school culture. The choice of concepts adopted is derived from Maslowski's (2001) review of inventories for measuring school culture in secondary schools and based on several studies, summarised in Appendix 1, with their accompanying concepts (Saphire & King, 1985; Snyder, 1988; Edwards, 1996; Pang, 1996; Cavanagh & Dellar, 1998). These concepts have been used extensively to measure school culture in North America, Asia and Australia and illustrate an emerging reference to common terms such as collaboration, professionalism, collegiality and collaborative leadership whilst also employing concepts distinct to each study.

Table 2.1: Comparison of school culture concepts identified by researchers

School culture concepts	**Snyder 1988**	**Pang 1996**	**Edwards 1996**	**Cavenagh 1998**	**Gruenert/ Valentine 1998**	**Maslowski 2001**
Collegiality		/		/	/	/
Efficacy				/		
Professionalism	/	/	/		/	
Vision / Unity of purpose					/	
Professional Development					/	
Collaboration		/	/	/	/	
Collaborative Leadership	/		/	/	/	
Partnerships					/	
Planning / communication	/	/		/		
Goals / Assessment	/	/				/
Student Learning/ Achievement		/		/	/	
Innovation /change						/
Self Esteem / Recognition					/	
Participation		/			/	/
Programme Development	/					
Formality / stability / rules		/				/
Autonomy		/				
External support						/
Efficiency						/

Research over the last twenty years, however, has built upon these earlier studies and two, also shown in Appendix 1, require greater scrutiny. Maslowski's (2001) schools culture inventory, based upon Quinn's (1983) competing values framework, examines eight concepts and was developed for his research in Dutch schools. Whilst recognising his extensive effort to measure culture in relation to school performance, Maslowski's focus on complex psychological measures of culture does not, I suggest, yield a model or identify concepts that school leaders in an English educational context would find helpful as a practical tool. By contrast, Gruenert and Valentine's (1998) school culture survey, identifies cultural concepts using a vocabulary which resonates more readily with an English audience. The wide-ranging and overlapping concepts, outlined in Appendix 2, exemplify the lack of a single, coherent or agreed framework within which to research school culture. Nonetheless, the comparative analysis in Table 2.1, accompanied by a list of definitions in Appendix 2, shows that it is possible to identify concepts that occur in studies undertaken in the last thirty years, and around which there appears some degree of consensus.

The analysis of school culture concepts in Table 2.1 aligns with Schoen and Teddlie's (2008) definition of school culture. It provides an opportunity to assess the validity of the definition chosen. By mapping the school culture concepts discussed, I have shown that the definition chosen as a basis for this study provides a framework which includes all relevant concepts. Although there is not an even distribution of concepts across the four sectors of the Schoen and Teddlie (2008) definition, all are evident. In addition, I have italicised on page 16 the school culture concepts identified by Gruenert and Valentine (2008) to show that their chosen concepts also are evident in all four sectors and thus representative of the definition I have chosen to use. Therefore, I suggest that the Gruenert and Valentine school culture survey is sufficiently in line with other contemporary surveys to provide a valuable, quantitative measure of school culture in an English setting.

With a clearer perspective on how school culture research has evolved, the research traditions upon which it is based, the historic confusion surrounding its definition and an indication of its characteristics and concepts, it is now appropriate to consider why further research into school culture is necessary and justified.

2.7 School culture; political trends and implications for policy

Global interest in school culture and its effect on all aspects of the life in and beyond schools, remains of interest to academics (Bland, 2012; Moree, 2013; Bipath & Moyo, 2016; Ohlson et al., 2016; Karadag & Oztekin-Bayir, 2017; Glusac, et al., 2017; Greany, 2017; Harris, 2018). Some researchers continue to investigate the connection between school culture and student achievement (Bland, 2012; Ohlson et al., 2016) whilst others examine the relationship between school culture and school leadership (De Villiers & Pretorius, 2012; Bipath & Mayo, 2016; Harris, 2018) and between school culture and the quality of teaching (Glusac, et al., 2015). The renewed interest in school culture has emerged at a time when many national educational systems are experiencing rapid change driven by three key international factors: increasing decentralisation and marketisation of educational provision; increased competition between countries based upon international measures of effectiveness and the development of system-led improvement models (Greany & Waterhouse, 2016). My focus is the English education system, but there is ample evidence to support the notion that marketisation, national competition and system-led designs impact on school culture and education policy beyond the UK (Mourshed et al., 2010; Barber, et al., 2012).

The demise of English Local Education Authorities and the rise of centrally-controlled state-funded academies has accelerated rapidly in the last five years. Arguably, this process began in 1992 with the introduction of 'local management of schools' (LMS) whereby school leaders were granted greater autonomy over finance and personnel. School autonomy accelerated most rapidly following the 2010 Academies Act which allowed successful schools to become convertor academies, free from Local Authority control. The creation of new MATs and the expansion of existing MATs accelerated after 2011 to include both sponsored and convertor academies. According to the House of Commons Education Committee, there were 1,121 active MATs in England in November 2016, an increase from just 391 MATs in March 2011 (House of Commons Education Committee, 2017, p. 4).

The creation of academies and MATS, free from Local Authority control and with greater autonomy over staffing, teaching, finance, training, and curriculum, was intended to promote significantly higher standards of achievement. However, the same report found that "evidence of their (academies') ability to raise pupil performance is limited and varied" (House of Commons Education Committee, p. 4). The impact of legislative changes and

greater autonomy for school leaders needs to be seen in the context of greater accountability and the introduction of more demanding GCSE and A Level courses, many first examined in 2018. Greater autonomy, combined with increased accountability in a quasi-market setting seems to have influenced the behaviour of school leaders, but might not, according to Greany (2017), have impacted upon the quality of teaching. Nonetheless, academy status and the creation of MATs provided, in theory at least, a new opportunity for school leaders to explore improvement strategies, including those which might use or shape school culture.

Rationalisation of educational provision is not new. School amalgamations have, for many years, been a response to demographic change. Two or more schools might be merged to form an economic unit able to deliver an affordable curriculum. Such an amalgamation creates a new school, but one which inherits the history and culture of its predecessor schools. By contrast, MATs are a relatively new construct and the schools which join a MAT have either done so voluntarily (converter academies) or are sponsored academies, taken over because of poor academic performance. In a MAT, schools remain separate institutions but are controlled by an overarching Trust, usually led by a successful school. Partner schools will have their own culture, but this is likely to be impacted by the ambitions of the Trust (Morris, 2018). Some Trusts may respect the culture of each partner and allow for individual development. Other Trusts may impose their vision on schools and, by implication, their culture, as part of a drive to improve standards. It is clear that amalgamated schools and schools in MATs will experience cultural challenges different to those of stand-alone schools. This study explores the extent of these challenges and considers the effect on school culture. My interest in school culture, and its development in MATs and amalgamated schools therefore sits within this evolving policy landscape in England. Schools that are in MATs or are products of amalgamations are in a different context to other schools; they are either entirely new entities or part of a new partnership working in close collaboration with a lead school or in parallel with other schools. Thus, the cultural dynamics are likely to be different to stand-alone mainstreams schools whose culture develops over time unaffected by either a merger or MAT partner. Understanding the development of culture in these very specific settings is of increasing relevance as the MAT programme unfolds.

Interest in school culture as a school improvement tool can be seen in response to the increasing competition between individual schools and national school systems. The global imperative for schools to improve student outcomes, particularly since the introduction of

international comparisons of effectiveness such as the programme for international student assessment or PISA launched by the OECD in 1997, has transformed many governments' approaches to their national education systems. PISA scores can cause turmoil or delight for governments (Jerrim, 2014). "Pisa results have been used to justify sweeping controversial reforms in England since 2010 and today are seen by a growing number of countries as a guide to how to create the perfect school system" (Stewart, 2013). The PISA rankings now accompanied by TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) and PIRLS (The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study), have transformed how governments evaluate the success of their own schools. But the PISA 'effect' and development of 'quasi' educational markets is not just of concern to national governments. There is growing interest in how entire school systems can be transformed to produce better outcomes for pupils and this justifies the need for further research into school culture (Barber, et al., 2012).

English education policy and practice, in recent years, has been characterised by the concept of the 'self-improving system' (Greany, 2015) where teachers and schools become responsible for their own improvement, learn from the latest research and extend their responsibility to effect improvement in other schools. This model of improvement, with MATs acting as the primary vehicle for increasing school effectiveness, sees lead schools sharing expertise and strategies and, potentially, approaches to create a 'healthy' school culture. This development emerges at a time of significant school autonomy accompanied by high levels of accountability (West, Mattei & Roberts, 2011). But this self-improving school system has it challenges. Potential problems of capacity, funding and the core need for deep partnership between schools have to be overcome (Greany, 2015). A worldwide version of system improvement was outlined by Barber, Donnelly and Rizvi (2012) in which the authors suggested that a global system for education required society to "furnish a culture that is progressive and open to the transmission of new ideas, welcoming of diversity and rules based" (Barber et al., 2012). The culture Barber described in *Oceans of Innovation*[5], comprised "values that are universal and vital: respecting opinions different from one's own; respecting individuals equally regardless of their wealth, race, gender, sexual orientation or origin; recognising the diversity of life" (Barber et al., 2012).

[5] In Oceans of Innovation, Barber and colleagues also described what students should know and be able to do as E(K+T+L) Where **K** is knowledge & skills, **T** is critical thinking, **L** is leadership and the ability to influence, and **E** is ethical framework (Barber, et al., 2012).

School culture is thus an identifiable element within the recent analysis and development of global and self-improving systems. Alongside this, the development of strategies to influence culture positively are now widely recognised in schools as tools which impact outcomes (Harris & Lambert, 2003; Ohlson et al., 2016). The relative importance, however, of the management of school culture in relation to other school improvement strategies remains a key issue for debate. The UK Government, for example, argue that Ofsted inspections are a key stimulus to school improvement, although this is hotly contested (Ferguson, Earley, Hoston & Fidler, 1999; Chapman, 2005; Gaertner, Wurster & Pant, 2014). If culture, including school culture, truly were, like the weather, outside human control, then effective practices, habits and routines amongst teachers could not affect school culture. Meteorological references aside, the evidence from the literature, my long tenure as a school leader and passionate headteacher with experience of amalgamating two secondary schools, overwhelmingly indicates that school culture is at the heart of school improvement and can be influenced, managed, even manipulated or engineered. As Hargreaves (1991) suggests, "differences in outcome are systematically related to variations in the school culture.... school culture is amenable to alteration by concerted action in the part of the school staff" (Hargreaves, 1991, p. 110). The specific actions leading to cultural change within a school will vary according to circumstances and the local environment, but, whilst "there are no blueprints for successful school improvement" it is clear that common practices can be identified (Harris & Lambert, 2003, p. 24).[6]

2.8 Conclusion

If academics remain unclear on a precise definition of school culture, there is consensus that it is important in securing sustained school improvement. The problem of definition and difficulty of separating school culture from school climate or ethos has posed researchers further problems. Agreement on school culture essentials remains elusive. However, whilst these gaps in research have yet to be fully addressed, there is sufficient common ground, particularly on the components of school culture to move forward and use Gruenert and Valentine's survey tool as a basis for this study.

[6] Full quote: "While there are no blueprints for successful school improvement there are some core activities that have been show to lead to cultural change…..In summary, the goal of school improvement is to bring about positive cultural change by altering the processes that occur within the school" (Harris and Lambert, 2003 p 24).

Much of the research into school culture has focused on educational systems in the United States (Beaudoin & Taylor, 2004; Valentine, 2006; Muhammad, 2009; Ohlson, et al., 2016) although some work has also been undertaken in the Netherlands (Maslowski, 2001), Serbia (Glusac et al., 2015), South Africa (Bipath & Moyo, 2016), Turkey, (Karadag, 2017), Spain (Miravet, 2013) and Ireland (Daley, 2008). Rather less research has been undertaken in England and therefore school leaders and policy-makers have not benefitted from knowledge and information derived from enough domestic studies which examine school culture in a uniquely English setting. The potential benefits, therefore, that may be derived from a greater understanding of how school culture contributes to or detracts from school development are missing for the leaders of English schools. This gap in knowledge is compounded for those working in MATs or schools that are products of amalgamations. Vital information about school dynamics in these contexts does not exist. Moreover, an increasing global focus on system rather than school improvement has become more evident and has already recognised the importance of school culture in making schools more effective (Barber, et al., 2012). The relationship between school effectiveness and improvement is an important one. Therefore, before I outline my research design and methods used for this study, it is important to consider the role of school culture in the context of the school effectiveness, school improvement and educational effectiveness traditions.

Chapter 3

School effectiveness and school improvement; the relationship with school culture in the context of amalgamated schools and MATs.

3.1 Introduction

Research outcomes from school effectiveness and school improvement disciplines may have shaped policy, determined school systems and influenced the educational experience of millions of young people globally, but explicit reference to the importance of school culture has, at best, been limited. However, in the last fifteen years, evidence supporting its crucial role in school improvement and school effectiveness has gathered momentum (Deal & Peterson, 2009; Fullan, 2009; Hargreaves, 2004; Reddyk, 2000; MacBeath et al., 2007).

The focus of this study is very specific. It considers school culture as it emerges in secondary schools in England which have been the subject of an amalgamation or are part of a new formal partnership or multi-academy trust. In these schools, some of which are recently created or part of a new partnership, school culture is newly emerging and therefore of particular interest to scholars and educationalists exploring how culture develops in a period of rapid change and challenge for the teaching staff of a school. This chapter explores the relationship between school culture and school effectiveness, school improvement and educational effectiveness and seeks to explore the inter-relationship within the context of MATs or school amalgamations. In short, this study draws upon 40 years of research in these key traditions and considers the importance of school culture as an improvement tool.

In the first part of this chapter, I present a review of the school effectiveness and school improvement movements focusing on the English context. I consider the impact on policy and practice and refer to the management of school culture as an improvement strategy. I also analyse the apparent synergy between school improvement and effectiveness, and consider the limitations of respective methodologies. I argue, for example, for the continued development of combined school improvement and school effectiveness models so that school leaders and policy-makers may benefit from a wider understanding of school dynamics and the creation of additional improvement tools, including more research into

school culture. Finally, all these developments, and particularly the creation and development of healthy school cultures, are explored through the lens of schools facing the challenges of amalgamation or new partnerships. They create the context for the central theme of this study.

3.2 School effectiveness and improvement research traditions

School effectiveness research and school improvement research have developed as separate disciplines and it is only since the 1990s that some degree of convergence between researchers in these fields has emerged (Reynolds et al.,1993). Despite the obvious common factor of placing schools at the centre of both effectiveness and improvement research, differences in process, practice and methodology explain what has kept these disciplines apart for so long. Chapman (2005) argues that programmes located within the effectiveness tradition tend to be more mechanistic, whilst those located within the improvement tradition tend to be more organic in nature. Other researchers cite alternative perspectives. Creemers (2013) suggests there are specific differences between the school effectiveness tradition, which focuses on theory and explanation, and the school improvement tradition, which considers change and problem solving in educational practice. Difference of process and theme, however, are not the only problems that had to be overcome. There is also the fundamental issue of definition. Whilst anyone would want schools to be effective and students to achieve their potential, there are different ways to assess effectiveness, and these differ both in validity and reliability (Von Hippel, 2009). As Bollen (1996) observed, much school improvement research has tended to tell a 'story', often based on a case study or a series of studies set at a point in time or over a longer period (Bollen, 1996). The evidence produced, however, is often characteristically 'open' and aimed at a series of educational goals. In more recent times, other researches have criticised the school improvement movement as lacking an educational direction (Wrigley, 2012). Despite these differences of view, I propose to use commonly accepted and widely used definitions of school effectiveness and school improvement. Stoll and Fink's definition of effectiveness concludes that a school is effective if it:

- promotes progress for all its pupils beyond what would be expected, given consideration of initial attainment and background factors
- ensures that each pupil achieves the highest possible standards
- enhances all aspects of pupil achievement and development
- continues to improve from year to year (Stoll & Fink, 1996, p. 28).

Similarly, I define school improvement as that which "concerns the raising of students' achievements and the school's ability to manage change" (Reynolds et al., 2001). Therefore, if school effectiveness research is essentially the school's impact on its pupils and how this is measured, school improvement focuses on learning conditions, culture and internal practices which secure change. With these guidelines established, what mention is made of school culture, and how has it influenced the school improvement and effectiveness traditions?

3.3 School effectiveness research and the role of school culture

Two seminal studies completed in the 1960s are considered embryonic in the school effectiveness movement. In the United States, Coleman and colleagues (1966) considered the quality of educational opportunity and concluded that only 5-9 % of the variance in student achievement was linked to school factors (Coleman et al.,1966). The influence of home, and culture in the home, was much more significant. In England, the 1967 Plowden Report seemed to support Colman's transatlantic findings by indicating that parental factors, including cultural influences at home, were more important in student achievement than what happened in school. School culture was not examined. Plowden concluded that "differences between parents will explain more of the variation in children than differences between schools" (Plowden, 1967, p. 35). Other studies gave support to Coleman and Plowden and some were even more controversial. Jensen (1969) returned to the theme of family characteristics and genetics and concluded that hereditary influences were much more important than environmental factors in student achievement. Jencks (1972) re-analysed Coleman's data with data from other studies and suggested that schools had a negligible effect on both student achievement and economic success in later life.

Despite the pessimistic conclusions of Coleman, Jencks and Plowden, the 1970s and 80s were dominated by school effectiveness research which showed that schools made a real difference to student outcomes and achievement. Rutter's (1979) landmark study *Fifteen Thousand Hours* demonstrated that "children's behaviour and attitudes are shaped and influenced by their experiences at school and, in particular, by the qualities of the school as a social institution" (Rutter et al.,1979, p. 179). In other words, "schooling does make a difference" (p. 1). Without explicit reference to school culture, Rutter went on to suggest the importance of values, attitudes and behaviours in determining school effectiveness, factors I would argue are part of school culture (Rutter et al., 1979). Whilst Rutter's critics (Goldstein,

1980) questioned the correlation between school factors and attainment, other studies confirmed the growing view that individual school characteristics, or culture, made a difference to the performance and achievement of pupils (Mortimer, 1988 and Smith & Tomlinson, 1989). Some temptingly suggested that a recipe of measures and actions on the part of schools, and school leaders, would lead to greater effectiveness of individual schools (Harris, Jamieson & Russ, 1996, p. 8). Rutter (1983) showed that effective schools were characterised by the degree of academic emphasis, teacher actions in lessons, the availability of incentives and rewards, good conditions for pupils and the extent to which children can take responsibility. Similarly, Edmonds (1979) noted five effective school 'correlates': strong instructional leadership; clear instructional focus; positive school climate; high expectations, and measurement of student achievement.

By the mid-1990s, studies of school effectiveness were more numerous and began to consider measures of effectiveness including pupil progress and value added (Morley & Rassool, 1999). With the commonly held view that it was possible to improve school effectiveness, researchers in England, USA, Netherlands and Australia extended research into new areas (Reid et al., 1987, Stoll & Fink, 1992). Departmental differences, size of schools, stability over time, classroom processes within ineffective schools, and differential effects for different school groups were just some of the areas under investigation (Morley & Rassool, 1999). These developments led to the creation of a national inspection system (Ofsted) in England which commissioned the International School Effectiveness and Improvement Centre at the University of London (ISEIC) to review current research into school effectiveness and particularly teacher effectiveness (MacBeath & Mortimer, 2001). The Sammons report (1995) supported later by a meta-analysis, identified eleven characteristics of effective schools and brought together much of the current research published at that time (Sammons et al., 1995, Sammons et al. 1996). The report referred to the following: collegiality, high expectations, clarity of purpose and pupil self-esteem, all elements, commonly associated with school culture. Additional work by Sammons (1998, p. 401), explored the "differential effectiveness" of schools, suggesting pupil performance was linked to the school attended rather than individual pupil differences. Deliberately or not, the importance of school culture in school effectiveness, albeit expressed in a limited and fragmented manner, was beginning to emerge. It would take some time for it to be fully recognised as a key component in raising achievement.

In the late 1990s, Barber (1996), a leading figure in school effectiveness research and adviser to the then recently elected Labour Government, outlined a policy that made school leaders and teachers accountable for performance and outcomes. Notwithstanding the controversy surrounding the means of measuring educational performance (examination outcomes or value-added analysis), the political and educational implication of performance measures for schools was ground breaking. The findings of school effectiveness research were interpreted by politicians of all persuasions to mean that schools and, by implication, teachers and school leaders, could be empirically judged on their effectiveness. Since educational success and school performance could now be measured, it followed that schools were either effective or failing; and teachers, good or bad (Barber, 1996).

The last 20 years has witnessed a new direction for the school effectiveness movement as the momentum to merge with the school improvement and educational effectiveness traditions grew (Burke Johnson, 2009). For some researchers, the period at the beginning of the new millennium was one of 'troubled times' as the teaching profession seemed to have 'done' school effectiveness and the Department for Education's 'Standards and Effectiveness Unit' was closed (Reynolds, 2010, p. 9). For others, new ways to measure and model effectiveness were sought, and newer traditions explored and embraced (Kyriakides, Creemers, Antonio & Demetriou, 2010). Advances in multi-level modelling meant that more complex, efficient and potentially more valid estimates of school differences in student achievement could be obtained (Goldstein, 2003). There were calls for new measures of school performance to eliminate the disadvantages inherent in over reliance on achievement tests, the outcomes of which were strongly influenced by contextual variables beyond the control of schools (Von Hippel, 2009).

More recent developments have continued to explore contextual issues, including the role of teachers, school policies and procedures, and school governance (Hofman et al., 2015; Scheerens, 2015). A longitudinal study conducted in Chilean schools (Valenzuela et al., 2016) showed improving school effectiveness was more likely in areas of lower socio-economic status rather than more affluent areas, although the study did not identify the factors which led to this conclusion. The synergy between school improvement, school effectiveness and educational effectiveness, to which I will return later, has grown and led to an increasing appreciation of the importance of school culture, particularly in relation to the importance of the teacher (Hattie, 2009).

Increasingly, school effectiveness research has focused on how much teacher and school variables impact on student achievement (Teodorovic, 2009; Kyriakides, Creemers, Antonio, & Demetriou, 2010). De Maeyer (2010) and colleagues produced an 'effectiveness criteria' list of 18 school characteristics against which schools can be measured. Some of these criteria including school climate, managerial qualities, participation, management support and orientation on learning, all resonate with school culture. Similarly, Teodorovic's (2009) four school effectiveness categories: student background, input-output, effective schools and instructional effectiveness, contain factors recognisable in a school culture survey. Contemporary studies go even further. Hofman (2015, p. 12) concludes that "school level differences are important", whilst Manaf (2017) and colleagues present statistical evidence to suggest that school effectiveness is enhanced by a strong school culture.

3.4 School improvement research and the role of school culture

School improvement research is a relatively young discipline, but it has gained increasing prominence and recognition in recent years because of its influence on education systems and our understanding of organisational change. More importantly, the rise of interest in school improvement is directly related to the idea that actions taken by schools affect student outcomes although the importance of school culture in securing improvement has not, at least in England, formed a major part of school development strategies (Fink & Stoll, 1998; Hargreaves, 2001). Since the 1990s, continual school improvement in England has not just been expected but required. Ofsted, which was established in 1992 to oversee school inspections, has worked to ensure that schools have robust systems in place to sustain continuous school improvement. Similarly, school improvement researchers have focused their attention on school and system-wide processes with an "emphasis on process measures rather than achievement outcomes" (Harris & Bennett, 2001, p. 12).

In *Five phases of research on school and system improvement*, Hopkins, Stringfield, Harris, Stoll & Mackay (2014) summarise developments over a fifty-year period, updating a previous three phase model produced by Hopkins and Reynolds (2001). Whilst Hopkins et al. (2014) acknowledge the influence of the Hopkins and Reynold's 'ages' model, they highlight how more recent school improvement ideas have moved from individual school initiatives to system-wide approaches. Rather than document all aspects of the five-phase model, however, I shall focus on the later phase developments and those which relate to school culture.

Table 3.1: Five phases of research on school and system improvement

Phase of School and System Improvement	Key Features of Each Phase
Phase One - Understanding the organisational culture of the school 1960s & 70s	The legacy of the organisational development research 'The culture of the school and the problem of change'
Phase Two – Action research and individual initiatives 1980s	Teacher research and school review The OECD International School Improvement project
Phase Three – Managing change and the emphasis on leadership 1990s	Comprehensive approaches to school reform Recognising the importance of leadership
Phase Four – Building capacity for learning at the local level 2000s	Professional learning communities and networks Making the shift from teaching to learning
Phase Five – Towards systemic improvement 2007 onwards	The influence of the knowledge base and the impact of international benchmarking studies (PISA) Differentiated approaches to school and system reform

(Hopkins et al., 2014)

Throughout Hopkins' five phase model, summarised in Table 3.1, there are explicit and implicit references to the importance of school culture in school improvement from the 1960s to the present. Phase One explicitly refers to "the culture of the school and the problem of change" (Hopkins et al., 2014, p. 258), and specifically acknowledges Sarason's (1982) research on the importance of school culture in organisational change. In Phase Three, direct reference is made to work on school development planning aimed at helping headteachers and governors "change the culture of their schools" (Hopkins et al., 2014, p. 262) whilst Phase Four focuses on leadership influencing "organisational culture" and school leaders developing capacity (Hopkins et al., p. 266). In the Fifth and final phase, which extends to the present day, Hopkins considers the increasing globalisation of school improvement, international benchmarking, the focus on minority populations and the move from school improvement to systems leadership (Hopkins et al., 2014). There is also recognition in this phase that schools are often at different stages in the improvement cycle and that strategies for school development need to fit the culture of the school (Hopkins et al., 2014).

At first glance, the five-phase model seems to make regular mention of school culture as part of school improvement. A more thorough consideration shows that it is only one small part of

multi-layered strategies in fifty years of analysis. The weakness of the Hopkins model, admittedly conceded by the authors, is that it is not a diagnostic tool but rather a framework for reflecting on the evolution of school improvement. Indeed, the authors stress that there is no built-in hierarchy within the phases: Phase Four systems are not necessarily more effective than Phase One or Two. In a large-scale school improvement project in Ontario, in 2004, Phase One and Two activities were not superseded by Phase Three, Four or Five but rather became powerful agents of change and improvement across the province (Chapman et al. 2012). More importantly for this study, the explicit reference to school culture as a key improvement strategy is tenuous. There is limited reference to school culture through later phases and little recognition that the development of strong school cultures makes a significant difference to school improvement or is a vehicle worth pursuing.

The five-phase model charts the development of school improvement models since the 1960s; it also illustrates the lack of a coherent and sustained rationale to drive research into school culture. Despite this, the maturation of school improvement research is seen in government policy initiatives in England. The concept of "every school a great school" requires system transformation and simultaneously a mechanism to share excellent practice (Chapman, 2012, p. 169). The recent growth of multi-academy trusts is a good example of system harmonisation across multiple schools, even if the development appears driven by random market forces rather than by a co-ordinated central improvement plan (Wilkins, 2017). It also suggests, however, that system transformation needs an implicit understanding of school culture if school improvement is to develop further.

3.5 School improvement, school effectiveness and educational effectiveness research and the role of school culture

School effectiveness and school improvement research over the last 50 years has made a major contribution to our understanding of outcome measures and the process of change in schools and beyond. However, school culture has not been a focus within these research traditions. Despite their different intellectual and methodological origins, some school effectiveness and school improvement scholars called for closer collaboration and even a merger of the two fields. As Teddlie & Reynolds (2008) observed, "the future benefits of a merger become even clearer if one considers how central the two disciplines or paradigms are to each other". Further attempts at synergy were made (Reynolds et al., 1993, Creemers et al.,

1997) and show that a methodological merger highlights the importance of school culture as an improvement tool to secure greater school effectiveness. White and Barber (1997) adapted Sammon's eleven effectiveness factors and incorporated improvement strategies to produce a tabular guide (White & Barber, 1997 p. 18). Despite its limitations, here was a clear attempt to merge school effectiveness and improvement outcomes. The complementary factors highlighted key components of school culture: vision, empowerment, collaboration, collegiality, staff development and others. Through the potential merger of improvement and effectiveness research, the importance of school culture emerged as a rich area of study.

On the international stage, the creation of the International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI) in 1990, further encouraged collaboration between the School Effectiveness and School Improvement communities. A few years later, the launch of the first international handbook of school effectiveness and improvement (Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000) reinforced the call for these two related, but separate, research fields to find more common ground and further opportunities to influence practice and policy. The re-focus on system-wide improvement is exemplified in the 2010 McKinsey report *How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better* (Mourshed, Chijioke & Barber, 2010). In this extensive study, the authors analysed 20 systems from around the world and compiled the most "ambitious attempt so far to examine the improvement trajectories of educational systems" (Chapman et al., 2012, p. 174). Their findings identified strategies used globally to improve school outcomes, and whilst the report may be criticised for the way systems and comparable contexts are compared, it provides an example of how improvement and effectiveness research can combine to positive effect. It also recognises the "influence of history, culture, values, system structure, politics etc…in their improvement journey" (Mourshed, Chijioke & Barber, 2010, p. 71).

The development of school effectiveness and school improvement research has evolved from two distinct paradigms towards an embryonic academic consensus where the importance of school culture is visible but not yet fully exploited. Much of the research outlined has been mirrored by developments in the United States, Canada, Australia and the Netherlands and there is now significant interest in effectiveness and improvement work in economies both developing and 'tiger' (Mourshed, Chijioke & Barber, 2010). In fifty years, the notion that schools make little difference has evaporated and been replaced by almost a moral imperative that schools must be effective and therefore seek continuous improvement. School

effectiveness and school improvement research may have not fully converged, but international comparisons of effectiveness and emergent strategies for school improvement are now widely accepted and continue to be developed (Townsend, in Chapman et al., 2012 p. 187 & Reynolds, in Chapman et al., 2012, p. 205). System leadership and Leadership for Learning have emerged as key areas of development (Barber & Mourshed, 2007; Bubb & Earley, 2009; MacBeath, Dempster, Frost, Johnson & Swaffield, 2018) and research has also been undertaken on the importance of teacher quality, teacher leadership and the retention and development of teachers (Frost, Durrant, Head & Holden, 2000; Mincu, 2015; De Villiers & Pretorius, 2012; Wilson, 2012 & 2017). These developments are increasingly the focus of research and policy initiatives where research into school culture (how it is developed and managed and how it contributes to whole system improvement) has an important role to play (Hopkins et al., 2014).

3.5.1 Educational Effectiveness Research and the role of school culture

The limitations of school effectiveness and school improvement (SESI) research, the difficulties encountered in producing a 'merged' model and the convergence of international research on school-wide, regional and national systems has led, in recent years, to a fundamental rethinking of the effectiveness / improvement research field. Chapman (2012) argues that SEIS research and practice has failed to address issues of equity and promoted a narrow view of what constitutes educational achievement. As an outcome, educational effectiveness research (EER) and educational effectiveness and improvement research (EEI) have emerged as new research communities. According to Creemers, Kyriakides & Sammons (2010), EER "attempts to establish and test theories that explain why and how some schools and teachers are more effective than others in promoting better outcomes for children" (p. 4).

Champions of EER refer to a 40 year history of research, which conveniently mirrors the history of school effectiveness research outlined. EER scholars suggest that most school effectiveness research is limited and is generic to all schools with little emphasis placed on school specific teaching behaviours (Creemers, Kyriakides & Sammons 2010). EER, it is suggested, is more comprehensive in approach and appeals because the methodological and technical advances, including multi-level modelling, structural equation modelling and meta-analysis, have enabled researchers to evaluate improvement practices and test effectiveness theories (Creemers, Kyriakides & Sammons 2010, p. xii). Despite the opportunities that EER

studies have provided to increase knowledge about what works at school, classroom and system level, the take up of ideas has not been widespread. The reasons for this are multi-faceted but may be linked to the contextual nature of some EER studies (Reynolds et al., 2014). For example, in England, successive governments have placed accountability for student outcomes at school, rather than classroom or system level (Altrichter & Kemethofer, 2015; Asebi, Midtsundstad & Willbergh, 2015). Equally, EER studies have tended to stress the importance of 'context' in school effectiveness, a theme which governments may have seen as 'inconvenient' in a system that financially wants a one size fits all approach.

On the other hand, EER research has also highlighted the importance of school culture or other contextual themes. In 2014, Reynolds, Sammons, De Fraine, Van Damme, Townsend, Teddlie and Stringfield developed nine global factors and made specific reference to the importance of a positive school culture as part of Educational Effectiveness. Similarly, Dunmay and Galand (2012) identified a causal link between school culture and the effectiveness of teachers. They conclude "the more schools are characterised by cultural strength, the more teachers feel they can, as a team, enhance students, learning" (Dunmay & Galand, 2012, p. 725). These findings confirm the importance of research into school culture within the educational effectiveness movement and complement other calls for more analysis of school culture as part of levers for change (Reynolds et al., 2014).

Despite research which suggests the crucial role school culture plays in student achievement, (Elbot & Fulton, 2008, MacNeil, Prater & Busch, 2009, Gruenert, 2005), a theme considered in more detail in Chapter 10, it has still not secured an established place amongst key effectiveness and improvement strategies that appear to deliver educational success. Problems of definition around school culture may be at the heart of this omission, but the financial costs of improving teacher motivation through more personalised training, for example, may also be a factor. The convergence between effectiveness and improvement movements, however, continues to gather pace; advocates for research into school culture remain vocal.

Researchers in the United States have not waited for an international consensus that confirms school culture as a key factor in school effectiveness, school improvement, educational effectiveness or student success. Here, the trend is to move from theory to practice to show in practical terms how school culture can be created, developed, shaped and strengthened

(Elbot & Fulton, 2008). Elbot and Fulton (2008) were swift to build upon Gruenert's (2005) conclusion that school leaders should actively create the conditions to promote healthy school cultures by developing their Four Mindset Model: dependence, independence, interdependence and integration. Combined with the development of a school 'touchstone', a short statement encompassing the core qualities and values central to the school, the authors produced a blueprint for cultural development that could be fashioned in all schools; a template or development plan, including teacher training exercises and leadership strategies. Similarly, MacNeil et al., (2009), having established a statistical link between student achievement and a strong school culture, suggested that school leaders should be at the heart of cultural development, shaping values, beliefs and attitudes and focusing development on student learning. In more recent times, Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) have also produced a plan to improve school culture with examples of what to do, how to do it, and how to overcome obstacles. Perhaps, however, the most successful advocates of shaping school culture, particularly in US schools, are Deal and Peterson (2009) who, in the *Shaping School Culture Fieldbook*, outline practical strategies for strengthening culture and if necessary, transforming culture.

In this chapter, I have focused on school culture in a traditional school and system context, where there has been little significant structural change for students, teachers or parents over time. In the next section, I examine school culture in the specific context of newly merged or amalgamated schools and schools in new formal partnerships or multi-academy trusts. How does amalgamation or transformational change impact school effectiveness, school improvement and, in particular, school culture?

3.6 School amalgamation, multi-academy trusts and school culture

If school culture is a relatively under-researched concept buried deep in papers about school improvement and school effectiveness, academic studies on the effect of school amalgamations and systems re-organisations are more common place (Reddyk, 2000; Welsh & Frost, 2000). Globally, the movement of peoples within and across continents has directed public resources to adapt to demographic change to meet consumer demand. As populations move, demand for services fluctuate, requiring a rationalisation or consolidation of resource provision. The changing demand for educational provision has meant that in many developed countries, schools have merged for demographic reasons; sometimes also in response to

changing national or regional priorities as financial resources have shrunk and the need to do more with less has become the norm. These changes are current, ongoing and exemplified in Britain, where in recent years, the Northern Ireland Education Authority identified 27 schools which may close or merge owing to sustainability issues (Northern Ireland Education Authority, 2016). Equally, the notion that successful schools should be able to take over less successful schools in the English setting as part of a multi-academy trust has become the most significant development in English secondary and primary schools this century (Wilkins, 2017). These changes have created new circumstances for school leaders, teachers, parents and students. Very little has been written about the cultural impact of joining a MAT or school amalgamation, but what literature exists is revealing, and consistent with my experience leading an amalgamated secondary school for eight years.

The limited, but growing literature on system leadership, a self-improving school system and MATs in England reveals a need for school leaders to understand the importance of school culture in improving student outcomes (Greany, 2018). Very recent research (Andrews, 2018), has explored the effectiveness of academies, MATs large and small, and school to school support models such as Teaching School Alliances, as part of an overarching self-improving school system policy established by the 2010 Academies Act.

Central to recent developments was the introduction of the academies programme which "has been one of the biggest changes to the English education system of the last few decades" (Andrews & Perera, 2017). In 2002, the then Labour government encouraged sponsors (including businesses, voluntary groups and philanthropists) to take failing schools out of local authority control and set up independent state funded academies with greater autonomy for headteachers and governing bodies. In 2010, the new coalition government extended the academies programme by encouraging successful schools to become converter academies. Many of these new converter academies later joined to form MATs and took less successful schools, known as sponsored academies, into their new partnerships. Thus, the English education system, particularly at secondary level, is now dominated by MATs, led by successful converter academies under the leadership of a CEO and a single Trust Board, encouraged to take over less successful schools which, in turn, become sponsored academies. Greany and Higham (2018) describe this process as one of "mergers and acquisitions." (p. 15) where the system has become one of "winners and losers" (p. 17). The merger is a 'win'

for the converter academy whereas the acquisition is a ‘loss’ for the sponsored or targeted academy whose property and assets are transferred to the overarching Trust.

The success and effectiveness of the academies and MAT programme remains in dispute. Andrews and Perera (2017) conclude that academies have not provided a solution to school improvement and whilst many of the highest performing schools are in MATs, MATs are also over represented in the lowest performing school groups (Andrews & Perera, 2017). Further recent research by Greany and Higham (2018) also concludes there is no positive impact from MAT status. In addition, in a very recent DfE report published in December 2018, Greany provides CEO’s, Academy Trusts and school leaders with compelling evidence of best practice in systems leadership and also includes reference to the importance of school culture.

Table 3.2

Five strategic areas for sustainability	**Five school improvement fundamentals**
• Vision, values, strategy and culture • People, learning and capacity • Assessment, curriculum and pedagogy • Quality assurance and accountability • A sustainable learning organisation	• Establish sufficient capacity • Analysis of needs • Deploy and support leadership • Access to effective practice and expertise • Monitor improvement in outcomes

(Based on Greany, 2018, p.12)

Table 3.2 summarises Greany’s findings for sustainable school improvement and includes explicit reference to the existence of a shared culture in those Trusts where “the vision and values were understood and subscribed to by both core team and school-based staff” (p. 59). “In these MATs and federations” he continued, “levels of commitment, trust and collaboration appeared to be high” (p. 60).

School mergers and amalgamations make the creation and maintenance of a healthy school culture, greater school effectiveness and sustained school improvement much more difficult to achieve, especially in the short term. The largest school district consolidation in American history, in 2011, revived race considerations and class issues for the Memphis School Board to manage. Whilst few re-organisations generate similar problems, the effects of change

create periods of uncertainty for all those involved (Dillon, 2011). Analysis of school amalgamation and school merger research over the last forty years highlights a series of factors that significantly undermine attempts to create positive school cultures (Wallace, 2012). These challenges include the increasing stress levels amongst teachers, a propensity to create sub-cultures, a cultural divide, or prolonged cultural fragmentation and therefore, for school leaders, a greater need to manage culture and to understand the role culture has to play in educational change theory.

In the first instance, I explore how teacher stress levels increase by the prospect of, involvement in and consequence of a school amalgamation. "Mergers mean more work, more commitment. Mergers are challenging situations. Challenges are exciting; they can be stressful too, for they present dangerous opportunities" (Speed, 1988, p. 47). This extract is one of the conclusions of Graham Speed in his 1988 case study of eleven school mergers in England. Speed's research, whilst not explicitly referring to school culture, does, nonetheless provide an insight into the multiple dynamics of post-amalgamated schools including the negative impact on school culture and the effect on teacher stress. His study is as relevant today as it was in the 1980s and shows the effect of not understanding the levels of uncertainty that amalgamations cause. Speed concludes that "maintenance of the morale of staff is crucial because, although some staff may see new opportunities, all are faced with a new situation not of their choosing" (Speed, 1988, p. 43).

Other writers concur with Speed on the potentially damaging effects that school mergers can have, particularly in the short term. A study of school mergers in Northern Ireland published in 1993, explicitly warned of the negative impact of school amalgamations: "it would seem that such school mergers present major trauma and upheaval for all teachers associated with the event (McHugh & Kyle, 1993). This Northern Ireland study also isolated the fears teachers expressed as they faced organisational change through school mergers, including the threat of redundancy and the effect on morale and loss of job satisfaction (McHugh & Kyle, 2006, p. 14). McHugh & Kyle (2006) warn education leaders not to underestimate how powerless and stressed teachers feel during times of school reorganisation. The theme of teacher stress during a school merger is also developed by Kyriacou and Harriman in their 2006 study of teachers involved in secondary school amalgamations in the north of England. They examined how mergers heightened stress amongst teachers, particularly around changes in role or school ethos (Kyriacou & Harriman, 1993, p. 298). In short, school amalgamations

significantly increase the levels of stress amongst teachers and therefore undermine the development of a healthy school culture. Research studies over the last thirty years confirm that amalgamations, or any significant educational upheaval, shift school culture as teachers move from their established environments into the new setting and context of an amalgamated school. Moreover, some teachers find the transition process difficult because they fear unemployment (Barter, 2014, Reddyk, 2000).

Theories of organisational change stress the challenges, uncertainties and anxieties that new working environments create. Whilst there are plenty of studies which examine the financial opportunities, academic outcomes and the structural effects of school amalgamations (Thorson, 2017; Berry & West, 2008; Boddington, 2010; Warner & Lindle, 2009; Mills & McGee, 2013; Kees, 2012), few researchers consider the impact of school and system re-organisation on teachers or upon school culture. In *Managing Complex Education Change* (2002), Wallace and Pocklington refer specifically to 'cultural fragmentation' and 'cultural transition' (Wallace & Pocklington, 2002, p. 54) caused by a school merger and suggest that leaders need to embark on a period of 'culture building' as part of the change process (Wallace & Pocklington, 2002, p. 230). In a later book, Wallace (2003) also explains how the ambiguity caused by a school amalgamation undermines established beliefs and values (p. 12). These dramatic upheavals can undermine a healthy school culture and increase conflict and tension between teachers (Reddyk, 2000). Moreover, "stakeholders will probably hold allegiance to a plurality of partially incompatible beliefs and values" and make the task of 'culture building' in a new school much more difficult (Wallace, 2003, p. 20). Increased ambiguity also makes the management of change challenging, but this phenomenon scarcely features in organisational research (Wallace, 2003, p. 14).

Other studies consider the specific nature and origin of educational change and its impact on participants involved in such a school merger. Hargreaves differentiates between change which is mandated and change which is self-initiated. Change through self-initiation, he argues, can evoke emotional responses from teachers and help to create a positive school culture (Hargreaves, 2004). Mandated change on the other hand, such as school reorganisation, tends to have the opposite effect, which "grinds most teachers into the dust" and undermines the creation of a positive school culture (Hargreaves, 2004, p. 304).

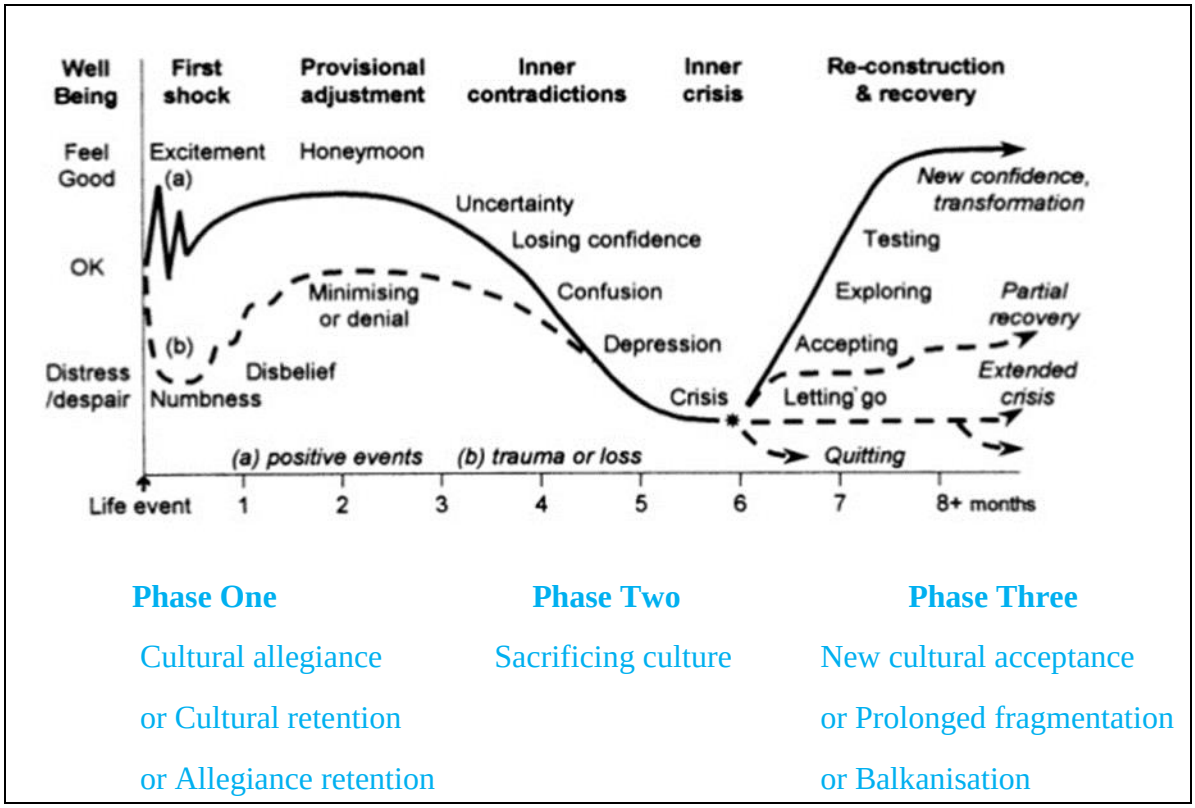
Central to the success of managing organisational or educational change, including school mergers, are the skills deployed by school and system leaders, a group Fullan refers to as Culture Change Principals (Fullan, 2002). To be successful, he argues, these CCPs need a moral purpose and the wisdom to understand how "re-culturing" can assist the change process (Fullan, 2002, p. 6). Hargreaves also highlights the importance of leadership in managing major change. He points out that success can depend on whether school leaders take an inclusive approach where teachers are involved in shaping change, or an exclusive approach, where participants are reduced to powerless bystanders having to accept outcomes without any sense of ownership. Shen (2008) explores the importance of participation in shaping change and helping to develop a positive culture in the face of change. He further suggests that resistance to change is sometimes because people don't know how to cope with it (Shen, 2008). Wildy and Louden (2000) also agree that participation is key in managing change, whilst Leithwood (1994) suggests that school restructuring needs leadership that is sensitive and can build a productive work culture (Leithwood, 1994).

The evidence seems to indicate that the process and effect of re-organisation follows a well-established pattern; school culture becomes more toxic and the creation and emergence of a stronger culture is delayed for some considerable time (Reddyk, 2000; Hargreaves, 2004). This pattern mirrors my own experience in leading a secondary school through an amalgamation. First, an announcement of an amalgamation or re-organisation creates uncertainty for teachers as the closing date of the 'old' schools is confirmed. Since planning and organising a new school can take considerable time to implement, the period of uncertainty can last up to a year or more. In the second phase, teachers, understandably, became pre-occupied with securing their own jobs, so the spotlight tends to move away from learning and student achievement towards a focus on the employee, their career and their future place in the new organisation (Wallace, 1996, p. 464). Third, there is the 'cultural shock' of moving into newly, and mostly larger, merged accommodation, possibly in a new location, with new systems, procedures, structures and people. No matter what strategies school leaders use to create a positive new culture, many participants remain 'caught in the headlights of change' and fall into new or old sub-cultures, commonplace in large organisations (Hargreaves, 1992). This 'creeping balkanisation' as Hargreaves (1992) describes it, whether strong or weak, will undermine any new school culture that leaders try to cultivate. Whilst headteachers leading amalgamations seem to understand the need to develop a new school culture quickly, Hargreaves' research suggests the challenge for school

leaders is “how to create an inclusive environment for developing and implementing educational change” (Hargreaves, 2004 p. 306). Indeed, my own experience concurs with this view. I would suggest that the creation of a new brand or school identity is a vehicle which can mitigate some negative effects of mergers and help accelerate the transition to a new, vibrant culture based on optimism and high expectations.

The emotional rollercoaster described above is outlined in more detail by the change curve in Figure 3.1. Here I have merged an already existing diagram of human response to change based upon Kubler-Ross (1969), Hopson and Adams, (1976) and Williams (1999) with changes identified by Wallace and Pocklington (2002), Hargreaves (2004) and Reddyk (2000) in their studies of organisational transition. The original diagram forms the top part of Figure 3.1 whilst the new additions form the lower part with the three phases of cultural change highlighted in blue. In Phase One, the excitement or numb feeling at the beginning of the process is soon replaced by uncertainty and confusion. Symbolically, this matches the cultural allegiance, cultural retention and allegiance retention referred to by Wallace (1996) in the first stage of organisational change. In Phase Two, as uncertainty and confusion take over, a sense of ‘sacrificing culture’ prevails whilst in Phase Three there is either new confidence, recovery or extended crisis, accompanied either by a new cultural acceptance, prolonged fragmentation or balkanisation.

Figure 3.1 summarises these chronological developments and underlines the impact on school culture through transformational change. What is significant, based on my own leadership experience and the view of other researchers, is that there is no guarantee that an amalgamation, no matter how altruistic or however carefully managed, will ultimately achieve a healthy school culture (Reddyk, 2000). The challenges of cultural transition are so all-embracing, demanding and potentially overwhelming, that historic cultural allegiance and prolonged fragmentation can lead to years of cultural toxicity where there is a cultural incompatibility between the groups working in a new institution (Reddyk, 2000).



(Based on: Kubler-Ross, 1969; Hopson, & Adams, 1976; Williams, 1999)

Figure 3.1: Amalgamation – Change with cultural transition

The unintended consequence that amalgamations can have on school culture suggests the importance of managing transformational change carefully to create the circumstances and environment in which a newly merged school can thrive for the benefit of all stakeholders. In a Canadian study, Reddyk (2000) analysed the process of school division amalgamations in Saskatchewan and concluded that "it is readily apparent that effective management of the technical, political, and cultural strands of an organisation is a necessary ingredient of successful mergers" (Reddyk, 2000, p. 6). Also, financial performance, rather than student outcomes, were considered the "most common indicator of a successful merger". Lessons learned from the study highlighted the future need to pay more attention to the "cultural aspects of amalgamation" (Reddyk, 2000, p. 24). Indeed, Reddyk not only understands but rightly identifies some of the critical leadership strategies that make cultural transition more likely to succeed. For example, there is an acknowledgement that "organisational culture is what holds an organisation together" (Reddyk, 2000, p. 234) and "competing cultural traditions can threaten successful integration of the amalgamating divisions" (Reddyk, 2000, p. 235). From my experience, Reddyk is right to assert that the

creation of new cultures following an amalgamation "does not just happen" but requires careful management of people and the process of transformational change (Reddyk, 2000, p. 242). In England, insufficient attention is paid to the importance of school culture in amalgamations (Reynolds et al., 2014). In short, the importance of understanding school culture, particularly in the setting of a newly merged school cannot be underestimated. Culture can either assist effectiveness and promote improvement, or totally undermine the efforts of school leaders to create a successful place of learning (Reddyk, 2000).

3.7 Conclusion

School culture is central to school effectiveness, school improvement and educational effectiveness. Each of these research communities has developed their own characteristics and evolved from separate research paradigms. Yet the importance of school culture, for each discipline has grown. The struggle to agree a definitive description of school culture, however, has continued to limit the widespread acceptance, particularly in England, of school culture as a key school improvement tool. When the complex issue of a school merger is thrown into the school re-organisation mix, the need to understand the importance of school culture grows significantly. The tensions and anxieties caused by the merger of schools, combined with the creation of a more toxic school culture, can undermine school improvement and school effectiveness, and hinder school function. The resulting sub-cultures, fragmentation and balkanisation can erode relationships and lengthen the time needed for a healthy school culture to emerge. Above all, cultural upheaval will potentially threaten the focus of teachers and, therefore, the performance of students. It is for this reason that understanding school culture is crucial to successful management of transformational change.

Chapter 4

Research design and methodology

4.1 Introduction; the research problem and purpose statement

In this chapter, I outline the rationale for the chosen research design, discuss the research problem and my position as a researcher, and explain the choice of methods based upon guidance in the literature. In addition, I outline the purpose of this study, clarify the research questions and explain the choice of population and sample.

4.1.1 The research problem

Governments and educators over the years have considered every aspect of school system design in search of strategies which could be replicated in every school to ensure that all students reach their potential (Barber & Mourshed, 2007; Greany & Earley, 2017). Most of these methods have focused on entire system re-designs or school restructures; the development of standardised curricula, specific school improvement tools and pedagogical initiatives have been prominent (Fullan, 1996; Kyriakides, Creemers, Antonio & Demetriou, 2010; Hopkins, Stringfield, Harris, Stoll & Mackay, 2014). Very few studies have focused on the role school culture plays in the creation of successful schools (Morris, 2018). None have considered the development of school culture in schools newly amalgamated or upon joining a multi-academy trust. A focus on schools that are products of mergers or a formal partnership is relevant to the contemporary English educational landscape. In this context, it is likely that school culture will be more embryonic, possibly fragile and evolving in a manner, which, if not consciously, is capable of manipulation. In a newly merged or amalgamated school, there is therefore a rich context, ripe for the study of cultural development.

This study seeks to contribute to the knowledge base by exploring the creation and development of school culture using a mixed methods approach in a longitudinal context. Hitherto, there has been little investigation of school culture, particularly in English schools, which has employed a combination of research methodologies. Several studies, such as Maslowski (2001) and Hobby (2004), have attempted to measure the health of school culture

but many have limited their approach to monomethod analysis. 22 of the 26 studies examined by Pritchett (2012) in her extensive study of school culture were monomethod in design, 17 of these were qualitative research. Many studies which have used quantitative techniques were designed to establish a link between school culture and student outcomes, rather than any consideration of how culture develops or how it can be strengthened.

This study therefore tries to provide an understanding of school culture and the internal and external factors which influence its development. A mixed methods longitudinal approach is useful since it enables comparative generalisations to be made from a large population of teachers in three secondary schools, whilst at the same time providing detailed views of teacher perspectives over a twelve-month time period. This study is distinctive because it explores school culture in the context of amalgamated schools or multi-academy trusts and therefore provides a detailed insight into cultural development in schools that are products of mergers or formal partnerships.

This aspect of the research is significant for four reasons. Firstly, it may provide educational policy-makers with knowledge about the development of school culture where school re-structures are being considered as part of strategic school improvement. For example, this study considers leadership strategies and factors both internal and external to schools, which influence the health of school culture and potentially impact the capacity of schools to improve student achievement. Secondly, whilst secondary school mergers or amalgamations are features of educational reorganisations worldwide, the concept of multi-academy trusts, or academies working in 'chains' or partnership, is a peculiarly English strategy since 2010; this research is therefore specific to the English domestic context and potentially useful for educational policy-makers. Thirdly, this study contributes to other academic studies on school culture from the perspective of a mixed methods analysis, in contrast to most studies which focus solely on monomethod approaches.

Finally, my experience as a secondary school headteacher has led me to reflect on a variety of school improvement measures across my 23 years in senior leadership. Most school improvement strategies necessarily focus on the most efficient and effective means to improve student outcomes, but scant regard is paid to the teachers who are the key to delivering success. My experience suggests that school culture in an amalgamated school differs considerably from that in an established school, where customs, traditions and

working practices have developed over years and are embedded. This is why investigation of school culture in schools forged together or joined in partnership is so fascinating: charting the emergence of cultural traits and examining how this development is affected. From a headteacher perspective, I believe that a healthy school culture helps retain and motivate teachers thereby making structural change a more feasible means of delivering school improvement in which student success is more likely. Research into school culture is a means of understanding school dynamics, teacher retention and motivation. It helps us understand how to create a better learning environment in which students can prosper and thrive.

4.1.2 Purpose statement

The purpose of this study is to explore the creation and development of school culture in amalgamated schools and multi-academy trusts. This study examines the factors that create a healthy school culture over time from the perspective of teachers in three case study secondary schools. Using a convergent mixed methods longitudinal approach, this study also seeks to combine quantitative and qualitative techniques to analyse the components of school culture and assess how leadership strategies together with other factors influence teacher perceptions. In this way, the study hopes to provide a greater understanding of school culture as it develops in schools that are products of mergers or formal partnerships and, at the same time, contribute to the field of school improvement research.

4.2 My position as a researcher

In Chapter 1, I outlined my professional purpose for conducting this research and explored my rationale and motivation in the light of 35 years' experience as a secondary school teacher and 17 years as a secondary school headteacher. My background growing up in a working-class family in the 1960s and 1970s has undoubtedly shaped my world view and encouraged me to see education as a force for social mobility as individuals make practical and positive contributions to society. Philosophically, Searle challenges our own concept of existence. He asks, "how can we square the self-conception of ourselves as mindful, meaning creating, free, rational agents with a universe that consists entirely of mindless, meaningless, unfree, non-rational, brute physical particles?" (Searle, 2000, p. 18).

From an ontological perspective, I do not see the world as fluid with each of us existing as a separate entity. Indeed, we may wish to believe that 21st century Britain aspires to create equal opportunities for all its citizens, irrespective of gender, race, age or sexual orientation, with no limit on the development of individuals or constraint upon their ambitions and aspirations. But the social structures and limited horizons I have witnessed in my youth, remain for many today. The desire to help people aspire, develop and succeed was the motivating force that steered me into teaching in the 1980s and the driver that subsequently encouraged me to take on headship. We all exist within social structures and whilst I may have encouraged my students to throw off the limits of their social norms and expectations, I am nonetheless aware that access to the corridors of real influence are not shaped by ambition alone, but often by inherited pathways open to all but a few.

My view of how the world exists is closely linked to how I see the creation of knowledge and how it is understood. From an epistemological perspective, my undergraduate knowledge of history and economics suggests that what constitutes knowledge and reality has more than one construct. Searching for the illusive fifth paradigm in macroeconomics since the 1970s has steered economists away from the Keynesian notion that governments can create sustained growth, towards a more classical view that markets are almost perfect and should be unregulated. In a similar way, what is regarded as a 'good' education has been created by those who have influenced education policy and not necessarily by those who have been the consumers. What does a 'good' education really mean and who are those who decide what good is? In the same way that the victors, not the vanquished, write history, so it tends to be that those in government or more importantly, those that form the Establishment, tend to decide what is a 'good' education for the rest of society. This is not merely a British perspective of how education has developed; the influence of such ideas on educational development are evident on a global scale. Creswell and Creswell's (2018) four worldviews; post positivism, constructivism, transformative and pragmatism, presented in Appendix 3, summarise the perspectives available to researchers in social science and help shape the context in which this study sits. For my part, and for the purposes of my research and my position as a researcher, I take a pragmatic worldview approach, not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality. A pragmatic approach is formed from actions, situations and consequences and is derived from the work of Pierce, James, Mead and Dewey

(Cherryholmes, 1992). It does not constrain the methodology and allows for the use of quantitative and qualitative data because they provide the best understanding of the research problem. The advantage of a pragmatist approach is that it opens the possibility of multiple methods, different assumptions and different forms of data analysis. It follows that it would be helpful to outline the worldview that frames the logic of my research enquiry.

The pragmatic paradigm in which the research sits, provides individual views which give a feeling and perception of the existing culture in the school to which they belong. My aim was to undertake the research in the natural setting of the participants' schools, so that they were able to reflect on and talk about their understanding of school culture whilst at the same time, being immersed in it. In this way, I looked to understand how the participants feel about their institutions in as normal a setting as possible. Since the research was informed by a pragmatic theoretical perspective, it follows that the setting and methods used are part of a pluralistic, problem-centred, and real-world pragmatic paradigm, unlike the observation of absolute truth as identified in a post positivism perspective or the disciplined way of interpreting texts. The pragmatic theoretical perspective in which this study rests illustrates that there are numerous ways of engaging with the world and that no single point of view can ever give the complete picture (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The intended participants in the study know the context of their environment and interpret it from their experience of that setting and their own background. Melles (2008) compares pragmatist researchers to architects. In the same way architects use whatever materials and methods needed to build the building they schemed on paper, pragmatists use whatever combination of methods necessary to find answers to research questions. From an axiological perspective, pragmatists can also be biased or value free. A pragmatic approach, therefore, has shaped the direction of this study, where I look to the 'what' and 'how', to research based on intended consequences using a mixed methods design set within a pragmatic paradigm.

4.3 Research questions

Since the purpose of this study is to compare the creation and development school culture in amalgamated schools and multi-academy trusts, I consider the factors in the development of school culture in a longitudinal multi-case setting over a period of twelve months and compare the processes at work in different schools. In effect, I examine the dynamics within each case study school as a means of maximizing knowledge of the factors that contribute to

creating and sustaining healthy cultures. The overall research question I have adopted is therefore:

How is the creation and development of school culture in amalgamated schools and multi-academy trusts perceived by teachers?

I used a mixed methods convergent design (Dawson, 2009; Teddlie and Tashakkorie, 2009; Morse, 2009; Creswell, 2018;) in which the mixing of qualitative and quantitative data (teacher questionnaires, teacher interviews) occurred roughly at the same time and in equal measure. I conducted the fieldwork with two main points of measurement (quantitative and qualitative) in each school over a 12 month period. This design allowed an investigation both within and between schools over time and enabled me to address mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) research questions (Wilson, 2009). The quantitative research questions focused on measuring teachers' perceptions of school culture over time, including the ability to assess change, and tested views of culture against variables such as age, length of service and role in school. The qualitative research questions, on the other hand, dealt with the influences on school culture, how these factors changed, how school culture developed, and the leadership strategies deployed within each school (Glaser & Strauss, 2009; Silverman, 2014). The research questions are:

1 What are teacher perceptions of school culture within and across case study schools?[7]
2 How does school culture change in each school and across schools?
3 How do the components of school culture vary within schools and between schools?

[7] From the perspective of statistical significance, the following null hypotheses were also tested:

There is no significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of school culture and each case study school (1a)

There is no significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of school culture and the gender of the respondent 1b)

There is no significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of school culture and the role of the teacher in his or her school (1c)

There is no significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of school culture and the number of years they have spent in the teaching profession (1d)

There is no significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of school culture and the number of years they have spent in the case study school (1e)

4 What are the factors that initiate or influence the process of change in school culture?

5 What are the leadership strategies that develop school culture?

4.4 Rationale for multiple case study.

The objectives of this research, including the need to investigate school culture within a real-life context, suggested a case study approach as the most appropriate way forward. Gillham (2000) defines a case study as:

> A unit of human activity embedded in the real world which can only be studied or understood in context which exists in the here and now that merges in with its context so that precise boundaries are difficult to draw (Gillham, 2000, p. 1).

In short, it is "one which investigates the above to answer specific research question and which seeks a range of different kinds of evidence" (Gillham, 2000, p. 1). Stake (2005) provides an understanding of the uniqueness of a case and how it provides an opportunity to discover something new and innovative. In describing case study research in such personal and specific detail, Stake suggests that a selection of cases and how they are chosen remains central to the validity of a research study. His division of case study into intrinsic, instrumental and collective provides a useful framework whilst at the same time challenges us to consider the dilemma of knowledge gained from in-depth study of an individual case, versus the generalisations that may emerge from multi case analysis. In his analysis of single and multi-case study research, Stake (2005, p. 6) went on to argue that at the heart of any case is a 'Quintain' or phenomenon or condition to be studied. The Quintain can be present in a single case or the 'holding company' or 'umbrella' for multiple case analysis.

For my purposes, "since the first criterion should be to maximize what we can learn" (Stake, 1995, p. 4) I decided to undertake a multi-case study of amalgamated schools and multi-academy trusts where each school is a case and where the Quintain is 'school culture'. The objective was to "study what is similar and different about the cases to understand the Quintain better" and consequently develop an understanding of school culture in these different but at the same time similar settings (Stake, 2006, p. 6).

The use of a multi-case study model allowed in-depth analysis of school culture within several settings as well as providing a comparative and longitudinal approach designed to create a greater understanding of how cultures develop, and how it contributes to school

improvement. With this in mind, it was also important to consider the theoretical basis upon which the approach was chosen and how case study literature helped place the research into context.

In considering the choice between single and multiple case studies, Yin is unequivocal. "When you have the choice" he argues, "multiple case designs may be preferred over single case designs…since your chances of doing a good case study will be better than using single case design" (Yin, 2003, p. 53). Yin also provides useful advice in relation to the selection of cases and whether the design should use replication or sampling logic. Sampling logic, he points out would require an impossibly large number of cases to study whereas replication allows for the comparison of outcomes in the development of a rich theoretical framework (Yin, 2003). The replication logic allowed me to me to duplicate the conditions in each of the cases selected, thus making the findings "robust and worthy of continued investigation or interpretation" (Yin, 2003, p. 47). Yin's analysis meant I needed to distinguish between multiple case studies which are either holistic or embedded. I used an embedded approach where data was pooled across cases and collected and analysed for each individual case.

Yin offers further advantages where more than one case is used: "multiple case studies can be used to either augur contrasting results for expected reasons or either augur similar results in the studies" (Yin, 2003). In this way the author can clarify whether the findings are valuable or not (Eisenhardt, 1991). When the case studies are compared, the researcher can also provide the literature with an important influence from the contrasts and similarities (Vannoni, 2015). An all-embracing fact is that the evidence created from a multiple case study is measured, strong and reliable (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Other advantages of multiple case studies is to create a more convincing theory when the suggestions are more intensely grounded in several empirical evidence. Thus, multiple cases allow wider exploration of research questions and theoretical evolution (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

In the multiple case studies design, there are no explicit conditions about the number of cases needed to legitimise outcomes, Yin says that "the typical criteria regarding sample size are irrelevant" (Yin, 1994, p. 50). Instead, he suggests selecting cases "until no significant new findings are revealed" (Yin, 1994, p. 50) and advises participants be selected where the phenomena under study is likely to be found. In assigning my research as 'comparative' and 'multiple' in design, therefore, I would argue that it has been possible to make some

legitimate generalisations about school culture as a 'Quintain' despite the breadth versus depth trade-off common in case study research (Johnson and Christensen, 2012).

A key aspect of case study and multiple case study research is the process of selecting the cases and the extent to which they will help develop knowledge of the Quintain. Therefore, I decided to apply Stake's three criteria for selecting the cases:

- is the case relevant to the Quintain?
- does the case provide diversity across contexts?
- do the cases provide good opportunities to learn about complexity and contexts? (Stake, 2006, p. 23).

A further consideration underlined by Stake in adopting multi-case studies is to examine how the Quintain operates in different environments. Therefore, he recommends that typical and atypical settings should be chosen (Stake, 2006). Finally, since case activity is influenced by setting, Stake recommends that the context of each case needs to be studied and described to assess its influence on the case and the Quintain (Stake, 2006). Critics of the case study approach point to the limitations in validity that single sources of primary information generate, and to the relative inability to generalise from a single environment. However, by examining school culture in similar but different environments in three secondary schools, the limitations of the case study model have been further mitigated in this study.

4.5 Rationale for a longitudinal study

At the beginning of the research, I decided that this study would perhaps be more useful to educational policy-makers and school culture academics if a developmental aspect was incorporated into the research design. Examining development, for example, would provide a richer insight into school culture as a 'dynamic' concept and not limit analysis to a snapshot or moment in time. There would be several other key advantages. Longitudinal analysis allows for the determination of patterns in both quantitative and qualitative data, whilst also providing opportunities to identify developmental trends, and to measure change accurately and with greater validity. Unlike single measure studies, here would be the opportunity to explore the components of school culture over time in three distinct settings and to consider the impact of leadership strategies as part of school development. The main challenge in the use of a longitudinal design, however, was the demand placed on the teachers in case study schools, and the added complexity and time required for a single research student. Nonetheless, participating headteachers generously allowed me good access to facilitate the

demands of a longitudinal approach and teachers participating in year one were kind enough to agree to a follow up interview in year two. I was very grateful for their co-operation.

4.6 The rationale for concurrent (convergent / triangulation) mixed methods design

Little work has been done to find out how school culture develops utilising the knowledge, skills and experience of those directly involved with shaping schools as organisations, namely, the teachers. More specifically, there was very limited research of teacher perceptions of school culture in amalgamated schools or multi-academy trusts (Morris, 2018). It was important then, to select a research design that was able to integrate the various components of the study to understand how teachers perceived school culture, and how its development could be traced over a period of time. In the following section, I explain and analyse the choice of research design and discuss the rationale for selecting a concurrent triangulation mixed methods approach.

Research designs are generally categorised under two broad groups: qualitative (QUAL) and quantitative (QUAN) approaches. Qualitative designs (post positivist) tend to explore behaviours and experiences through methods such as interviews and focus groups providing an in-depth perspective of participants. Here the researcher and the researched interact and are bound together. Quantitative designs (positivist), on the other hand, often use numerical surveys to test hypotheses or generate theories from a large population sample and this requires separation of the researcher from the researched. I have chosen a mixed methods approach for this study for several reasons. First, mixed methods research has a philosophical association with a pragmatic worldview, where the focus is on "what works" rather than a search for 'truth' or 'reality' (Teddlie & Tashakkorie, 2009, p. 7). Instead of focusing on methods, the research centres on and uses a variety of approaches to understand the problem. Here, mixed methods investigations are guided and answered with information that is presented in both narrative and numerical forms and "involves the integration of statistical and thematic data analytic techniques, plus other strategies unique to mixed methods" (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p. 8).

Second, I decided a monomethod analysis, where either quantitative or qualitative approaches are used, may be insufficient to provide a thorough and in depth understanding of how school culture develops, whereas a mixed study would provide different 'perspectives' of school

culture in a variety of settings. I am not convinced by the monomethod purists who suggest that methods cannot be combined. According to the 'Incompatibility Thesis', for example, research paradigms are associated with research methods. If the underlying paradigms are in conflict, then the associated methods cannot be combined (Teddlie & Tashakkorie, 2009, p. 15). Guba, a leading qualitative purist, spelt out the purist position when he said that "accommodation between paradigms is impossible ... we are led to vastly diverse, disparate, and totally antithetical ends" (Guba, 1990, p. 81). By contrast, Neuman (2006, p. 177) said that "the qualitative and quantitative distinction is often overdrawn and presented as a rigid dichotomy. The goal of developing a better understanding and explanation of the social world comes from an appreciation of what each has to offer." This view is supported by Buchanan and Bryman (2007) who identify three emerging trends: widening boundaries, a multiparadigmatic profile and methodological inventiveness. The key advantage is that the quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provide a better understanding of my research problem than if either approach was used on its own.

Although a potentially expensive approach, the use of a mixed methods does not restrict the researchers' choices as typically seen in single quantitative or qualitative studies. Mixed methods provide an opportunity to 'follow' the research question with greater freedom and therefore allow a greater chance that the answer will add to overall knowledge. The collection of multiple data types using different strategies, Johnson and Turner (2003) argue, results in complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses. They refer to this as "the fundamental principle of mixed research" and the main justification for its use as a research method. Mixing methods provides a more complete and comprehensive analysis than qualitative or quantitative approaches alone and allows for an in-depth explanation of unexpected results of use to practitioners. Monomethod studies, on the other hand, limit the remit of the researcher (Johnson & Turner, 2003) and constrain the opportunity to enrich knowledge and extend understanding by considering qualitative or quantitative data in isolation. In summary, the use of mixed methods, now considered a third paradigm (Johnson & Christensen, 2012), offers some significant advantages over a monomethod approach and can, ultimately, improve the quality of the research. As Creswell (2003) concludes "mixed methods has come of age" and provides this study with greater data richness as a result. Finally, since the end of the 'Paradigm Wars' (Howe, 1988; Guba, 1990; Cameron & Miller, 2007), the use of mixed methods has grown apace. In 1990, Stanovich wrote a paper *A Call to an end to the Paradigm Wars* in which he advocated "paradigms yes, incommensurability

no…(incommensurability) has been used to drive a wedge between research frameworks and methods that instead should be used to bolster, rather than to refute, each other" (Stanovich, 1990, p. 228). Then in 2003, Tashakkori and Teddlie published their landmark *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioural Research*, the first comprehensive publication devoted to mixed methods. Since then, Cameron and Miller suggest that the increasing use of mixed methods has caused a "'quiet' revolution due to its focus of resolving tensions between the qualitative and quantitative methodological movements" and has been a "positive reaction to this split personality and to the excesses of both the QUAN [quantitative] and QUAL [qualitative] camps" (Cameron and Miller, 2007). My research is set, therefore, in this evolving and exciting research tradition.

The exact type of mixed methods analysis used will be discussed shortly but, for clarity, I have used the following mixed methods definition. "The class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study" (Burke Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Table 4.1 Example Mixed Methods Research Designs

1 Sequential Mixed Methods	1) Parallel (concurrent) Mixed Methods
a) Sequential Explanatory	2) Sequential Mixed Design
b) Sequential Exploratory	3) Conversion Mixed Design
c) Sequential Transformative	4) Multilevel Mixed Design
2 Concurrent Mixed Methods	5) Fully Integrated Mixed Design
a) Concurrent Triangulation	
b) Concurrent Nested	
c) Concurrent Transformative	
Based on Creswell (2003)	Based on Teddlie and Tashakkori, (2009)

Although there are many research designs in the mixed methods field (Creswell, 2018, p.15), my approach was guided by leading researchers whose designs are summarised in Table 4.1. Creswell's designs are particularly relevant to this study and make available clear options for mixing data to ensure evidence can be captured and analysed independently. My final choice of design was guided by the requirements of the research questions and emphasised the

following considerations:

- should the quantitative and qualitative data be collected sequentially or at the same time?
- should there be equal emphasis on qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis or should one method dominate?
- should the data be collected over more than one-time period?

Table 4.2 Mixed Methods Design

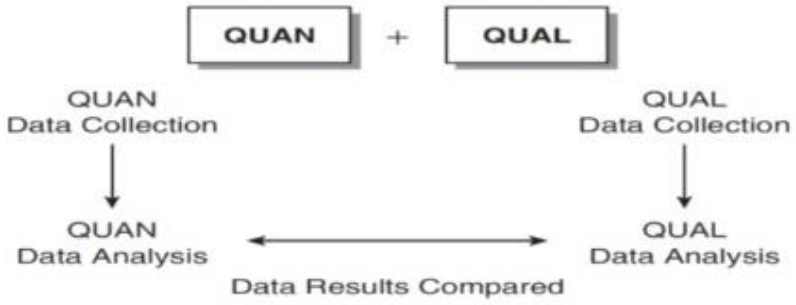
Design Name	Equal Priority	Data Collection Period	Data Collection Period
Concurrent Triangulation	Quantitative - Qualitative	July 2014	July / Sept. 2015

(Adapted from Creswell, 2003)

Since the main research question was based on understanding the development of school culture in several schools, I decided it would be appropriate if the research design were able to combine the advantages of quantitative data (QUAN, trends, large numbers, generalisations) with the advantages of qualitative data (QUAL, detail, small numbers, in-depth) in a format where quantitative and qualitative findings could be merged, compared and interpreted with an equal emphasis on both methods. The method of mixing data outlined in Table 4.2 provide this study with a context and framework to combine qualitative and quantitative methods. The advantage of using a concurrent / convergent / triangulation model lies in the interaction and inferences between the qualitative and quantitative data across time periods and the opportunity for comparison over time, across cases and between participants.

Once the research design had been decided, my next consideration concerned the extent and nature of mixing methods. The procedure for the data collection, therefore followed the plan outlined below and illustrated in Figure 4.1.

- quantitative and qualitative data collected
- quantitative and qualitative data collected at the same time in the research procedure
- quantitative and qualitative data analysed separately
- quantitative and qualitative data combined, analysed and interpreted



Based on Creswell, Plano Clarke, Gutmann and Hanson, 2003.

Figure 4.1 Concurrent (convergent) Triangulation Design

4.7 Population and Sample

Each of the three schools involved in the study comply with Stake's criteria for case selection (Stake, 2005). Each is an 11 -18 mixed comprehensive school, one school being the product of an amalgamation and now in a multi-academy trust (MAT), and the other two schools, initially part of a 'hard' federation (formal school partnership with one governing body) and now part of a multi-academy trust. The schools chosen are representative of secondary schools in England, are all academies whose governing bodies have chosen academy designation. They are therefore in the vanguard of current policy development. The schools were identified from a national list of academy chains and by local authority searches of schools which had amalgamated since 2000. Located for ease of access in the southern half of England, all the schools selected represent a collection of case studies (Quintain) from rural, urban and semi urban settings.

This study is an examination of school culture in three distinct settings. Two of the three schools (B and C) were sponsored academies and therefore joined their MATs, not as equal partners but with a weakened status. Under these circumstances both schools faced two distinct pressures; the compelling drive to improve standards, now the responsibility of a new MAT, its leaders and governance, and the loss of autonomous identity concomitant with the school's sponsored status.

School A is a stable and successful school facing the challenge of a deepening partnership with a less successful school (School B). As the lead school in the MAT, the capacity for raising standards in School B essentially resided in the resources of School A. The scale and urgency of the task to deliver improved standards in the MAT's sponsored academy, created new complexity for the leadership in School A. School B, a school with significant challenges joined a federation with a much more established school and, more recently entered into a multi-academy trust with its federation partner.

School C is the product of an amalgamation between two similar size and underperforming secondary schools and part of a MAT. The relationship between School C and its MAT is arguably less intimate than that between School B and its MAT. Whereas School B joined a MAT which arose out of an existing partnership, School C, with even greater vulnerabilities than School B, had a weaker and more recent bond with its MAT. School C's MAT was larger than School B's and therefore offered greater capacity to support School C.

Since the research was undertaken using a mixed methods approach, there was some variation in how the sample size was determined. There are clearly understood guidelines in the selection of samples and the number of participants involved for the sample to be a valid representation of the population (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 101). Therefore, I used a stratified random sampling for the teacher and questionnaires and based the size of the required sample on guidelines produced by Krejecie and Morgan (1970). In addition, I managed to achieve a sample up to 80% of the teacher population in each case study school and therefore achieved the required sample size to test statistical significance.

4.8 Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter, I outlined the research problem under consideration and suggested a strategy which would effectively contribute to the field of research into school culture and its development in amalgamated schools and multi-academy trusts. Specifically, I set myself the objective of finding out how school culture develops and selected a longitudinal and multi-case concurrent mixed methods design involving the collection of quantitative and qualitative data in three schools over a 12 month period. At a practical level, a mixed methods design provides a sophisticated and comprehensive approach currently at the forefront of educational research and at a procedural level enables a comparison of

perspectives drawn from quantitative and qualitative data. Although my research design was complex and time-consuming, it was chosen because it seemed to offer the most effective means of researching this important area of school improvement. In the next chapter, I consider the intricate details of the data gathering and the methods of data analysis.

Chapter 5

Data Collection and analysis

5.1 Data collection rationale

In Chapter 4, I outlined the purpose of this study, my position as researcher and the methodological assumptions underpinning the research design. This chapter outlines the practicalities of the research, the methods chosen to collect, analyse and interpret the quantitative and qualitative data and the rationale, choice and design of the survey instruments. In addition, I reflect on the ethical considerations presented by the study, its validity and reliability and statistically test the quantitative research tool chosen to gather teacher perceptions of school culture.

The rationale for the selection of the data collection tools was based on the best fit to answer the research questions and the most appropriate method to match the research design. Since a mixed methods approach was used, it was important to select research tools which best exploited the benefits of quantitative and qualitative information. My final selection, explained below and based on three characteristics of social research data (Matthews & Ross, 2010), was a highly structured approach with a 36 point questionnaire combined with four sets of paired interviews in each case study school where, I as researcher, played an active role in the process.

5.2 Research Instruments: questionnaires

5.2.1 Selection of instruments: rationale for the use of questionnaires

I gave careful consideration to the means of quantitative data collection and several options were considered in the light of work undertaken by other researchers (Hobby, 2004; Ainscow, 1994; Maslowski, 2001). An extensive study conducted in Britain by the Hay Group (Hobby, 2004) identified a series of fifteen categories to measure school culture in high and low performing schools. The card sort exercise deployed by the Hay Group, enabled school leaders to identify cultural factors and use these to plan further school improvement measures. The results provided snapshots of cultural 'health' in successful and less successful schools. However, despite its wide remit, the researchers limited their findings to the identification of statements which separated good schools from less good schools; there was

little to indicate the importance of culture or each cultural component nor any consideration of how these varied between groups of individuals within host schools. No account was taken of the impact of school policies on school culture, nor consideration given to changes over time.

In another example, published as *Mapping Change in Schools* (Ainscow,1994), researchers in Cambridge developed a theoretical model devised by Hargreaves (1995) in the form of a board game with four 'players' where each 'player' uses card statements to plot school culture on a grid. Participants were asked to identify a culture they currently recognised in their school and identify a culture they would wish to see. Whilst the board game model created interesting discussion, the qualitative outcomes produced a collated version of individual responses and limited the identification of school culture to one of four absolute models; no mention was made of cultural 'health' or 'strength' and there was no exploration of potential change in teacher views over time.

After reflecting on the restrictions of these quantitative instruments, I decided that a highly structured approach, using a questionnaire, was required to measure teachers' perceptions of school culture in a way that allowed comparisons to be made within and across case study schools. In particular, I chose "highly structured, closed questions because they can generate frequencies of response amenable to statistical treatment" (Oppenheim, 1992, p. 115). The longitudinal dimension of the research design required the selected questionnaire to be used over two time periods, separated by 12 months, with the same group of teachers. Finally, I decided that it was important to assess, as far as possible, the strength of opinion from those completing the questionnaire so included a five-point Likert scale based on the assumption that each item has equal attitudinal value or importance. The advantage of using the Likert measure is that it is easy to complete, produces more than a simple yes / no answer and thereby provides the respondent with the opportunity to express a degree of opinion. The rating scales enable researchers to determine frequencies and correlations and afford users the opportunity to fuse measurement with opinion, quantity and quality (Cohen, 2000). I was also aware, however, that whilst rating scales have their advantages, there is no assumption of equal intervals between the categories, hence the intensity of feeling between 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' may not match the intensity of feeling between 'strongly agree' and

‘agree’ (Cohen, 2007). This problem, I decided would be remedied by information from the qualitative part of the study.

5.2.2 Selection of validated questionnaire

In my initial plan, I designed my own school culture questionnaire based on Sellitz (1976) and Peterson (2000), but later decided that it did not fulfil the requirements for a successful survey instrument owing to the limited number of cultural components measured. There were, however, surveys already in existence, published by established researchers, which were more likely to provide the quantitative data needed to successfully measure teacher perceptions of school culture (Owens & Steinhoff, 1988). I therefore sought a validated questionnaire by re-examining Table 2.1 in Chapter 2 which compared cultural components used by other researchers such as Snyder (1988) Pang (1996) and Maslowski (2001) and finally selected the Gruenert and Valentine (1998) School Culture Survey for the following reasons. Firstly, it measured cultural components similar to other surveys (Snyder, 1988, Pang, 1995). Secondly, I felt that the questions used, with some minor linguistic amendments, would be a good fit for an English audience and thirdly, I considered that Gruenert and Valentine’s conception of school culture best matched my perceptions based on long experience of school leadership. The six school culture factors identified and measured by Gruenert and Valentine (1998) are:

1. Collaborative Leadership
2. Teacher Collaboration
3. Professional Development
4. Unity of Purpose
5. Collegial Support
6. Learning Partnership.

The original school culture pilot survey was given to 634 teachers in Indiana in 1998 but what began as a 79-item survey was reduced to 35 items using a Varimax rotation, an item-reduction method. The item-reduction process produced a six-factor instrument of 35 items (Appendix 4). These six factors were named according to the nature of the items each contained. Internal correlations and Cronbach's alphas were established for the six-factor instrument and validity was established in the United States in conjunction with the use of the survey by members of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (Howard & Keefe, 1991).

5.2.3 Permissions and amendments

Whilst the Gruenert and Valentine (1998) questionnaire provided an effective means of measuring school culture, I had some reservations about the vocabulary since it was designed for a North American audience. I also noted the lack of a single all-encompassing question asking teachers about their perception of school culture, a feature if amended, that would strengthen the research findings. I requested from Professor Valentine and Professor Gruenert, (Appendix 5) and gained their agreement to make minor linguistic amendments to fit a British audience as well as permission to add a 36th question about school culture.[8] Whilst many of my suggested amendments made no change to the meaning of questions in the survey, several suggestions required discussion and agreement.[9]

5.2.4 Validated questionnaire trial

Despite the decision to use Gruenert and Valentine's already validated questionnaire, I decided to conduct a further trial to test the success of the amendments agreed and establish if further changes were necessary. The trial survey (Appendix 7) was administered in my own school, a large 11 – 18 amalgamated comprehensive, in May 2014. All teachers were asked to complete and return forms within a week. 61 forms were returned out of a possible 76 (80%) and data was analysed using the statistical package SPSS. I also attached a short survey to ten of the trial participants and their responses indicated that the questionnaire was ready to use. Despite the validation of Gruenert and Valentine's original survey, because of the minor changes I had made to some of the vocabulary, I decided to re-test the internal consistency of

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[8] Permission to use the Gruenert and Valentine survey was granted as shown in Appendix 6 and the amendments made to the questionnaire are shown in Appendix 8

- [9] The addition of a 36th question asking for a general overall perspective of school culture. The rationale for this was to provide a summative view of school culture to complement the overall perspective of culture acquired from combining answers to all the questions.
- The use of the word vison rather than mission in question 5, 12 and 27. This suggestion was made since I felt that British teachers were more likely to feel more familiar with the concept of their school's vision rather than mission.
- The use of the phase "school leaders" rather than "leaders" or "administrators" in questions: 2, 11, 28, and 32. I suggested this amendment to ensure greater clarity about the context of leadership
- The use of the phrase "my faculty / department "rather than "the faculty." I suggested this amendment to provide clarity about context.

the questionnaire, examining the relationship between each factor, using Cronbach's alpha test. Cronbach's alpha is an index of reliability associated with the variation accounted for by the true score of the 'underlying construct' and it is the hypothetical variable that is being measured (Hatcher, 1994). The Alpha co-efficient ranges in value from 0 to 1 and may be used to describe the reliability of factors extracted from dichotomous (questions with two possible answers) and/or multi-point formatted questionnaires or scales (rating scale: 1 = poor, 5 = excellent). The higher the score, the more reliable the generated scale. Nunnaly (1978) has determined 0.7 to be an acceptable reliability co-efficient but lower thresholds are also sometimes used in the literature.

Table 5.1: Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	59	96.7
	Excluded	2	3.3
	Total	61	100.0

Table 5.2: Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.928	.927	36

Table 5.1 shows the number of valid cases, with no missing data on the selected variables. In this case nearly 97% of responses are valid. Table 5.2 lists the Cronbach's alpha and an alpha based on standardised items. The Cronbach alpha score of 0.928 indicates very good internal consistency (above 0.70) for the questionnaire in general and its 36 elements. In addition, Appendix 9 demonstrates that the individual Cronbach score (Cronbach Alpha if item deleted) for each of the questions was between 0.924 and 0.930 (highlighted in Appendix 9). This shows that removing any of the questions would not significantly enhance the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The outcome of the reliability analysis indicated that no further revision was needed beyond that already described and the questionnaire was used for the full study.

Principal axis factor analysis with varimax rotation was also conducted to assess the underlying structure for the 35 items of the school culture questionnaire. (Question 36 was removed since it was not designed to fit one of the cultural components.) Six factors were requested, based on the items designed to index six constructs: Collaborative Leadership; Professional Development; Collegial Support; Teacher Collaboration; Unity of Purpose; and Learning Partnership. After rotation, the first factor accounted for 21% of the variance and the second factor accounted for 30% of the variance. The first factor which identifies Collaborative Leadership had strong loadings on the first 14 items. The second factor, which identifies Professional Development, had high loadings on four items. "School Leadership value teachers' ideas (CL2) had its highest loading for the first factor and "the school values overall improvement" (PD30) had the highest loading for the second factor. Factor three, Collegial Support had a high loading for four items whilst factors four, Teacher Collaboration and five, Unity of Purpose both had high loadings for three items. The final factor, Learning Partnership had a high loading for one factor.

Table 5.3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.929
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3278.124
	df	595
	Sig.	.000

Finally, a statistical procedure (Kaiser-Mayer Olkin Measure of sampling adequacy), shown in Table 5.3, was conducted to measure the quality of the correlations between variables. The KMO test scored 0.929, which, since it was close to 1, showed that there were enough items for each factor whilst the Bartlett test of Sphericity measure was less than 0.05 indicating that the correlation matric is sufficiently different from an identity matrix and that variances are equal across groups or samples. Thus, the factor analysis results applied to the amended Gruenert and Valentine (1998) questionnaire provided support for the validity of the six cultural concepts in the questionnaire. Secure in the knowledge that the amended Gruenert and Valentine (1998) questionnaire was able to measure teacher perceptions of school culture and its components effectively, and the terminology used was clearly defined[10] (Gruenert

1. [10] Collaborative Leadership (principles value teachers' ideas) measures the degree to which school leaders establish and maintain collaborative relationships with school staff. School leaders completely

1998), I developed the analysis to include a further series of variables which would test a range of hypotheses relating to the individual context of each participant. The objective was to ascertain if perceptions of school culture were influenced by the participants' age; gender; number of years spent in their current school, number of years in teaching and role / position in school. The outcomes of this analysis are presented in Chapter 9.

5.2.5 Quantitative survey instrument: administration

The search for a suitable quantitative tool with which to measure school culture and its components began with my naive assumption that a questionnaire would be straightforward to design, produce, test and administer (Fink, 2006). It soon became apparent, however, that the use of the Gruenert and Valentine (1998) survey, with some linguistic amendments, would be more effective.

Once the research questionnaire had been completed and tested, I contacted the participating headteachers of the case study schools and agreed the method for the distribution of the questionnaire in phase one of the study. Questionnaires were distributed to all the teaching staff by the school secretaries in each school for anonymous and voluntary completion and requests were made to return copies to the school office. School secretaries were asked to

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value ideas of the teachers, seek input, engage staff in decision-making and trust the professional judgment of the staff.

2. Professional Development (making the most of oneself as a professional) measures the degree to which teachers seek ideas from seminars, colleagues and any other professional resources to maintain current knowledge about instructional practices.

3. Teacher Collaboration (teachers are expected to work together to share pedagogical information) measures the degree to which teachers engage in constructive dialogues to build up the vision of the school. Moreover, it brings more experienced and less experienced teachers closer together and reinforces the competence and confidence of the less experienced ones.

4. Collegial Support (teachers are willing to help out when there is a problem) measures the degree to which teachers work together effectively, trust and assist each other as they work to accomplish the tasks of the school.

5. Unity of Purpose (demonstrates how the mission statement influences teaching) measures the degree to which teachers work towards the common mission of the school.

6. Learning Partnership (teachers and parents have common expectations towards student's performance) measures the amount of time parents and teachers communicate with each other about students' performance. Parents trust the teachers and students generally accept the responsibility for their own schooling.

collect completed questionnaires and I visited each school to take personal delivery and thank those who had assisted. Consent forms were filed to maintain confidentiality and all data was compiled according to school, encrypted and stored securely. This process of quantitative data collection was repeated twelve months later in the summer of 2015 following the same method.

The first part of this chapter has charted my quantitative research journey toward production of a validated research tool, for a British audience, capable of measuring teacher perceptions of school culture and six school culture components as identified by Gruenert and Valentine (1998). In the next section I examine the development of the qualitative research instrument including the rationale for its selection and means of data collection and analysis

5.3 Research instruments: interviews

5.3.1 Selection of instruments: rationale for the use of interviews

In this section, I return to the data collection methods available and explore the rationale for the choice of a research tool for qualitative data, considering a variety of instruments including interviews, focus groups, observations and visual analysis.

I decided to use standardized open-ended interviews, rather than other data collection methods for several reasons. (Auerbach, 2007). First, summary data from interviews is available for inspection by those who may wish to use the findings of the study. Second, the interview process is highly focused, making responses easier to compare (Quinn Patton, 2002). Interviews enable exploration of views, experiences and motivations of individuals to provide an understanding of perceptions deeper than those obtained from purely quantitative methods (Davis, et al., 2011). I therefore considered the advantages and disadvantages of using one to one interviews, paired interviews or focus groups.

I quickly discounted using one to one interviews because I wanted to collect the views of four groups of teachers in one day and interviewing in pairs provided an opportunity to collect a variety of views in a timely fashion. I also considered the use of focus groups since they might illicit a range of detailed and perhaps contrasting views about school culture and therefore provide a rich and informative complement to the quantitative data. However, whilst acknowledging the advantages of focus groups, there were also specific disadvantages.

For example, focus groups might inhibit individual teachers feeling comfortable in expressing their views especially when those views oppose the thoughts of other participants. In addition, the larger the group, the greater the potential for the discussion to lose focus and become fragmented as participants may take the discussion in a different direction. Finally, whilst focus groups are economical in gathering data, they are also much more costly to organise in school time and there was a risk that headteachers would not agree to a whole group of staff possibly missing lessons to take part in the research. Therefore, I selected paired interviews as the main qualitative research tool because of the opportunity to explore school culture and its components in depth in a personalised and interactive environment where participants would feel safe to express their views to me and each other. Often referred to as dyad, paired interviews were much easier to set up, enabled teachers with similar responsibilities to discuss issues openly, where their voice could be heard and supplied a means to discover how teachers felt and why they held their views. In short, "the use of paired interviews would lead to an interview process that is more continuous, iterative, interactive, dynamic, holistic, and above all synergistic" (Wilson, Onwuegbuzie & Manning. 2016).

As a researcher, I adopted an evaluative approach to the qualitative aspect of the research based on the work of Matthews and Ross (2010) since I wanted to explore with participants how school culture manifested itself and developed in each of the case study schools. I also decided to be active in the interview process because I wanted to gather evaluations of school culture in some detail and to ensure that interviews were kept on track (Matthews & Ross, 2010). I chose a semi-structured approach where the topics and questions are set but where questions were open ended. Finally, I decided to be an active, rather than passive researcher (Matthews & Ross, 2010), so that I could prompt and probe the respondents about their views of school culture; how it might have changed over the period of the study and how leadership strategies may have affected their perceptions. In short, my aim was to develop the 'ideal' interview which met several quality criteria identified by Kvale (1996). These included verifying interpretations of the participants' answers; encouraging spontaneity and depth of response and providing an opportunity for the interviewer to follow up and clarify the meaning of the relevant aspects of the answers (Kvale,1996, p. 145 in Cohen, et al., 2018).

5.3.2 Rationale for creation and selection of questions

I chose the standard open-ended question because it is flexible and allows the interviewer to probe for clarification. This style of questioning seemed more likely to produce answers of depth rather than the fixed alternative approach, or extent of agreement or disagreement approach, identified by Cohen in his "three main kinds of items used in the construction of schedules" (Cohen, et al., 2018, p. 513).

Using a standard open-ended approach, wording or sequence of questions was determined in advance based on Gruenert and Valentine's school culture components. The outcome of the first set of interviews in each case study school successfully revealed teacher perceptions of school culture including the beliefs, attitudes and experiences of individuals; they provided a rich source of information about the development of a concept which is generally considered difficult to define. Interviews in year two, re-examined views about school culture and explored whether teacher perceptions had changed, and if so why. Interviews explored both internal and external factors, and strategies adopted by school leaders.

To support the use of a standard open-ended approach, I decided that questions needed to be indirect rather than direct to encourage an open response, an idea taken from Cohen's four component model of formatting questions (Cohen, et al., 2018). Since I also wanted to evaluate teachers' opinions of school culture, its components and how this developed in their school over time, I took careful note of Quinn Patton's (2002) advice that "the truly open ended question permits those being interviewed to take whatever direction and use whatever words they want to express what they have to say" (Quinn Patton, 2002, p. 354).

5.3.3 Interview questions trial

A representative sample of questions based on each of Gruenert and Valentine's (1998) cultural components were trialed with the teachers who had agreed to provide feedback from the initial questionnaire. Each of the trial questions was based on a suggested format for open-ended questions which used the phrases: "how do you feel about…. or what is your opinion of…." (Quinn Patton, 2002, p. 354). The benefits of trialing questions meant that it provided a feel for the interview process, allowed me to assess the productivity of each

question and highlighted any questions that may be redundant, confusing or in need of revision (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Gillham, 2000; Gillham, 2005). In the trialing process, based on guidance provided by Gillham (2000), I asked participants for feedback on the questions and the way they were phrased (Gillham 2000). In the trial, respondents were asked to consider a sample of questions for interview round 1 and interview round 2 of the study based on school culture and its components. I also asked participants to indicate the extent of any change in perceptions of school culture over time and any strategies used by school leaders. or events at school, which may have affected their view of school culture. In particular, participants were asked to indicate those questions which were simple to understand and more likely to provide a substantive response. The feedback from the respondents suggested that I needed to clarify the meaning of each cultural component prior to asking a question and prepare supplementary questions to probe for examples or details of factors which may have encouraged a development or caused perceptions to change. The full interview schedule is outlined in Appendix 11.

5.3.4 Organisation of interviews

The respondents were volunteers in each school who agreed to be interviewed in pairs based upon their role and responsibility. In this way, it was possible to obtain perceptions from key groups: senior leaders, middle leaders, experienced teachers and newly qualified teachers (NQT). The selection of the pairs was also based on their availability and this was organised in each school by the headteacher's personal assistant. To avoid the need for a school to cover the class of the teacher participating, each of the interviews took place in the summer term of 2014 and 2015 after public examinations when most teachers gained time. Owing to the number of events taking place at the end of the summer term, one school headteacher asked to delay the second round of interviews until September 2015, I agreed.

Prior to each paired interview, participants were provided with a clear rationale for their participation, information about the purpose of the interviews, and an estimate of how long each interview would take. Participants were asked if they would be comfortable if each interview was recorded in order to capture a full picture of their views (see Chapter 5.8 Ethical considerations). Each school generously provided refreshments and a suitable room for the interviews to take place. At the beginning of each interview, I thanked each

participant for agreeing to take part, explained the purpose of the interview, stressed the confidential nature of the interview and asked if they had any questions. I explained why I preferred to record each interview and how it would be transcribed and analysed. I pointed out that I had a series of questions about school culture, that the interview would take approximately 40 minutes and I was happy to provide any clarification and answer questions at the end. Finally, at the end of the year 1 interview, I asked each participant if they would agree to take part again for a follow up interview in twelve months to provide analysis of change. All participants consented to have their views used as part of my study and agreed to take part in the follow up interviews.

The first set of interviews in the three case study schools took place in the summer term 2014. Four pairs of teachers, (two senior leaders, two middle leaders, two experienced teachers and two newly qualified teachers) were interviewed in each school. At the end of the interview process, the recordings of the interviews were copied electronically and stored securely. A further copy was made, and all 12 interviews were subsequently transcribed. This same process was repeated between July – September 2015 so that, at the end of the process, 24 interviews had been completed, transcribed and analysed. As a sole part-time researcher, the transcription, coding and analysis of 24 paired interviews was a significant undertaking but the interview transcriptions were completed by the summer of 2016 and detailed analysis followed.

5.4 Qualitative data analysis

5.4.1 Coding, themes and constructs

The challenge of qualitative data analysis is to reduce large quantities of information into a manageable form from which findings can be deduced and research questions addressed. In this study, the qualitative research challenge was to analyse 24 paired interviews where the average interview included 4,000 – 5,000 words. The volume and complexity of data, therefore, required careful consideration of the reduction methods adopted to ensure all aspects of the qualitative evidence were captured. A key feature used in this study, and developed later in the chapter, is the use of themes and constructs, where themes are abstract

summaries which emerge from the data and codes, and constructs are abstract concepts that organise a group of themes by fitting them into a theoretical framework.

Rather than restrict my qualitative data analysis to a specific data reduction method such as those advocated by grounded theory and perhaps, thereby, limit the opportunities afforded by the transcripts of 24 paired interviews, I decided to use the "shameless eclectic" method advocated by Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014, p. 9/10), in which a complete repertoire of codes is used in order to provide a best fit for the data. I was also influenced by Quinn Patton's (2002) view that, because each qualitative study is unique, each analytical approach needs to be tailored accordingly.

The research literature is full of guidance about how qualitative data can be analysed but, as Patton suggests, there is no prescribed formula or recipe recommended (Patton, 2002), a view also supported by Miles and Huberman: "we have few agreed on canons for qualitative data analysis, in the sense of shared ground rules for drawing conclusions and verifying their sturdiness" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p.16). Miles, et al., (2014) refers to 20 different quality research genres including content analysis which pays meticulous attention to every single word, and grounded theory which uses a series of cumulative coding cycles. Not only is there no single recommended coding method for qualitative analysis, there is debate as to whether coding should be used at all. Performance ethnography and narrative enquiry, for example, rely on interpretivist methodologies whilst others consider coding mechanical and futile (Saldana, 2009, p. 47). Saldana, on the other hand prefers "pragmatic eclecticism" where initial coding is reviewed to find an approach which produces a substantive analysis (Saldana, 2009, p. 47).

Another advantage of the qualitative data analysis approach taken in this study is the 'substantive significance' method of data collection and analysis, which assesses if an observed effect is large enough to be meaningful. It has been summarised by Quinn Patton (2002) as follows: "if quantitative data requires an analysis and understanding of statistical significance it follows that quantitative data can be judged by its 'substantive significance' (Quinn Patton, 2002, p. 466). 'Substantive significance', therefore, is crucial in determining the substance of qualitative data and the importance of themes, patterns and categories that are derived from the data.

Unlike quantitative researchers who have statistical tests to assess the significance of an observation or pattern, qualitative researchers must rely on answers to key questions in order to test statistical significance:

- how solid and coherent is the evidence in support of the findings?
- how does the evidence deepen our understanding of the topic being studied?
- how useful is the evidence? (Quinn Patton 2002, p. 467)

Additionally, in assessing the importance and meaning of the data, qualitative researchers are also reliant on three further factors: their own experience and judgement, the actual responses generated and those who read and reviewed the results. My design, therefore, whilst taking note of statistical significance, was underpinned by an approach which allows inference to emerge; data were compared over the two time periods to establish patterns or clusters from which conclusions may be drawn.

5.4.2 Rationale for the section of codes

The coding methods used in this study were a product of a selection process advocated by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003, p. 44) where the research questions were kept close at hand as the interview transcripts were being read. Key questions that remained prominent as each transcript was read were:

- does it relate to the main research concern?
- does it provide a better understanding of the participants?
- does it seem important at this stage even if it is difficult to say why? (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 48)

Using this technique, it was easier to decide if a piece of text were relevant to the study and then to determine the coding methods that matched the content and context of the transcripts.

In this study, I chose three coding methods based on Flick's (2009) checklist and further developed by Saldana (2009). Since the criteria for coding needs to be related to the original research questions, the following coding methods were used:

- grammatical methods: attribute and magnitude coding
- elemental methods: descriptive, in vivo and process coding
- affective methods: emotion, values and evaluation coding

The rationale for selecting each of the above was as follows:

(Grammatical methods) Attribute coding is suitable for most qualitative studies but is particularly useful for this study where there are multiple participants across case study schools (24 paired teacher interviews). Magnitude coding is also useful since it adds texture to codes to indicate intensity or frequency when referring to a particular issue. Some teachers who were interviewed, for example, held strong opinions about school culture and it has been important to reflect this in the coding process.

(Elemental methods) Descriptive coding is appropriate for most qualitative studies since it summarises the basic topic of a passage of data. In this way it is possible to accurately record what is being talked about and thus provides a "basic vocabulary" of the data (Turner, 1994 p. 199). Similarly, In Vivo coding is appropriate for most qualitative studies since it provides a mechanism to "honour the participant's voice" (Saldana, 2009, p. 74). In this study, the use of the participants' actual words further deepens our understanding of their perceptions and together with magnitude coding, emphasises key aspects of the data. The final elemental method I used was process coding which was useful in identifying actions, interactions and emotion in response to situations or problems (Saldana, 2009, p. 77). The analysis of school culture through teacher perceptions and how this may or may not have changed in the case study schools required a code to document a basic activity and identify actions that have resulted from changing situations. Process codes enabled actions to be documented and are usually gerund based.

(Affective methods) The collection of coding methods which investigate subjective qualities of human experience are known as affective methods and have been useful in this study because of its focus on teacher perceptions. Emotion coding has been used for example, since it labels emotions experienced or recalled and assists in the analysis of intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships and perceptions. In addition, values coding has been useful since it identifies a participants' values, attitudes or beliefs and therefore has provided a basis to explore perceptions of school culture and how this may or may not have changed in individual cases. Values coding has also been particularly of benefit since it enables exploration of cultural values and how these affect actions and opinions. The final affective method employed to analyse the interview transcripts has been evaluation coding and this has provided an effective means of assigning judgements about school policies and decision as perceived by teachers. Whilst there may be many forms of evaluation including summative, outcome and formative, the ability to code from "the evaluative perspective of the researcher or from the qualitative commentary provided by participants" has provided the research with a deeper insight into teacher perceptions **(**Saldana, 2009, p. 98).

5.5 Qualitative data analysis: summary constructs and role ordered matrices

A key objective of this study was to obtain a full and deep understanding of school culture from the viewpoint of participating teachers. I therefore used two specific analytical and presentational tools to evaluate the qualitative findings: a table of key themes and theoretical constructs and a role ordered matrix. The use of the role ordered matrix will be explained shortly, but first I will outline the rationale for the themes and constructs

approach as shown in the blank example Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: School culture component – Summary Themes and Theoretical Constructs

Summary themes	Year 1	Year 2
Theoretical construct		

Once coding had been completed, I used the themes generated by the paired interviews to create a theoretical construct, and ultimately a theoretical narrative. These constructs emerged from the data and were not assumed prior to data collection. Thus, the goal was to develop theoretical constructs and to formulate a theory about the relations between them (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2006). To achieve the coherence defined by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) "the patterns, concepts, categories, properties, and dimensions must fit together to create the constructs, which must tell the story of the phenomena" (Thompson, 2011, p. 79). This coherence is evident in Table 5.4 and more complete versions in subsequent chapters. This table presents the story of each school culture component from the viewpoint of the participants. It records changes over time; the impact of internal and external factors and shows how the actions of school leaders affected these perspectives. The result, as presented in the following chapters, is a story of school cultural change unique to each school and supported by an evidence base which throws light on cultural development, both positive and negative.

Another key aspect of the research was to investigate whether perceptions of school culture within each case and across cases were dependent on the role or responsibility of the teacher as suggested by Miles and Huberman (Miles & Huberman,1994, p. 122). Therefore, I decided to use a role ordered matrix (see Table 5.5) to track the perceptions of paired groups of teachers over time and to assess their view of internal or external factors and strategies adopted by school leaders which may have impacted their views of school culture and its components (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). In this way, I was able to build a case-by-case analysis of perceptions according to role in each school and assess differences between groups and the reasons for those differences. In each of the case

study chapters and in the cross-case analysis, the data in each matrix show each group,[11] a brief summary of the analysis, including perceptions of school culture; how this was manifest or apparent in each school, factors and strategies that affected school cultural health and perceptions of change over time. "In short, a matrix of this sort lets us see how perspectives differ according to role as well as within role" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 125).

Table 5.5: Role Ordered Matrix – School Culture Component

Position in School	Perception of Unity of Purpose in year one and two	Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change	Perception of change over time
SLT			
ML			
ET			
NQT			

5.6 Combining qualitative and quantitative data

The rationale for mixing qualitative and quantitative methods has been fully considered in Chapter 4, but now the survey instruments have been discussed, it is necessary to explain how methods were mixed. Miles and Huberman (1994) see the qualitative – quantitative linkage at three levels: quantizing; distinct data types and overall study design. The quantizing level converts qualitative data into a rank or scale. Distinct data types, on the other hand, compare qualitative information and numerical data; overall study design presents more complex mixing of methods. In this study, I chose qualitative and quantitative methods as illustrated by Miles and Huberman's distinct data types where there was continuous collection of both sorts of data. Here data were analysed independently in separate stages and the same questionnaire used on two occasions separated by a 12 month period. The same questions were asked in the paired interviews with an additional emphasis on identifying change, lack of change or continuity, in the second round of interviews. The separate analysis of each data collection enriched the information collected for each case study, provided a multiple perspective and deeper understanding of school culture and enabled analysis of change and continuity. In this way, it has been possible within each case study and across

[11] (SLT – Senior Leaders, ML – Middle Leaders, ET – Experienced Teachers, NQT – Newly Qualified Teachers),

case studies, to triangulate findings, and address the main research questions through a comparison of teacher perceptions of school culture over 12 months.

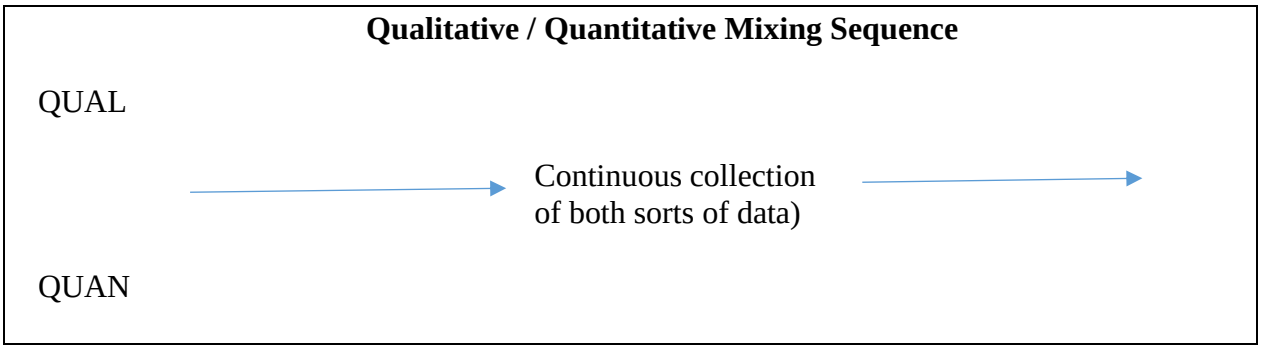

Figure 5.1: Illustrative Designs Linking Qualitative and Quantitative Data (adapted from Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 41).

5.7 Validity and Reliability

Every effort has been made in this study, from the design to reporting stage, to ensure high levels of research validity and reliability. At the design stage, a timescale of 12 months between data collection points was established and a research focus and selection of instruments was chosen. At the data-gathering and analysis stages, the use of case studies and clear explanation to participants helped to minimise non-returns of questionnaires and secured agreement of interview participants to be re-interviewed in year two of the study. Interviews were standardised, and the questionnaire selected for use was chosen for its accessibility and ease of completion. At the final stage, findings have been faithfully reported and all claims supported with evidence. This process has included two presentations to conferences in 2017 and 2018 where details of the research were discussed and questions taken from the audience. (Birks, 2017, 2018).

The choice of a mixed methods approach has made efforts to secure high levels of validity more complex owing to the need to meet the validities in both quantitative and qualitative research traditions. In quantitative research the importance of validity is long established (Onwuegbuzie & Burke Johnson, 2006). In this study checks were made to ensure the data were free from errors to uphold internal validity and provide a level of external validity which would allow wider generalisations to be made. Issues of internal and external validity, it could be argued are more complex for qualitative data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

In this study, the in-depth responses of participants over two data collection points, the gathering of 24 sets of interviews, and recording information through the voices of participants has, I believe, helped to secure high levels of qualitative validity, both internal and external. To ensure high levels of construct validity, meaningful categories, themes and constructs were created, and this further ensured the reliability of the findings.

The challenges presented by a mixed methods approach were not underestimated and consideration given to Onwuegbuzie & Burke Johnson's (2006) use of the term *legitimation,* rather than validity, to ensure acceptance by both quantitative and qualitative research traditions. *Legitimation*, which Onwuegbuzie & Burke Johnson see as a process rather than an outcome, can be applied to all aspects of a research study. For the purposes of this study, the quantitative and qualitative validities addressed throughout the research potentially meets the requirements of Onwuegbuzie & Burke Johnson's Multiple Validates Legitimation, although I could argue that elements of Commensurability Legitimation are also evident in the repeated re-visiting of the data to produce a third viewpoint, additional to the qualitative and quantitative outcomes.

Finally, efforts throughout this research process were made to ensure high levels of reliability, consistency and replicability over time. Cohen et al., (2018) suggests reliability in terms of quantitative data has three aspects: stability, equivalence and internal consistency. In this study, the same questionnaire was applied throughout, carefully administered over two time-periods 12 months apart. Correlation coefficients were calculated, and similar data produced by similar respondents. The reliability of equivalence requirement was met by using the same quantitative collection tool in each case study and internal consistency was met by conducting a Chronbach alpha test. Efforts to ensure high levels of reliability of qualitative data included: use of a structured interview approach, minimising researcher bias, avoiding leading interview questions, and not looking for responses to validate a preconceived notion. As much as possible, I tried to ensure that the recorded data was a true representation of the participants in a natural setting.

The research also benefited from the large number of interview participants who agreed to be re-interviewed in year two of the study. In total, for example, 24 teachers from three schools were interviewed in year one of the research. All year one teachers agreed to be re-interviewed in year two if they were still available. At the time of the second round of

interviews, 17 of the 24 (71%) original teachers were available and agreed to be interviewed. Six of the original eight teachers were re-interviewed in school A, six in school B and 5 in school C.

5.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are central to educational research. Research should be conducted with care and consideration, the rights of the participants taken into account and data produced treated in a sensitive and confidential manner. Throughout the trial and full study, I have consistently taken note of the four main ethical principles for researchers: harm to participants; informed consent; invasion of privacy and deception (Long in Johnson & Long, 2007, p. 47). At all stages, I reassured participants of their anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. In line with Diener and Crandall's (1978) four elements in the process of informed consent, all participants were volunteers and briefed on the objectives and rationale of the research study gave their full consent.

My initial plan had been to use my own school as one of the case studies, but upon further reflection, I decided only to test data collection instruments as an insider researcher and not to use the data collected for the main research. For the full study, I worked with teachers in three 11 -18 comprehensive secondary academies and received written agreements to participate (Appendix 12).

In each school, I used well-established procedures and processes to ensure all ethical considerations were taken into account based upon the British Education Research Association's (BERA) Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2018) and the Ethical Framework Checklist originally created by Seedhouse (1998) and further developed by Wilson (2009). I used the relevant parts of the summary checklist also developed by Wilson (2009). The teacher questionnaire, for example, was voluntary and an explanatory letter accompanied the distribution of the questionnaire to reassure teachers that their responses would be anonymous and findings confidential to the school. Permission to use the questionnaire and to interview teachers was sought in advance. All participants were invited to share in the outcomes of the research once it was complete and I sent the headteachers of each school a short summary of the quantitative findings. I offered to present a more detailed report if they considered that helpful.

5.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have built upon the philosophical and methodological assumptions underpinning the research design by considering and explaining the rationale and practical approaches in the selection of the survey instruments and the ethical and organisational aspects of gathering, analysing and interpreting data. I have explained the choice of survey tools, which were selected on well-founded and established research principles to ensure that statistical techniques will validate quantitative methods and outcomes. I have outlined the tried and tested means of analyse and presented the qualitative aspects of this mixed methods investigation.

In the next three chapters, I use the amended Gruenert and Valentine (1998) questionnaire and semi-structured paired interviews to present the findings from the three case studies and, in a further chapter, later compare findings from all the schools involved in the study. In Chapters 6 and 7, I examine the development of school culture in Schools A and B. Although separate, Schools, A and B are part of the same multi-academy trust (formerly federation) with a single governing body. Whilst I analyse culture in each school separately, I am also interested in the relationship between the schools and examine if teachers perceive an identifiable joint academy or MAT culture. In Chapter 8, I consider school culture in a large comprehensive school which is the product of two school amalgamations and assess how its culture has been influenced by the merger process.

Chapter 6

Case Study School A

6.1 School A context

In this chapter, I consider the creation and development of school culture in the first case study school. First, I outline School A's context and its recent history. I explain its decision to partner with its neighbouring secondary school, School B. In the second section, I examine the quantitative and qualitative outcomes to show the development of school culture during this period of change, and examine how this was affected by leadership strategies and other internal and external factors.

With approximately 1700 students on roll, School A is a much larger than average co-educational 11-18 comprehensive school in a market town in England. It is located in a prosperous neighbourhood and has always had a good local reputation. It was opened as a secondary modern school in the 1960s but subsequently became a comprehensive and expanded extensively. Over 98 per cent of students in School A have English as their first language; two per cent have special educational needs and seven per cent are entitled to free school meals. School A does not serve a 'deprived' community. The buildings look tired despite efforts to make good. Typical of many British schools, School A has suffered from a lack of funding and cuts to its capital development fund.

The 2002 Education Act allowed governors at both School A and a neighbouring secondary school to create a single federation of two secondary schools sharing leadership, governance, teaching and other education resources. The federation included a local nursery and small secondary alternative provision for students with behaviour and emotional needs. In due course, governors at School A and School B took advantage of provisions in the 2010 Academies Act to leave local authority control and become a DfE funded independent academy. Subsequently, School A and B strengthened their federation and formed a multi-academy trust and, shortly before this research began, School A was judged to be a good school in an Ofsted Inspection.

During the period of the research, School A's staff and student population was stable. The headteacher of School A had previously been deputy there and jointly led the local federation with the headteacher of School B. With only two seconday schools locally, the success and development of School A and School B were inextricably linked and rather than compete, governors had decided to work in close collaboration for the benefit of students in both schools. Each headteacher was responsible for outcomes in each of their own schools but also had a specific leadership responsibility in each partner school. This enabled the MAT to provide whole town leadership and to co-ordinate strategy for the provision of secondary education.

The quantitative and qualitative outcomes for each Gruenert and Valentine factor are considered individually as part of the cumulative analysis of school culture over twelve months; the role ordered matrices provide information on leadership strategies and other emerging factors. The overall analysis is accompanied by an assessment of school cultural health and, later in the chapter, the identification and creation of a theoretical narrative for School A based on the themes and constructs from the qualitative data. In this way, I present the story of School A through its educational journey and its interaction with school culture over 12 months. First, I begin with the quantitative and qualitative analysis of each cultural factor commencing with Collaborative Leadership.

6.2 Collaborative Leadership

6.2.1 Collaborative Leadership – Quantitative analysis year one / two

The individual scores for Collaborative Leadership in School A provided a standard deviation which was less than half of the mean, indicating that the means for Collaborative Leadership were good indicators of an average. Table 6.1 shows items of note particularly strong or weak responses. Whilst perceptions based on mean scores were positive about the school's approach to Collaborative Leadership in year one, mean responses to CL 34 and CL 20 were particularly strong.[12] Seven of the eleven modal responses were also strong and indicate that

[12] CL 34 Teachers are encouraged to share ideas.
CL 20 Teachers are kept informed on current issues in the school.

Figure 6.1: Collaborative Leadership in year one and two

teachers had an overall favourable view of Collaborative Leadership. Teachers responded well to a series of issues: trust and praise for staff; providing opportunities for teachers to work together and to be involved in decision making; ensuring teachers were kept up to date with current issues and protecting time for planning. These are also shown in Figure 6.1 above.

Table 6.1: Collaborative Leadership – Teacher perceptions quantitative outcome

Year one		Year two	
Mean	Statement	Mean	Statement
3.93	Teachers are encouraged to share ideas (CL 34)	**4.27**	Teachers are encouraged to share ideas. (CL 34)
3.84	Teachers are kept informed on current issues in the school (CL 20)	**4.20**	Teachers are kept informed on current issues in the school (CL 20)
3.78	School leaders protect teaching and planning time (CL32)	**3.98**	School Leaders value teachers' ideas (CL 2)

Survey results from year two indicated a strongly improving perception of Collaborative Leadership. All eleven questions showed a more positive mean score than the previous year. Responses to CL 2, 18 and 22 produced an improved mean score greater than 0.5.[13]

[13]CL 2 School Leaders value teachers' ideas.
CL 18 Leaders in our school facilitate teachers working together.

Importantly, responses to CL 20 and CL 34 scored 4.20 and 4.27 respectively were very positive and therefore indicated support for the actions of school leaders to improve Collaborative Leadership. On the other hand, perceptions were weakest in response to question CL 22 [14] although there was a noticeable strengthening of this factor in year two.

The modal scores in year two were all positive and standard deviation measures were less than half of the mean indicating that mean scores were a good representative measure. With a positive summative analysis of Collaborative Leadership, I now turn to analyse the qualitative data.

6.2.2 Collaborative Leadership – Qualitative analysis year one / two

Analysis of paired interviews confirm a positive view of Collaborative Leadership. Three of the four groups had a positive perception with one middle leader commenting "it's about everyone in the school having their opinion as well ...collaborative leadership is actually very good here at this school". Frequent reference was made to opportunities to give feedback although one experienced teacher believed that the federated relationship of Schools A and B limited School A's development. Participants referred to leadership strategies to develop collaboration across the MAT. One experienced teacher considered the strategy one-sided, "I think it's one way. I think from my point of view it goes from us to them". There was agreement about perceptions of Collaborative Leadership between groups despite their different roles with the school.

Interviews supported the quantitative analysis that Collaborative Leadership improved over the time period of the research. All groups appreciated the sensitivity and response of senior leaders to changes initiated largely by external factors in the partner school. This had improved Collaborative Leadership and brought about permanent changes in School A's structure. There was also some acknowledgement that external school improvement factors, such as visits by Ofsted inspectors, accelerated the need for change. One teacher observed, "it became a really open process". More importantly, a warning notice about standards received

CL 22 My involvement in policy making is taken seriously.

[14] CL 22 My involvement in policy making is taken seriously.

by School A's partner school, and the resignation of that school's during the period of the study, also affected teachers' perceptions, the pace of change and reactions to change.

Further analysis of themes based on elaborative initial and secondary coding confirmed a strong sense of Collaborative Leadership and that this improved over time. Table 6.2 below confirms improving collaboration was made possible by established routines and active and willing participation by teachers. Whilst there was some suggestion that actions may be described as 'top down' and discussion of some key issues was 'avoided', the overwhelming view of participants was positive.

Table 6.2: Collaborative Leadership – Summary Themes and Theoretical Constructs

Summary Themes	Year one Improving collaboration and professionalism Established routines Two-way process Limited, top down collaboration Avoiding discussion of key issues	Year two Stronger and improving collaboration External factors provide momentum Perspective controls participation Closer co-operation and positive experience Developing teamwork
Theoretical construct	Action supporting collaboration Strategy with narrow focus	Energetic participation in collaboration Individuals act as barriers to co-operation

(Based on Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003)

Table 6.2 identifies the theoretical constructs derived from the interviews. Here is the story of Collaborative Leadership in School A using the theoretical constructs and the language of the participants. There is *action supporting collaboration* by School A's leadership team as one teacher described, "we get opportunities to feed back" and "there has been quite a lot of collaboration". By contrast, a very small number of participants took a contrary view which suggests a *strategy with narrow focus:* "we have gained nothing" said one, adding "we are playing to the lowest common denominator". This was not widely upheld but is best summarised by an NQT "I do think they are working hard to try and be collaborative together and share things".

By year two, the overwhelming view of participants suggested that there was *energetic participation in collaboration*. There was a sense that more teachers were willingly involved in collaborative activities and that the senior leadership team had responded sensitively to difficult issues. Even fewer of the participants in year two held a negative view of Collaborative Leadership leading to the creation of the construct *individuals act as barriers to co-operation.* In short, the participants' story based on the theoretical constructs was positive, optimistic about the future and evolving strongly.

Table 6.3: Role Ordered Matrix – Collaborative Leadership

Position in School	Perception of Collaborative Leadership in years one and two	Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change	Perception of change over time
SLT	Significant development, permanent basis	Daily meetings Links with depts. Dept. meetings Permanent structural change External factors	Major, immediate, external interference, pro active
ML	Good involvement Good collaboration Acceleration, dominance of one partner	Two-way process Time provided Working together Lots of meetings	Variable
ET	Limited collaboration Top down Improving process, Integration, sensitivity	Structural change	Major change, togetherness
NQT	Supportive leadership Good approachability, collaborative	Openness Opportunities to feedback Questionnaires	Unnoticed

The quantitative and qualitative data for years one and two provided evidence to answer research question 1 and 2.[15] Teacher perceptions of Collaborative Leadership were strong and became stronger over time. Collaborative leadership had emerged through

[15] Research questions:

1. What are teacher perceptions of school culture within and across case study schools?
2. How does school culture change in each School and across schools?
3. How do the components of school culture vary within schools and between schools?
4. What are the factors that initiate or influence the process of change in school culture?

deliberate and considered actions by the school's leadership and was reinforced by external actions required by Ofsted. The cumulative effect supports a positive view of Collaborative Leadership and I will now turn to examine the strategies and factors which influenced these outcomes.

The role ordered matrix for Collaborative Leadership provides a thematic snapshot from the perspective of four teacher groups and answers research questions 4 and 5. The vertical columns within the Table 6.3 shows teacher perceptions of Collaborative Leadership and how this is identified. The table identifies observed leadership strategies and any perceived changes over the time. The role ordered matrix is a summative version of matrices initially produced for years one and two, and shows how strategies identified, such as regular staff meetings, contributed to the development of Collaborative Leadership.[8] The involvement of teachers was a deliberate management strategy, and this was appreciated and voiced through their comments: "so in terms of effectiveness, I think they've been in a difficult situation and they've handled it quite well" said one teacher. The openness identified by teachers assisted the change process and this extended across the MAT. A teacher explained "there's been quite a lot of liaison between the two schools".

The leadership strategies continued to assist the development of a strengthening culture as witnessed by participants: "some very strong and robust decisions had to be made and it started at the very top…. So, the leadership from that point of view had a lot to do…I think they've been very open about what's going on so we've been very aware of what's taking place." This acknowledgement of inevitable change, rather than weakening school culture, seems to strengthen it because of the deliberate and open approach to collaboration. This strategy, together with the effective use of meetings, teacher surveys and structural changes to the deployment of key staff, helped strengthen the collaborative aspect of school culture and sustain change through difficult and challenging times.

If the vertical columns in the role ordered matrix highlight specific strategies and the factors which initiate change, then the horizontal rows highlight the views of teacher groups. Whilst it is acknowledged that perceptions of Collaborative Leadership (research

5. What are the leadership strategies that develop school culture?

questions 1 and 2) were generally positive overall, Table 6.3 accentuates perceived differences by role and therefore answers research questions 4 and 5. Senior teachers highlighted the importance of external factors (e.g. Ofsted) in accelerating the process of change and the steps required to initiate and sustain change. Experienced teachers, on the other hand, said key problems and issues were being avoided, whilst NQTs appreciated the openness and opportunities to feedback ideas. Notwithstanding this discrepancy, the role analysis reflects a good deal of agreement between groups and confirms the positive perception of Collaborative Leadership.

6.3 Professional Development

6.3.1 Professional Development - Quantitative analysis year one / two

Figure 6.2: Professional Development in year one and two

All the scores indicate very strong agreement with School A's approach to Professional Development and standard deviation scores show the means are a good indicator of an average. As Figure 6.2 and Table 6.4 show, all statements were perceived as a strength with some achieving noticeably positive scores. Teachers were strongly supportive of PD 16 and PD 30[16] and teachers' positive views were consistently amongst the strongest recorded in year one of the research. Outcomes for year two of the research show views of Professional Development remain strong and three of the statements produced stronger mean

[16] PD 16 Professional Development is valued by the school.
PD 30 The school values overall improvement.

scores than in the previous year. Responses to PD 16 and PD 30[17] were particularly strong with mean scores of 4.2 and 4.47 respectively and these statements produced modal responses of 5 which indicates an overwhelmingly positive view.

Table 6.4: Professional Development – Teacher perceptions quantitative outcomes

Year one		Year two	
Mean	Statement	Mean	Statement
4.15	The school values overall improvement (PD 30)	**4.47**	The school values overall improvement (PD 30)
4.03	Professional Development is valued by the school (PD 16)	**4.20**	Professional Development is valued by the school (PD 16)
4.01	Teachers utilize professional networks to obtain information and resources for classroom instruction (PD 1)	**4.02**	Teachers utilize professional networks to obtain information and resources for classroom instruction (PD 1)

6.3.2 Professional Development – Qualitative analysis year one / two

Views expressed in teacher interviews agreed strongly with outcomes from the quantitative data. All groups suggested that Professional Development was a strength of the school. Senior leaders referred to a tailored approach to CPD whilst middle leaders suggested there was a personal touch to the way training was managed.[18] Other comments were also very complimentary. Professional Development was described as "tailored", "ambitious", "superb", and even "fantastic". Whilst these comments are very positive, there remains some hesitation when referring to Professional Development within the MAT. Here, senior leaders see a one-sided aspect of the relationship and whilst other teachers detect that "one school is expanding quite quickly… and the other school is struggling a little to find where it is …".

Teacher interviews in year two indicated that perceptions of Professional Development continued to agree with quantitative outcomes. Each of the four interview groups had a positive perspective and one teacher suggested that there had also been positive developments across the MAT. Experienced teachers commented that "leaders have been extremely

[17] PD 16 Professional Development is valued by the school.
PD 30 The school values overall improvement.

[18] One middle leader said "There's also a personal touch, they don't just want to know about the school, they do take an interest in other aspects, which makes it very pleasant."

supportive". Middle leaders considered that Professional Development had improved in School A. Although it was apparent that there was more work still to do, teachers acknowledged that strategies to further improve Professional Development had accelerated and grown over time.

Table 6.5 summarises the key findings of explicit coding and the key themes from years one and two of the study and confirms the overwhelmingly positive teacher perceptions of Professional Development and its importance within School A and across the MAT.

Table 6.5: Professional Development – Summary Themes and Theoretical Constructs

Summary Themes	Year one Effective training from supportive leadership Increased opportunities for progression Proactive rather than reactive training policy Improved joint school professional development	Year two Proactive joint training across schools Personalised training from supportive leadership Good training opportunities to develop people
Theoretical construct	Training as a priority for improving standards	Standards driven by developing people

(Based on Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003)

The identification of the theoretical construct *training as a priority for improving standards* reflect a strong perception that Professional Development is viewed as a key improvement tool. A clear link is also identified between sharing good practice and teacher motivation which, in turn, links to improving standards. Other participants confirmed the training standards connection, "we have had a massive kind of focus on differentiation across the partnership" and how this developed the quality of teaching. There was very little, if any, negative perception of Professional Development with an acknowledgement by one observer that good training opportunities were available to all "if you've got the right attitude of mind, the sky's the limit. You can go where you want to go and the support is unbelievable."

The personalisation of Professional Development and its contribution to school culture is a continuing theme identified in year two of the study. Analysis of the qualitative evidence provides strong support for the creation of a theoretical construct for year two entitled *standards driven by developing people.* One observer noted that Professional Development

remains “proactive rather than reactive” and cited whole school training led by outside contributors with a specific focus on school’s standards. Whilst there was agreement that more work needs to be done across the MAT, frequent reference was made to the ongoing training opportunities made available. Moreover, where training has occurred across the partnership, participants noted that it was “really effective”.

The sharing of good practice, a personal approach to training and the allocation of appropriate time for training, are key factors and leadership strategies which initiate and sustain positive teacher perceptions of Professional Development and how it is regarded in School A. The deliberate involvement of external school improvement agencies and use, for training purposes, of a large local venue to accommodate staff at both School A and B, were perceived as positive strategies which contributed to a successful outcome. As one participant explained “we had training session where people came from PiXL …. that was at the cinema and everyone was there”. There was also a clear strategy to develop training across the MAT as one participant noted “collaboratively, we have training slots together, three slots through the year. The partnership will have the same training opportunities”. This was also reinforced in year two “Professional Development has improved in the partnership” and there was a strong strategic perception that “both schools work together” and school leaders “feel like the teachers have been extremely supportive”.

The role ordered matrix in Table 6.6 shows that all groups interviewed had a positive view of Professional Development over the period of the study. There was significant agreement between groups about the personalisation of training and its development within School A and across the MAT. The only perceived difference was identified by middle leaders who considered that “the schools were moving at different speeds” with respect to Professional Development.

Table 6.6: Role Ordered Matrix – Professional Development

Position in School	Perception of Professional Development in year one and two	Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change	Perception of change over time
SLT	Tailored Individualised Proactive Effective	Sharing Three slots per year Training in local cinema PiXl (external agency)	High profile More sharing in school Grown over time Growing collaboration
ML	Ambitious Personal touch Personalisation Flexible Good Collaborative Early days	Personal approach External factors	One school moving quicker than the other Long way to go
ET	Superb Developing people Helpful Good Supportive Effective	Supportive of CPD Acting roles Personalised CPD	Taken time Accelerated
NQT	Specific Fantastic Collaborative	Pick and mix CPD Openness	Improved

6.4.1 Collegial Support – Quantitative analysis year one / two

6.4 Collegial Support

Teacher perceptions based on mean scores were generally very positive about Collegial Support as can be seen in Figure 6.3. There were positive views of CS 10 and CS 17.[19] All modal scores indicated agreement or strong agreement with the questionnaire statements. Whilst mean scores for questions CS 4 and CS 25[20] were slightly less positive, it was still

[19] CS 10 Teachers are willing to help out wherever there is a problem.
CS 17 Teachers ideas are valued by other teachers.
[20] CS 4 Teachers trust each other.
CS 25 Teachers work cooperatively in groups.

clear that teachers trusted each other, and this was confirmed by the positive response to levels of co-operation.

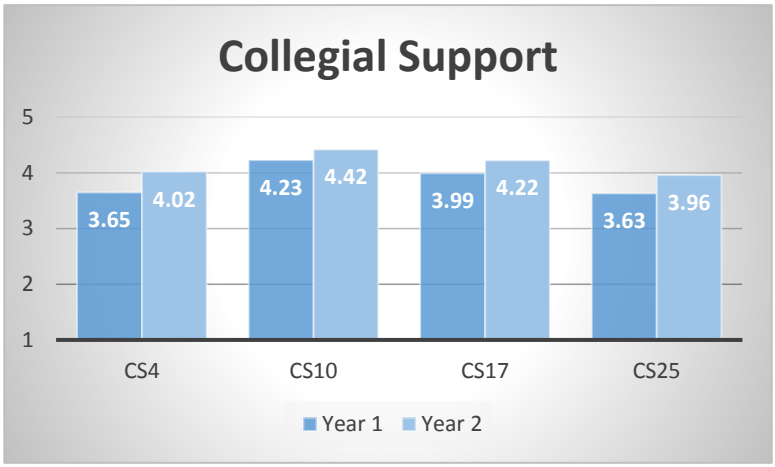

Figure 6.3: Collegial Support in year one and two

Teacher perceptions based on mean scores in year two were even more positive about Collegial Support than in year one. Three of the responses: CS 4; CS 17; and CS 10[21] had mean scores of 4 or above. The concept that teachers value the ideas of other teachers was particularly strong with a mean score of 4.42. All modal outcomes too scored 3 or 4. Overall, quantitative data produced from the questionnaires showed that teachers' perception of Collegial Support all improved over the period of the study.

Table 6.7: Collegial Support – Teacher Perceptions Quantitative outcomes

Year one		Year two	
Mean	Statement	Mean	Statement
4.23	Teachers are willing to help out wherever there is a problem (CS 10)	**4.42**	Teachers are willing to help out wherever there is a problem (CS 10)
3.99	Teachers' ideas are valued by other teachers (CS 17)	**4.22**	Teachers' ideas are valued by other teachers. (CS 17)

[21] CS 4 Teachers trust each other.
CS 17 Teachers' ideas are valued by other teachers.
CS 10 Teachers are willing to help out wherever there is a problem.

6.4.2 Collegial Support – Qualitative analysis year one / two

Most of the groups interviewed in School A agreed with the quantitative outcomes that Collegial Support is a strong feature. Senior teachers were of the view that "trust in this place is very high" and this was corroborated by NQTs and experienced teachers. Middle leaders, on the other hand considered Collegial Support a factor still under development; "it's not the strongest area" said one middle leader, adding "but again its being developed".

Collegial Support is a strength in School A as one teacher explains, "I think that people trust each other, mostly, with one or two exceptions". The strength of teamwork is highlighted in the theoretical construct *trust and teamwork underpin values* and even where teachers were less positive, there was clear acknowledgement that Collegial Support was improving. Teamwork is a continuing theme in year two and there is further acknowledgement that barriers to better Collegial Support were being removed. This is particularly evident in teachers' perceptions about the relationship between School A and School B. There was a strong view that meetings between teachers across schools had "broken down barriers" as one teacher explained, whereas five years ago "there were views on either campus which weren't helpful". Year two responses are also characterised by themes and constructs reflecting change and challenge and School A teachers recognise their role in assisting their partner school. "There's a lot of resources now being shared" and "we need to help them, they are struggling a bit over there".

Table 6.8: Collegial Support – Summary Themes and Theoretical Constructs

Summary Themes	Year one	Year two
	Effective and improving teamwork Trusting and collaborative atmosphere	Barriers removed Co-operation challenges pre-conceptions Misunderstandings as part of change Mutual support improves teamwork
Theoretical construct	Trust and teamwork underpin values	Trust overcomes change Trust part of school DNA

(Based on Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003)

The role ordered matrix in Table 6.9 overleaf confirms Collegial Support as an area of cultural strength. There was almost a unanimous view from participants that Collegial Support had improved over the period of the study and a recognition that time was a crucial factor in allowing improvements to happen. Teachers referred to in and out of school events which encouraged collegiality as one summarised: “all the boys’ trips away – cricket tours, football tours. You just get to know people from other departments.”

Table 6.9: Role Ordered Matrix – Collegial Support

Position in School	Perception of Collegial Support in year one and two	Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change	Perception of change over time
SLT	Sense of trust High levels of trust Removing barriers Better atmosphere	Social events Bring people together Restoring relationships ‘PILT’ training	Good over time Improving, particularly perceptions of partner school
ML	Not the strongest area Initiated Developing Works well Some misunderstandings	Example strategies Use of ‘growth mind set’	Developing over time Improved
ET	Collaborative Trusting Good sharing but not across the two schools Level of trust is still good	Cultural change Sharing of resources	Takes a lot of time to develop Improving
NQT	Reciprocation Friendly Nice environment People work together Disparity	Willingness to help Openness	Unnoticed

The second round of interviews conducted in School A confirmed the positive view of Collegial Support from most of the groups. Senior teachers pointed to strategies and training opportunities that had helped to break down barriers and middle leaders also acknowledged that “there are things we have done that have worked well”. The role ordered matrix confirms universally across all groups an improving level of Collegial Support signified by a better atmosphere, the removing of barriers and good levels of sharing between teachers. However, since School A and School B are part of a MAT, teachers also commented on their perception of Collegial Support across the partnership. Whilst acknowledging that levels of trust between teachers was still developing, it was recognised that there was still much more to do.

For example, one middle leader suggested "there have, at times, been issues where, and this is a minority of teachers at the other school, have automatically assumed that we're doing things in a way that looks down on them…Sometimes the intentions have been misunderstood." More formal and deliberate strategies such as joint training meetings had a positive effect on Collegial Support including the PILT sessions referred to one senior leader and the use of Growth Mindset mentioned by another.

In School A, it was widely recognised that Collegial Support was a strength. All teacher groups were positive about the good levels of Collegial Support in School A but there were differing views when this was extended to work across the MAT, particularly in terms of sharing resources. As one middle leader expressed: "on the whole positive…. but there have at times been issues".

6.5 Teacher Collaboration

6.5.1 Teacher Collaboration – Quantitative analysis year one / two

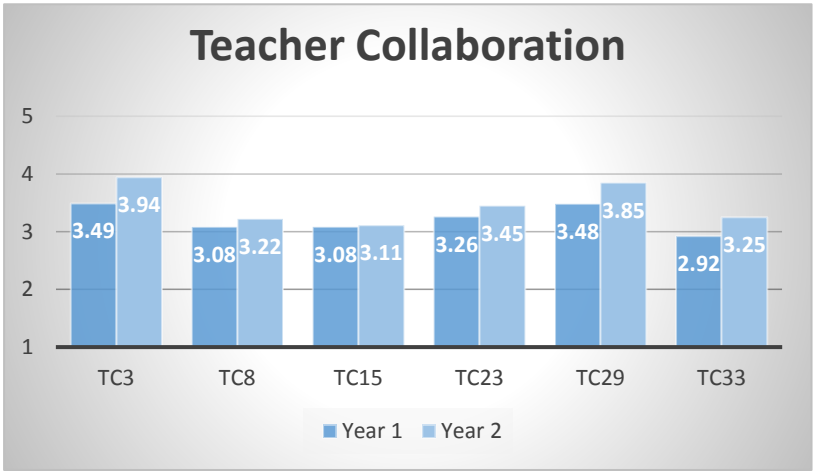

Figure 6.4: Collaborative Leadership in year one and two

As illustrated in Figure 6.4, teacher perceptions based on mean scores were positive about Teacher Collaboration with five of the six measures scoring 3 or above. The two strongest aspects of Teacher Collaboration were TC 3 an TC 29.[22] Five of the six modal scores indicated positive teacher perceptions; question TC 33 indicated neither agree or disagree.

[22] TC 3 Teachers have opportunities for dialogue and planning across year groups and subjects.
TC 29 Teachers work together to develop and evaluate projects.

Teacher perceptions based on mean scores in year two were more positive about Teacher Collaboration than in year one across all measures. All responses scored at least 3 or above. Whilst the weakest mean score referred to TC 15[23] other scores were much more positive. This was particularly the case in respect of TC 3 and TC 29.[24] Finally, whilst all mean scores for Teacher Collaboration in year two improved from year one, the year two modal scores divided equally between 4, agree and 3 agree/not agree.

Table 6.10: Teacher Collaboration – Teacher perceptions quantitative outcomes

Year one		Year two	
Mean	Statement	Mean	Statement
3.49	Teachers have opportunities for dialogue and planning across year groups and subjects (TC 3)	**3.94**	Teachers have opportunities for dialogue and planning across year groups and subjects (TC 3)
3.48	Teachers work together to develop and evaluate projects (TC 29)	**3.85**	Teachers work together to develop and evaluate projects. (TC 29)
3.26	Teachers are generally aware of what other teachers are teaching (TC 23)	**3.45**	Teachers are generally aware of what other teachers are teaching (TC 23)

6.5.2 Teacher Collaboration – Qualitative analysis year one / two

Outcomes from teacher interviews were more positive about Teacher Collaboration than suggested by the quantitative measures. The role ordered matrix in Table 6.12 shows extensive levels of collaboration as observed by all the groups interviewed. Realignment of senior roles and effective use of meetings were strategies identified that had assisted the process of improvement and been instrumental in overcoming barriers to better Teacher Collaboration. Specific responses from representatives of the four groups interviewed further highlighted the positive perception of Teacher Collaboration. In short, whilst teachers were positive about Teacher Collaboration, there was a sense of realism about further barriers to overcome.

The improved perception of Teacher Collaboration in year two quantitative data is

[23] TC 1 Teachers take time to observe each other teaching.
[24] TC 3 Teachers have opportunities for dialogue and planning across year groups and subjects.
TC 29 Teachers work together to develop and evaluate projects.

mirrored by year two qualitative outcomes. All four groups suggested that there was strong Teacher Collaboration and this had improved. Most also agreed that collaboration had improved across the MAT although there was still more work to do. Teachers in all groups gave specific examples of growing Teacher Collaboration. An experienced teacher commented, “I’ve definitely felt a big sense of collaboration between departments on our last training day”. Senior leaders share the same view whilst middle leaders also agree “in terms of the general teacher collaboration, it has increased over the last twelve months”.

Table 6.11: Teacher Collaboration – Summary Themes and Theoretical Constructs

Summary Themes	Year one Effective teamwork within departments Individuals provide momentum for collaboration Individuals restrict collaboration Growing integration	Year two Neutral venue provides reassurance Stronger joint working and coming together Impact of external factors incentivised collaboration Reluctant collaborators
Theoretical construct	Sense of common values Few non-collaborators	Leadership and external issues drive collaboration Minority unwilling to share

(Based on Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003)

More specific analysis of themes using elaborative primary and secondary coding confirmed the initial findings that Teacher Collaboration was a strength of School A and this had further improved in year two. Evidence from interviews conducted in year one, summarised in Table 6.11, identified a theoretical construct *sense of common values* which enable collaboration to take place and become effective. Teachers’ comments also led to the identification of a second construct; *few non-collaborators,* which was more indicative of the limited collaboration across the MAT. As one teacher observed “it’s whether a person can get past that baggage and leave it behind and start moving forward”.

The outcomes of year two interviews suggested that Teacher Collaboration had improved further, particularly across the MAT because of a combination of leadership and management strategies and greater contact between teachers. There was a real sense that collaboration was

being further engineered and this has led to the creation of the theoretical construct *leadership and external issues drive collaboration.* By contrast, the construct *minority unwilling to share,* illustrates a sentiment that at times seemed as much deliberate as accidental as exemplified by "I don't think people work together as much as they could". To summarise, the theoretical narrative reported by teachers in terms of the theoretical construct presents a positive story of Teacher Collaboration that had improved over time and had impacted on relationships between teachers in School A and within the partnership.

Table 6.12: Role Ordered Matrix – Teacher Collaboration

Position in School	Perception of Teacher Collaboration in year one and two	Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change	Perception of change over time
SLT	Lots of sharing Bringing depts. together Significant development, permanent basis,	Meetings Dual roles Permanent structural change External factors Resignation of School B headteacher	Accelerated Major, immediate, external interference, proactive
ML	Varied collaboration Getting past the 'baggage' Accelerated Dominance of one partner	Overcoming change Removing 'blockers'	Improved
ET	Improving process, Integration, sensitivity	Structural change	Major change, togetherness
NQT	Good approachability, Collaborative	Openness	Unnoticed

The role ordered matrix in Table 6.12 identifies a range of actions from the four teacher groups which contribute to an improving perception of Teacher Collaboration. Regular departmental meetings, combined with leadership changes to improve collaboration across the MAT, are key features identified. One teacher noted that a meeting between staff from both schools took place "on neutral ground" and that there was "quite a lot of sharing between departments". The appointment of teachers with responsibilities in both schools was also regarded as a key factor in improvement. The decision to locate all sixth form teaching onto School A's campus was observed by one teacher to have a profound effect on Teacher Collaboration in that "more teachers have had to visit each other's premises". The increased

movement of teachers between schools was anticipated to become "more embedded and will feel like one teaching staff instead of just bouncing between two sites". Finally, the sense of greater collaboration was reinforced by several teachers, one of whom who saw developments as a natural consequence of external DfE visits and intervention: "there's a lot of bringing together of two schools, particularly over the last twelve months we've seen a big shift in that and working together as groups".

The prevailing view was that Teacher Collaboration is good and improving. There was also an agreed view that Teacher Collaboration had improved across the MAT. Comment was made about the resignation of School B's headteacher following an Ofsted monitoring visit in the second year of the study and how this dramatic change had accelerated the need to improve School B through further collaboration between the schools. Middle leaders also agreed with this analysis: "so there has been a continual increase, first within this school and then within the partnership. There has been an increase in the number of things that have happened, certainly in terms of training."

6.6 Unity of Purpose

6.6.1 Unity of Purpose – Quantitative analysis year one / two

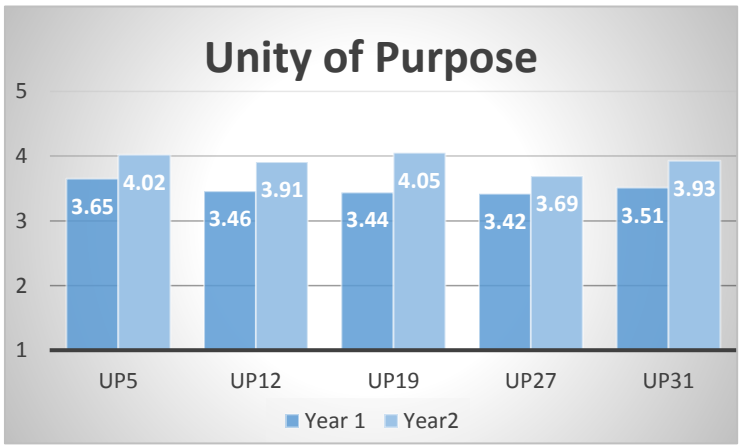

Figure 6.5: Unity of Purpose in year one and two

Teacher perceptions based on mean scores were positive about Unity of Purpose with all the five questions scoring 3 or better. The strongest measure with a mean score of 3.65, was in

response to statement UP 5[25] and scores for the remaining questions were very similar and varying between 3.51 and 3.42. Four of the five modal scores showed strong teacher scores of at least 4 with only question, UP 27[26] with a model score of 3 and mean score at 3.42.

Teacher perceptions based on mean scores in year two were more positive about Unity of Purpose than in year one across all questions. Teachers were strongly supportive of two questionnaire statements; UP 5 and UP 19.[27] The overwhelmingly positive perceptions of Unity of Purpose are summarised in Figure 6.5 and Table 6.13.

Table 6.13: Unity of Purpose – Teacher perceptions quantitative outcomes

Year one		Year two	
Mean	Statement	Mean	Statement
3.65	Teachers support the vision of the school (UP 5)	**4.05**	Teachers understand the vision of the school (UP 19)
3.51	Teaching performance reflects the vision of the school (UP 31)	**4.02**	Teachers support the vision of the school (UP 5)
3.46	The school vision provides a clear sense of direction for teachers (UP 12)	**3.93**	Teaching performance reflects the vision of the school (UP 31)
3.44	Teachers understand the vision of the school (UP 19)	**3.91**	The school vision provides a clear sense of direction for teachers (UP 12)

6.6.2 Unity of Purpose – Qualitative analysis year one / two

Outcomes from teacher interviews were very positive about Unity of Purpose although middle leaders expressed some reservations about the "narrative" of the vision. Comments made by all the four groups expressed real clarity about the vision of School A and the clear sense of a common purpose. Senior leaders were unequivocal: "so I think there's a strong vision there". This was fully endorsed by middle leaders who suggested that the headteacher in particular "has got a huge vision for the school and is moving ahead at quite swift rate".

Analysis of themes based on elaborative initial and secondary coding confirmed a strong sense of Unity of Purpose and this had developed further over the study. Table 6.14 identifies

[25] UP 5 Teachers support the vision of the school.
[26] UP 27 The school vision reflects the values of the community.
[27] UP 5 Teachers support the vision of the school.

the theoretical constructs, and summary themes which form a theoretical narrative, or abstract story which follows the journey of the participants using their own words. These constructs demonstrate how Unity of Purpose contributed to overall school culture and sense of direction, both for School A and the wider MAT.

Table 6.14: Unity of Purpose – Summary Themes and Theoretical Constructs

Summary Themes	Year one Huge and inspiring vision Strong sense of purpose Cynicism from minority	Year two Common town wide vision Journey requires further mapping Strong determination to improve Clarity of purpose
Theoretical construct	Inspiring drive to raise aspirations Acceptance of barriers	Clear common vision Unfinished map of the future

(Based on Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003)

An ambitious inspiring vision and sense of purpose combined with the cynicism of a tiny minority are key themes identified in year one. Teachers were overwhelmingly positive about the vision set out by the headteacher summarised here in the construct *inspiring drive to raise aspirations.* An experienced teacher commented, “I think his overall vision for the school to have an environment where children can learn is inspiring, to bring out the best in his teachers”. This view was echoed by all participants and even by those who questioned the motivation or lack of acceptance by others. “I think this school does have a really strong vision. I think (the headteacher) is great, I think he’s really driven and really wants the school to improve and has lots of great ideas.” Despite the challenges, there was also evidence from the interviews that the strength of the vision had brought together teachers from both School A and School B. Another teacher observed “I think bringing the staff together has meant staff have said ‘we’re both alright, we’re in the same boat’”. Interviews revealed an acknowledgement there was some cynicism from a minority reflected in the construct an *acceptance of barriers* to improvement. “It’s difficult to get rid of dead wood” said one teacher, with another reporting a comment from a fellow colleague “what are we going to get back from a failing school?”. Despite these observations, however, there remained an overwhelming view that School A had a strong vision.

If the theoretical narrative summarising teacher perceptions of Unity of Purpose was strong in year one, then further progress was made by the end of year two. Teacher perceptions, alongside the outcomes from the quantitative study, indicated an even stronger and more determined vision. The construct a *clear common vision* was created from a range of comments: "I think we're on a big drive to try and get outstanding as a school here. I think there's real clarity on that front." Whilst also recognising the construct an *unfinished map of the future* there was even a sense of a common vision across the MAT. However, one participant was not convinced and suggested "this school hasn't cracked the narrative and the partnership hasn't cracked the narrative".

Table 6.15: Role Ordered Matrix – Unity of Purpose

Position in School	Perception of Unity of Purpose in year one and two	Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change	Perception of change over time
SLT	Strong bold vision Joint targets Sense of unity Well established	Bring people together Partnership Targets Public road map More frequent meetings Town-wide targets Student targets	Acceleration Growing closer
ML	Headteacher has huge vision Extra mile Haven't cracked the narrative Varying perspectives	Good overview Staff go extra mile Need a clear narrative	Swift Pace Variable
ET	Ofsted driven Common purpose Common purpose in town	Recognition that staff are at different levels Real clarity Driven Well briefed	Vision prone to change Taken time to change and improve Established
NQT	Driven Strong vision Varied vision	Outstanding strategy Very clear strategy	Can't comment Continuity

The role ordered matric in Table 6.15 summarises teacher perceptions of Unity of Purpose. It confirms the view of a strong, bold vision where people were being brought together whilst

also recognising that teachers react to change in different ways. The columns in Table 6.15 highlight the factors, concepts and strategies which influenced change and help answer research questions 4 and 5. For example, middle leaders indicated that measures to strengthen Unity of Purpose had been put in place quickly and with the change in headship in the partnership School B, the pace of change had accelerated. The leadership of School A was clear about the vision and the wider partnership with School B, as one senior leader explained: "there was a road map that was very public, it was displayed around the school. He continued "…there was a common core purpose, a town-wide target so that was already embedded".

The role ordered matrix for Unity of Purpose reinforces the sense of a strong vision. Bringing people together, town-wide targets, going the extra mile and more frequent meetings are well defined strategies which assist the strengthening of that vision. It also should be recognised, that views differ, with some teachers referring to the need to 'crack the narrative' and share the vision more widely.

Outcomes from qualitative data analysed according to role in school were very positive about Unity of Purpose, although middle leaders expressed some reservations about the vison across the MAT. Most teachers confirmed a strengthening Unity of Purpose and that was expressed enthusiastically by senior leaders: "there was always a unity of purpose… and that's become even stronger, so much stronger". That strong sense of vision, was, for senior leaders, evident across the partnership too. "I think that it is almost unrecognisable to what it was at the start of the year." Middle leaders, on the other hand, were rather more sceptical, unsure that the vision was fully embedded. "I think there would be varying perspectives on that across the school and depending where you are in the school. You can't just have a goal; you have to have a clear mapped journey."

Despite the few reservations, senior leaders, experienced teachers and NQTs were enthusiastic about the strength of vison in School A. In summary, the combined quantitative and qualitative outcomes for teacher perceptions of Unity of Purpose are amongst the strongest indicators yet observed in the analysis of school culture in School A. The qualitative evidence complements the quantitative findings and reinforces the importance of a strong vision in securing improved outcomes, improvement in standards and teacher buy-in.

I now consider teacher perceptions of Learning Partnership, the last of Gruenert and Valentine's suite of school culture components

6.7 Learning Partnership

6.7.1 Learning Partnership – Quantitative analysis year one / two

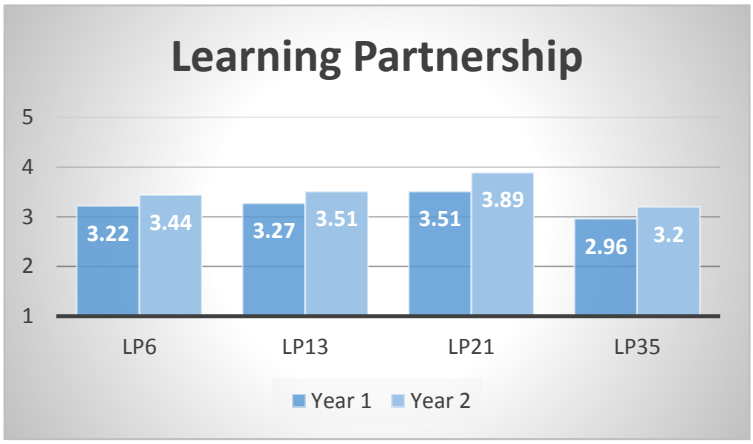

Figure 6.6: Learning Partnership in year one and two

Teacher perceptions based on mean scores were generally positive about Learning Partnership with three of the four measuring 3 or better. The strongest aspects of Learning Partnership were LP 21 whilst the weakest aspect was LP 35.[28] Three of the four modal scores were also strong.

Table 6.16: Learning Partnership – Teacher perceptions quantitative outcomes

Year one		Year two	
Mean	Statement	Mean	Statement
3.51	Teachers and parents communicate frequently about student performance (LP 21)	**3.89**	Teachers and parents communicate frequently about student performance (LP 21)
3.27	Parents trust teachers' professional judgements (LP 13)	**3.51**	Parents trust teachers' professional judgements (LP 13)

[28] LP 21 Teachers and parents communicate frequently about student performance.
LP 35 Students generally accept responsibility for their schooling.

Teacher perceptions in year two, as shown in Table 6.16 and Figure 6.6, were more positive about Learning Partnership than in year one across all the questions asked. Teachers were in strong agreement with the question LP 21 whilst there was also a significant improvement in perceptions of LP 35.[29] There was no change in the modal scores between years one and two, with three of the four questions producing responses which agreed with the questionnaire statements.

Learning Partnership – Qualitative analysis year one / two

Outcomes from teacher interviews were positive about Learning Partnership in School A. Senior leaders considered that most parents were very supportive, and that Learning Partnership was "within out school fairly strong". Similarly, middle leaders thought that "we have a good relationship with parents" and that "an awful lot of information goes back and forwards". NQTs were also positive about Learning Partnerships: "on the whole, I think it's a fantastic place to work and I think that there's a real kind of pulling together".

Interviews conducted in year one show positive teacher perceptions and describe good relations with parents. However, they also reveal varying perceptions of Learning Partnership when considering views across MAT. For example, senior leaders commented that "across town, parents' views are embedded" in viewing one school more favourably than the other. Therefore, whilst there is clearly a positive perception of Learning Partnership within School A, this does not extend to perceptions about the town partnership.

Interviews conducted in year two confirm that teacher perceptions of Learning Partnership remain positive and parents are supportive of the school. Outcomes from interviews show continued parental support as expressed by one experienced teacher "I think here there's always been strong support from parents". The continued positive view of Learning Partnership by School A teachers is not reflected, however, when views are extended to the wider partnership between School A and School B. Senior Leaders were of the view that parental support was not equally apparent across both schools and the recent creation of a joint sixth form at School A had alienated many parents at School B. The less than positive

[29] LP 21 Teachers and parents communicate frequently about student performance.
LP 35 Students generally accept responsibility for their schooling.

view of Learning Partnership across the two schools was also confirmed by experienced teachers: “typically parents have been much more engaged at School A”. Parents’ views on the partnership is best summarised by a senior leader; “I think their view seems to be ‘as long as my child is still getting the education I’m expecting, then I’m not really bothered what you do with the partnership”.

Further analysis of themes based on elaborative initial and secondary coding confirmed a positive perception of Learning Partnership in School A and this had improved over time. Table 6.17 identifies the theoretical constructs and summary themes which help create a theoretical narrative. Teachers highlight strong parental support and an expectation that their son or daughter would receive a good education. As one senior leader explained “the majority (of parents) buy in ……its part of the culture of the town”.

Table 6.17: Learning Partnership – Summary Themes and Theoretical Constructs

Summary Themes	Year one Strong stakeholder buy in Good relationships and acceptance of standards Strength of partnership not uniform across town schools	Year two Emerging partnership Dominance of one partner Varied levels of support across partnership Well established views
Theoretical construct	Standards and participation expected Uniformity as an ambition	Perceptions underpinned by past reputation Changes challenging long held views

(Based on Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003)

The themes in Table 6.17 reinforce this view and the expectation of good examination outcomes which lead to the construct *standards and participation expected.* Teacher perceptions of Learning Partnership, when applied to the relationship between School A and School B, were less positive. “It’s a tricky one” said one senior leader, “I don’t think it’s good”. An experienced teacher agreed “I don’t think they (parents) see the partnership at all. I think they still see it as School B and School A. Again, it’s history, isn’t it?”

The themes emerging about Learning Partnership in year two interviews suggest the emergence of a dominant partner in the relationship between School A and School B. A

senior leader accepted that "that's one area where there's still a lot of work to do". *Perceptions underpinned by past reputation* appear to cloud Learning Partnership as one senior leader explained "there's been a view that School A is kind of steam-rollering in and trying to take the place over and that's what it would look like" and, although there are *changes challenging long held views,* there remains a parental perception which was succinctly summarised by an NQT "speaking to people who live in the area, I know it's very much you want your child to go to School A; School B is a rough school, we don't want our kids to go there".

Table 6.18: Role Ordered Matrix – Learning Partnership

Position in School	Perception of Learning Partnerships in year one and two	Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change	Perception of change over time
SLT	Majority buy in Varied across town Partnership with other school is irrelevant for many parents	Persistent approach Joint sixth form centre	Little change Embedded views Lot of work still to do. Only small changes
ML	Good relationships with parents Supportive parents	Responsive parents Increased number of meetings	Traditionally stable Variable
ET	Schools in partnership viewed differently Strong support from parents	Divide between schools is more apparent Improved systems	Need to start again More engagement Incremental change having a positive effect
NQT	Good place to be Supportive parents Faith in school	Pulling together 'Pushy' parents	Can't comment Little change

(Based on Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003)

The role ordered matrix in Table 6.18 summarises teacher perceptions of Learning Partnership. It confirms the strong relationship between teachers and parents and a less strong relationship when applied to views across the MAT. The table also helps answer research questions 4 and 5 which consider factors and concepts that initiate change and leadership strategies that develop culture. Teachers in School A said that parents were now much more aware of what was happening in school. "There are systems coming in to make parents more aware of what school actually does". Whilst teacher-parent relations were considered good,

and parents generally supportive, there was also the view that "parents here are quite pushy, which is good. Although, it can be a little bit draining, but at least they care". Specific actions of School A's leadership team are also a feature of Table 6.18. The removal of sixth form teaching at School B and its entire relocation on the campus of School A was clearly a move that had to be handled with care and sensitivity. As one senior leader explained, "we had to create a sixth form centre, all very quickly over the summer, but that is still obviously simmering and we have to be very conscious of the fact we've got to get it right". By contrast senior teachers pointed to the lack of parental interest in the Federation. "The parents here, I haven't heard a lot from regarding the partnership with School B. I've not had any great feedback from them at all."

I have now considered all the quantitative and qualitative data from Gruenert and Valentine's six school culture components and assessed teacher perceptions of each. In the following section, I examine teacher perceptions of school culture as a single component and summarise the cumulative findings of the data collected.

6.8 Overall school culture and conclusions

In the final part of this chapter, I answer the five main research questions for School A.[30] The findings are divided into two sections: quantitative and qualitative results of teacher perceptions of school culture, and leadership strategies and other factors which influence cultural change.

6.8.1 School culture – Quantitative and qualitative findings of teacher perceptions in year one and two (Research questions 1-3)

The quantitative measures indicated in Figure 6.7 and Table 6.19 show that teacher perceptions of school culture were positive and strengthened over the period of the study.

[30]Research Questions:
1 What are teacher perceptions of school culture within and across case study schools?
2 How does school culture change in each School and across schools?
3 How do the components of school culture vary within schools and between schools?
4 What are the factors that initiate or influence the process of change in school culture?
5 What are the leadership strategies that develop school culture?

Modal scores also strengthened between years one and two, and responses to question 36[31] were overwhelmingly positive.

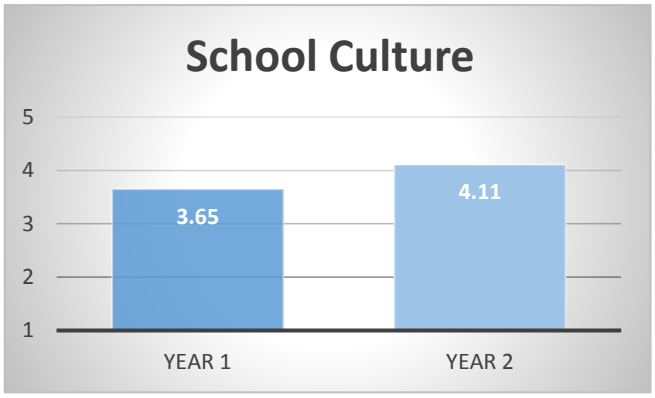

Figure 6.7: Overall school culture

Positive teacher perception of school culture, measured as a single question, is supported by the cumulative responses from analysis of Gruenert and Valentine's six school culture components. Table 6.19 and Figure 6.7 show the mean score for each of the components over the full period of the study. Professional Development, Collegial Support and Unity of Purpose scored highly and all the means analysed presented a score above 3.[32]

Table 6.19: School culture by component in year one and two

School A	**Year one**	**Mean**	**Year two**
Collaborative Leadership	3.42		3.77
Professional Development	3.88		4.00
Collegial Support	3.88		4.16
Teacher Collaboration	3.22		3.47
Unity of Purpose	3.50		3.92
Learning Partnership	3.24		3.51
School culture, mean of above components	3.52		3.81
Q36 School culture	3.65		4.11

[31] SC 36 This school has a strong positive culture.
[32] Likert scale: 5 strongly agree, 4 agree, 3 neither agree not disagree, 2 disagree, 1 strongly disagree.

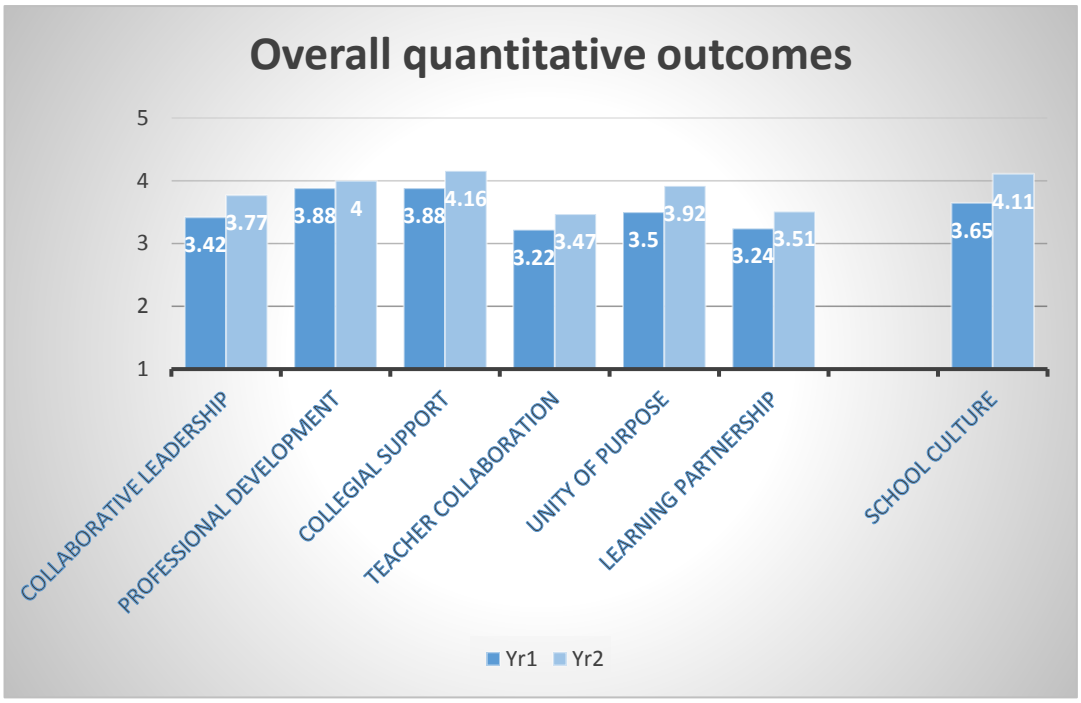

Figure 6.8: school culture by component in year one and two

The overall quantitative conclusion is that school culture in School A was positive at the beginning of the study and strengthened between years one and two in every single category. The extent of quantitative improvement in teacher perceptions is also highlighted in Figure 6.8 which shows the relative change in mean scores between years one and two. Overall school culture, together with perceptions of collaborative leadership and unity of purpose, show most improvement over the 12 months of the study. Perceptions of Professional Development, which had one of the highest means in year one, shows some of the lowest improvement. According to Table 6.19, school culture, as measured by the combined means of all the six cultural factors, also strengthened from year one to two from 3.52 to 3.81 But this improvement was much less when compared to the measurement of school culture as single question (Q36) as shown in Figure 6.8. In year one, only two statements on the teacher questionnaire out of thirty-six scored below 3.[33] In year two, none of the questionnaire statements recorded a mean score less than 3 whilst the number of statements scoring above 4 more than doubled to ten.[34]

[33] Questionnaire statements with mean of 3 or less in year one:
TC 33 Teaching practice disagreements are voiced openly and discussed. (2.92)
LP 35 Students generally accept responsibility for their schooling. eg. they engage in learning (2.96)

[34] Questionnaire statements with mean of 4 or more in year two:
PD 30 The school values overall improvement. (4.47)
CS 10 Teachers are willing to help out wherever there is a problem. (4.42)

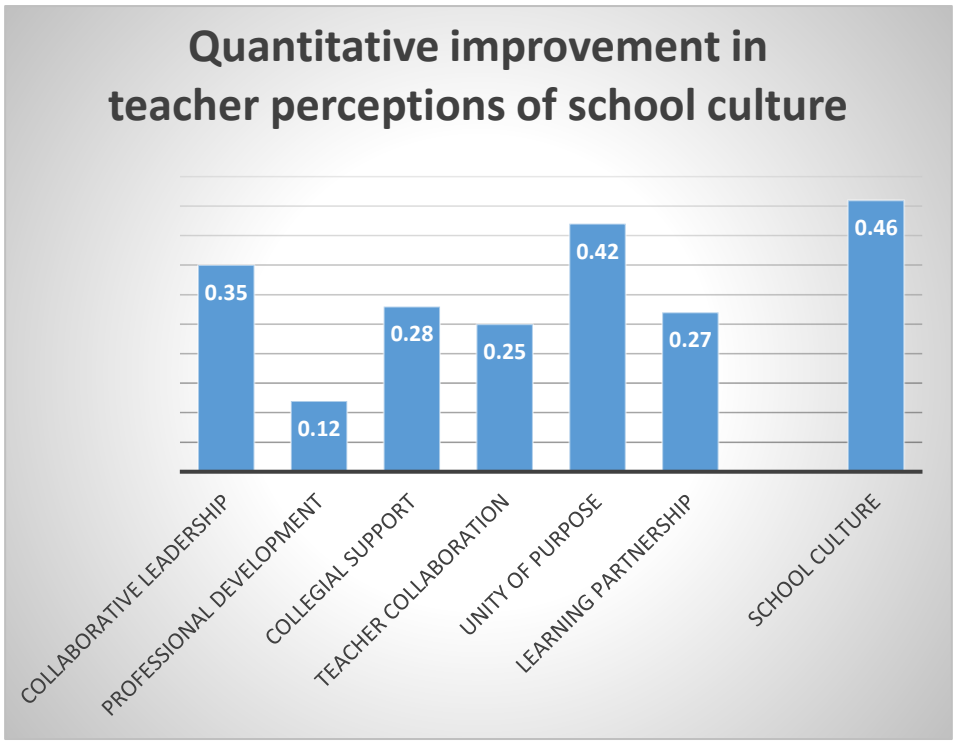

Figure 6.9: Quantitative improvement in teacher perceptions of school culture

Positive teacher responses to these individual statements show a school with a strong and improving sense of collegiality, trust, and appreciation of professional development. There is also clear support for the vision of the school and its mission to further improve standards.

Qualitative perceptions of school culture support the quantitative analysis over the period of the study. A summary of the qualitative findings is presented in Table 6.20, but it is also helpful to see individual comments. In year one for example, one middle leader commented "I absolutely love coming to work every day. I love it. I've never been happier." Experienced teachers too were positive about the culture of School A with only some reservations. "I think there a strong school culture here and I think they're trying to make a strong culture across

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CL 34 Teachers are encouraged to share ideas. (4.27)
CS 17 Teachers' ideas are valued by other teachers. (4.22)
PD 16 Professional development is valued by the school. (4.20)
CL 20 Teachers are kept informed on current issues in the school. (4.20)
UP 19 Teachers understand the vision of the school. (4.05)
PD 1 Teachers utilize professional networks to obtain information and resources for classroom instruction. (4.02)
CS 4 Teachers trust each other. (4.02)
UP 5 Teachers support the vision of the school. (4.02)

the federation, but I think they're struggling at the moment." For NQTs, school culture was a strength. "I think it's stronger culture than it was in September and I think it will continue to grow." Comments in year two also confirm School A's strong and positive culture, as one middle leader explained "I think we have a unique culture". Perceptions of school culture across the federation, however, were more thoughtful, as expressed by one middle leader "there's been a lot of change across the partnership, rather than at individual schools, it has been on a bit of a rollercoaster ride I'd say". Nonetheless, it was acknowledged that progress had been made. "I sense a growing feeling" said one senior leader "that we are actually one school on two sites much more". A middle leader concluded "I think the change over the last twelve months has very much been that both schools have begun to reconnect".

Table 6.20: Teacher perceptions of school culture according to role

Position in School	Perception of school culture in years one and two	Perception of change over time	Example comment
SLT	Positive and improving	In school good, across partnership mixed	The culture across the partnership, rather than at individual schools, has been on a bit of a rollercoaster ride (Yr2)
ML	Strong	Improving over time	I sense a growing feeling that we are one school on two sites much more (Yr2)
ET	Strong	Improving but disparity across partnership	I think there's a strong school culture here, I think they're trying to make a strong culture across the Federation, but I think they're struggling at the moment. (Yr1) I think here it is brilliant (Yr2)
NQT	Strong	Strong and improving	Partnership-wise, I think it's a stronger culture than it was in September and I think it will continue to grow. (yr1) Within the school the culture is good, it's got a nice atmosphere. (Yr2)

Qualitative findings support the above conclusions but provide additional insights from different groups of teachers. Table 6.20 summarises these perceptions and shows considerable agreement across the four groups. These responses are also representative

of the quantitative findings. For example, middle leaders confirm that school culture has improved over time whilst experienced teachers refer to a strong school culture but acknowledge the disparities between the partner schools.

6.8.2 School culture – Leadership strategies and other influencing factors (Research questions 4 and 5)

Key strategic actions by school leaders are recognised by groups of teachers as having a positive effect on school culture. These are summarised in Table 6.21. Regular meetings, personalised training, time set aside for teachers to meet, plan and share resources help to create a collegial atmosphere. Experienced teachers and middle leaders appreciate the supportive approach of school leaders and the need for structural change and clear targets. Whilst there remains some concern about how the relationship with partner School B distracts School A's development, there is widespread recognition of the leadership efforts made to think and act town-wide, rather than merely school-wide.

The qualitative evidence collected from interviews illustrate two emerging factors which influence the development of school culture in School A. These are shown in the summary of theoretical constructs in Table 6.22. Two clear factors emerge. Firstly, school improvement measures are developed within School A and across its partnership with School B and these have the impact of strengthening school culture. Secondly, the additional scrutiny of school A's underperforming partner school means that swift improvement measures are put in place across the MAT and these are closely monitored by Ofsted. The impact of this external monitoring is considerable and evident in interviews summarised by the theoretical constructs of each Gruenert and Valentine factor presented in Table 6.22. One construct highlights the 'external issues' which drive Teacher Collaboration whilst another refers to 'perceptions underpinned by past reputation.' Here, the factors which influence school culture and the leadership strategies employed, combine to provide a holistic picture of School A and its development over time; a theoretical narrative of its educational journey. (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).

Table 6.21: Leadership strategies / factors influencing school culture

Position in School	Collaborative Leadership	Professional Development	Collegial Support	Teacher Collaboration	Unity of Purpose	Learning Partnership
Senior Leadership Team	Daily Meetings Links with Depts. Dept. Meetings Permanent structural change	Sharing Three slots per year Training in local cinema Pixel (external agency)	Social events Bring people together Restoring relationships 'PILT' training	Meetings Dual roles Permanent structural change External factors	Bring people together Partnership Targets Public road map More frequent meetings Town wide targets Student targets	Persistent approach Joint sixth form centre
Middle Leaders	Two-way process Time provided Working together Lots of meetings	Personal approach External factors, Ofsted	Example strategies Use of 'growth mind set'	Overcoming change Removing 'blockers'	Good overview Staff go extra mile Need a clear narrative	Responsive parents Increased number of meetings
Experienced Teachers	Structural change	Supportive of CPD Acting roles Personalised CPD	Cultural change Sharing of resources	Structural change	Recognition that staff are at different levels Real clarity Driven Well briefed	Divide between schools is more apparent Improved systems
NQTs	Openness Opportunities to feedback Questionnaires	Pick and mix CPD Openness	Willingness to help Openness	Openness	Very clear strategy Needs more sharing	Pulling together 'Pushy' parents

The development of the theoretical constructs over time also illustrates a personal story that describes the subjective experience of the research participants and shows a collection of activities and initiatives which drive forward standards. The story of School A, therefore can be summarised by theoretical narratives, which bring together the theoretical constructs listed above. In year one, the theoretical narrative can be described as *determination to succeed* since this represents "the process that the research participants reported" and the subjective experience of their journey (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). By contrast, the experiences of the very small number of participants who were more 'isolationist' in their view of school culture can be summarised by the theoretical narrative *unconvinced developers* because of their reluctance to engage with those immediately outside their normal sphere of work.

Table 6.22: Theoretical Constructs in years one and two

Cultural factors	Year one	Year two
Collaborative Leadership	Action supporting collaboration Strategy with narrow focus	Energetic participation in collaboration Individuals act as barriers to co-operation
Professional Development	Training as a priority for improving standards	Standards driven by developing people
Collegial Support	Trust and teamwork underpin values	Trust overcomes change Trust part of school DNA
Teacher Collaboration	Sense of common values Few non-collaborators	Leadership and external issues drive collaboration Minority unwillingness to share
Unity of Purpose	Inspiring drive to raise aspirations Acceptance of barriers	Clear common vision Unfinished map of future
Learning Partnerships	Standards and participation expected Uniformity as an ambition	Perceptions underpinned by past reputation Changes challenging long held views

(Based on Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003)

In year two of the study, the constructs identify a change in the pace of developments and can be summarised by the narrative *accelerated improvements strengthening culture* since this is the experience of most of the participants interviewed. A different view is held by a very small number of those interviewed who remain *unconvinced participants,* particularly in

relation to School A's partnership with School B. They remain overwhelmingly supportive of their own school and the direction of educational travel.

Finally, here is the story of School A. A school with a strong collaborative and collegial culture where most teachers are keen to participate and where school leaders work to personalise training for staff. Here also is a school with a clear vision and unity of purpose, where 'trust' between teachers, and between teachers and school leaders, is clearly evident. Here is a place where collegiality, vision and collaboration are strong and where there is a keen desire to support a partner school despite the increased challenges this brings. The drain on resources and the need to think 'town-wide' rather than 'school-wide' impose a significant challenge. Yet, despite the obstacles, the overwhelming evidence is that leaders in School A were making substantial progress and there is evidence of a strong school and MAT culture which becomes stronger over time.

Chapter 7

Case Study School B

7.1 School B context

School B is a smaller than average co-educational 11-18 school in southern England. Of its students, 94 per cent have English as their first language, 4 per cent have special educational needs and 15 per cent are entitled to free school meals. School B is significantly more disadvantaged than its multi-academy trust partner, School A.

School B is a relatively new and modern building and mostly single story. The challenges facing School B become fully apparent on approach; a tall green fence and high-security locks separate students from the outside world. The school is surrounded by older social housing combined with some newer social housing. The profile of the area is deprived; unemployment and social problems are well above county averages. Entry by security gate suggests unwelcome visitors have been a feature of the school's history; a very small reception highlights a lack of capital funding, although school staff have done much to create an atmosphere of welcome and order. The first sign in reception that greets visitors warns that anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated. Many buildings appear tired, especially since budgets had been cut. Nonetheless, visitors are warmly welcomed with a sense of pride and purpose.

School B has had a mixed history in recent times with several headteachers in eight years and significant periods dealing with student underachievement and consequent scrutiny from Ofsted. School B opened as a comprehensive school in the early 1970s and re branded itself with a new name in the early 2000s. The headteacher who had led the re-branding left several years later after a disappointing Ofsted inspection. He was succeeded by a new headteacher who, along with governors, was also unable to secure the required improvements, leaving after only three years when the school was judged by Ofsted to require special measures. Despite these setbacks, the next headteacher worked in collaboration with the neighbouring secondary school (School A) and, after a consultation process, the two schools joined in a federation and School B reverted to its original name.

One year later, School B, alongside its federated partner School A, took advantage of the provisions of the 2010 Academies Act to remove itself from local authority control and become a DfE publicly funded independent academy, directly responsible to the Secretary of State for Education. Before obtaining academy status, School B secured sufficient improvements and Ofsted judged that it no longer required special measures. The school remained under close Ofsted scrutiny during the period of the longitudinal study between 2014 and 2015 and was once more judged to require special measures prior to the beginning of the research.

School B's challenging circumstances, regular Ofsted inspections and repeated change of leadership caused significant turmoil for the school, its staff and wider community. The student population fell sharply and the budget pressures that resulted required the Federation and latterly the MAT, to implement staff redundancies and other cost saving measures. During the period of the research, School B's student population fell to below 800 and teaching staff school to approximately 50. The base for sixth form provision was also removed by the MAT and located entirely at School A, although some School B teachers were still timetabled to teach post 16 students.

During the period of the research, a further Ofsted inspection noted that standards of education had improved sufficiently to remove School B from special measures. It was judged to require improvement. However, a further monitoring visit by Ofsted in concluded that insufficient progress had been made since the previous inspection and this prompted the headteacher to resign his post before my planned second data collection. In the weeks that followed the resignation, the headteacher of School A was given oversight and responsibility for School B while a series of redundancies were announced, and the search for a replacement headteacher began. In the summer of 2015, the headteacher of School A requested that I postpone my second data collection until September owing to the level of instability. The multi-academy trust received a warning notice stating that School B would be removed from their control unless rapid improvements were made. The new acting headteacher of School B took up post in 2015, and it was in this context that the second round of data was collected.

Each of Gruenert and Valentine's six cultural components has been analysed individually using qualitative and quantitative measures, and a summary of findings is presented at the end of the chapter.

7.2 Collaborative Leadership

7.2.1 Collaborative Leadership – Quantitative analysis year one / two

The individual scores for Collaborative Leadership in School B, as summarised in Figure 7.1[35], provided a standard deviation which was less than half of the mean, indicating that the means for Collaborative Leadership were good indicators of an average. Table 7.1 shows items of particular interest, where mean scores were neither positive nor negative about the school's approach to Collaborative Leadership in year one. An average of the eleven means produced a score of 2.98 and while there were several positive responses to perceptions of Collaborative leadership, the overwhelming response was less positive. Table 7.1 highlights some of the most positive and least positive scores.

Figure 7.1: Collaborative Leadership in year one and two

[35] Mean scores above 3 indicate 'strong' teacher agreement with each statement and scores below 3 show less teacher agreement. The cumulative effect of these scores shows that school culture is 'stronger' where the mean is above 3 and 'weaker.' where the mean is below 3.

In year one, mean responses to statements CL 34 and CL 32 were particularly strong. Only four of the eleven modal responses agreed with the question asked indicating that teachers had an overall less favourable view of Collaborative Leadership. Teacher responses tended to agree more with issues relating to sharing ideas and protecting planning time, and less with issues about trusting and praising teachers. Table 7.1 shows the three statements which gained the least teacher support, CL 7, CL 11 and CL 14.

Table 7.1: Collaborative Leadership – Teacher perceptions quantitative outcomes

Year one		Year two	
Mean	Statement	Mean	Statement
3.66	Teachers are encouraged to share ideas (CL 34)	**3.80**	Teachers are kept informed on current issues in the school (CL 20)
3.26	School leaders protect teaching and planning time (CL 32)	**3.68**	School Leaders value teachers' ideas (CL 2)
3.14	School leaders support risk taking and innovation in teaching (CL 28)	**3.56**	Teachers are encouraged to share ideas (CL 34)
2.76	Leaders in this school trust the professional judgments of teachers (CL 7)	**3.32**	School leaders support risk taking and innovation in teaching (CL 28)
2.63	School leaders take time to praise teachers that perform well (CL 11)	**3.08**	Teachers are rewarded for experimenting with new ideas and techniques (CL 26)
2.60	Teachers are involved in the decision-making process (CL 14)	**3.04**	School leaders take time to praise teachers that perform well (CL 11)

Perceptions of Collaborative Leadership by teachers in School B significantly improved in year two of the study. All eleven of Gruenert and Valentine's statements which relate to Collaborative Leadership scored a more positive response from teachers, and some significantly so. For example, eight of the eleven model scores in year two suggested 'agreement' with the question asked, while the average mean for Collaborative Leadership improved significantly from 2.98 in year one to 3.43 in year two. Most significant was the improvement in teacher perception of their school leaders in response to statements: CL 20, CL 2, CL 34 and CL 28. With an improving teacher perception of Collaborative Leadership over time, I now examine qualitative data to supplement the quantitative findings.

7.2.2 Collaborative Leadership – Qualitative analysis year one / two

Analysis of paired interviews confirms an improving perception of Collaborative Leadership in School B across the period of the study although there were a few examples where teachers questioned the extent of the collaboration experienced. Two of the four groups interviewed had a particularly positive view of Collaborative Leadership with one senior leader commenting "I think the situation is completely unrecognisable, it has moved massively". Another senior leader added "I think middle managers have been empowered to become more involved in decision making". Other participants were equally positive about the extent of Collaborative Leadership with comments such as "there is much more collaboration in some areas" and "there seems to be a lot of cross germination of ideas and actions".

Paired interviews supported the view that Collaborative Leadership had improved in year two of the study although some participants were particularly vocal about the nature of collaboration, particularly about the partnership work between School B and its MAT partner School A. For example, one NQT commented that "I think its probably fairly collaborative" while an experienced teacher added "there is more consistency than there was previously …but I don't know if collaboration is the right word". Further analysis of the paired interviews based on elaborative initial and secondary coding confirmed the positive and mixed perceptions of Collaborative Leadership, as expressed by the participants. Table 7.2 overleaf summarises the themes and theoretical constructs identified in years one and two and shows the underlying tension between an improving picture of Collaborative Leadership contrasting with a less positive perspective seemingly caused by feelings of instability and uncertainly amongst some of the participants.

Two clear theoretical constructs can be identified and this contrasting perspective is evidenced in years one and two of the study. There is plenty of evidence to substantiate the constructs *collaboration creating improvement* in year one and *strengthening collaboration* in year two. One participant, noted "there is so much growth together" and "I think that is leading the way forward". Similarly, another teacher observed "I think it is growing and I think ideas are being adopted". By year two, these same observers notice a sense of accelerated collaboration, but some of this was generated by external pressures from the Department for Education and Ofsted. "Very recently", said one participant "we've suddenly

got quite strong collaboration, haven't we?". Other teachers commented "the leadership has come together, they're fully together" and "when we got a visit from the Department for Education and got a little letter from them, then suddenly we had lots of SLT ". While there was a strong sense from most participants that Collaborative Leadership had improved in School B over the period of the study, there were a few participants for whom it was less evident and whose views generated the constructs *sense of inferiority caused by instability* and *individual disconnect with pace of change.* For these teachers, the challenges facing School B, the potential loss of jobs, the continued underperformance of students at age 16 and the complexities of its relationship with its partner School A, were represented in the views expressed. "I think we've gone through a lot, special measures and all those sorts of thing" said one teacher. She continued "you might have been asked to do a CPD session, but that's not collaborative".

Table 7.2: Collaborative Leadership – Summary Themes and Theoretical Constructs

Summary Themes	Year one Growing collaboration Increased momentum Feeling of inferiority Job losses Instability causing cynicism	Year two Faster pace of effective collaboration Strategy disguised as collaboration External factors accelerating change Sense of helplessness
Theoretical construct	Collaboration creating improvement Sense of inferiority caused by instability and uncertainty	Strengthening collaboration Individual disconnect with pace of change

(Based on Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003)

Views on Collaborative Leadership were also affected by staff changes as another teacher noted "I think in this school, there's a change or flux that's constant in managers, staff, middle leaders, they seem to change names a lot". Reservations about the effectiveness of Collaborative Leadership were particularly noticeable concerning the relationship between School B and its partner School A. Here, the feeling of inferiority and disconnect was apparent across both years of the study. "We were made to go over there for that **** meeting thing and then all the School A people sat over there and all of us sat over here." "We're at the bottom, we're slaving away, they come in and like what they see and go away

again" and "they do pay lip service. They'll invite us to a meeting to make us feel like we're having a say."

Whatever the personal views of individual participants about Collaborative Leadership, it is clear from the paired interviews that actions by the school leadership to address underperformance in School B were not only necessary but also monitored by the DfE and Ofsted through regular visits. These external pressures, whilst designed to assist the school to improve standards, also coloured perceptions and helped to create, amongst some teachers, a less positive view of Collaborative Leadership. On balance, however, the overall picture was more positive if punctuated with the reservations expressed above.

The cumulative quantitative and qualitative data so far assembled and analysed for teacher perceptions of Collaborative Leadership in School B provide strong evidence to answer research questions 1 and 3. In the section below, I analyse the same data by a role ordered matrix to examine evidence about other factors and specific leadership strategies which influenced outcomes and views as observed by the groups interviewed.

The role ordered matrix overleaf is a summative version of the matrices produced for years one and two of the study. The matrix provides a thematic snapshot of teacher perceptions of Collaborative Leadership according to role in the school and therefore addresses research questions 4 and 5 which address actions taken, and leadership strategies. Table 7.3, together with quotes from teacher interviews show that Collaborative Leadership has been assisted by regular meetings, more frequent consultation with staff and changes of roles to support improvements. As one senior leader noted "regular meetings are called where there is something to discuss and teachers are empowered to call a special meeting if that is deemed necessary". Another teacher confirmed "there have been changes in middle management here and they are looking at trying to make it much more collaborative". There is also clear evidence of a greater sharing of ideas within School B and with its partner school. One participant observed "there seems to be a lot of cross germination of ideas and actions…. and I see School A teachers coming over here taking part in assemblies and popping into lessons".

Table 7.3: Role Ordered Matrix – Collaborative Leadership

Position in School	Perception of Collaborative Leadership	Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change	Perception of change over time
SLT	Grown massively Greater empowerment of middle leaders Real impact	Regular meetings Greater consultation More transition work	Influence of external factors means speed of improvement needs to increase DfE gives 8 weeks to show improvement
ML	Better Collaboration Accelerated by external events Feeling of inferiority	Movement of staff More contact between schools	Increased collaboration Events changed because of external factors
ET	Sense of flux Kept in the dark Political interference	Change of roles Redundancies Forced training	Sense of cynicism Disconnect Helplessness People as scape goats
NQT	Sense of momentum Growing collaboration but heard	Cross fertilisation of ideas Greater movement between schools	Still two schools from ground up Not much sense of change

While this evidence illustrates actions which have helped to enhance Collaborative Leadership over the period of the study, uncertainty and insecurity amongst School B teachers also appears to have increased. “Here is a kind of pit bottom”, said one teacher, “because everyone kept leaving all the time, so that transition of staff gives an unstableness, especially to the kids”. In addition, the falling rolls added to the insecurity. A teacher observed that “any new words that involve ‘restructure’ to us now equate to getting the sack at some point”. In short, actions to address a falling roll require reductions in staffing and associated remedies which in turn undermine trust and a collaborative approach to leadership.

The quantitative data for all teachers showed improving perceptions of Collaborative Leadership over time, and therefore gave a good indication of how well strategies were received in general terms. The role ordered matrix in Table 7.3, even if not statistically significant, complements these findings by isolating, perceptions of different teacher groups in School B about Collaborative Leadership. The results show opinion divided. On one hand, senior leaders and NQTs are more positive about Collaborative Leadership and tend to describe an improving picture. Middle leaders and experienced teachers, however, tend to

hold a greater variety of views. Senior leaders are unequivocal. Collaborative Leadership has improved. “If you looked back twelve months” said one, “it was more blurred, but now towards the end of last academic year it wasn’t”. An NQT added: “it feels better because of the way things are going”. Middle leaders were less certain, “we felt we were the poor relation” said one. Another experienced teacher was more strident “there’s a dictatorship going on… robots are in place… there’s a sense of disproportionality”. It is difficult to assess the extent to which these final views are representative of teachers in general, and they are not supported by the quantitative findings, but the actions needed to improve standards quickly and the pressures that arise from external scrutiny clearly make it difficult to maintain a collaborative approach to leadership over the short term.

7.3 Professional Development

7.3.1 Professional Development – Quantitative analysis year one / two

Quantitative outcomes from questionnaires indicate that teachers in School B agree with the school’s approach to Professional Development with only one of the five statements indicating a negative perspective. The average of the five individual means was a positive 3.53 whilst four of the five modal scores also indicted positive teacher perceptions. In year one, teachers were strongly in agreement with the statements PD 1, PD 24 and PD 30. Table 7.4 and Figure 7.2 summarise the main findings and include statement PD 9 for which there was neither agreement nor disagreement.[36]

Teacher perceptions of Professional Development all improved in year two of the study with the average mean shortening significantly from 3.53 to 3.73. The emphasis on school improvement was also noticeable in teacher responses, with significant agreement for statement PD 30 about valuing school improvement. This outcome is of particular interest considering the challenges School B faced to raise standards.

[36] PD 9 Teachers regularly seek ideas from seminars, colleagues and conferences.

Figure 7.2: Professional Development in year one and two

The quantitative evidence here supports the view that school leaders have successfully focused on improving outcomes. This was reflected in the views of teachers when considering their Professional Development. The ongoing use of teacher networks to obtain information and resources, and the updating of current subject knowledge, received widespread support from participants. Modal outcomes too remained strong with teachers in agreement with four out of five statements. Overall, teachers support the school's approach to Professional Development and this view strengthened over the period of the study.

Table 7.4: Professional Development – Teacher perceptions quantitative outcomes

Year one		Year two	
Mean	Statement	Mean	Statement
3.91	Teachers utilize professional networks to obtain information and resources for classroom instruction (PD 1)	**4.29**	The school values overall improvement (PD 30)
3.69	Teachers maintain a current knowledge base about the learning process (PD 24)_	**3.88**	Teachers utilize professional networks to obtain information and resources for classroom instruction (PD 1)
3.69	The school values overall improvement (PD 30)	**3.84**	Teachers maintain a current knowledge base about the learning process (PD 24)_
2.80	Teachers regularly seek ideas from seminars, colleagues and conferences (PD 9)	**2.92**	Teachers regularly seek ideas from seminars, colleagues and conferences (PD 9)

7.3.2 Professional Development – Qualitative analysis year one / two

Views expressed in teacher interviews were not entirely consistent with the quantitative analysis. Whilst some teachers strongly agreed that Professional Development opportunities had continued to improve, other teachers expressed reservations about the underpinning rationale and lack of personalisation. There was general agreement that Professional Development in School B was co-constructed with its partner School A in order to secure maximum benefit for both schools. One participant observed "I think there's been a lot of creative thinking to develop people and it's lovely to see". By contrast, and acknowledging that they could be wrong, another teacher observed "I think there's a little bit of a difference…they seem to have more money to offer, whereas here it is quite restricted because of the amount of money we have". Despite these reservations, there were others who were more complimentary about what was on offer and its lasting effects: "I think professional development here looks very sound… and I think it has been very successful for the school".

Table 7.5: Professional Development – Summary Themes and Theoretical Constructs

Summary Themes	Year one Creative opportunities to develop people Home grown success in training Box ticking exercises of limited value Pace of change restricts time for effective training	Year two Joint development practice as a tool for development Variability of opportunity Greater direction and structure Imposition of training accelerated by external factors
Theoretical construct	Creative approaches to CPD Unwelcome imposition of ineffective training	Structured CPD External control of training

(Based on Auerbach &Silverstein, 2003)

Interviews with teachers conducted in year two did not reflect the improved perceptions as seen in the quantitative analysis. Whilst some participants still reflected on the overall benefits of Professional Development offered by the school, others were quick to criticise the motives for the training and lack of time training. One teacher acknowledged the benefit of the training "there's a lot of direction and it seems more structured to me". By contrast

another teacher suggested "my professional development over the last few years has been entirely sitting listening to someone talking from a Powerpoint, told to go and read something and that's it".

Further analysis of teacher interviews based on elaborative coding, confirmed the mixed perception of Professional Development in contrast to the quantitative findings. Table 7.5 summarises the main outcomes and identifies contradictory themes and theoretical constructs observed in years one and two. Here, the construct *creative approaches to CPD*, acknowledges the opportunities provided for teachers and the focus on 'home-grown' staff: "the teaching staff who have been home-grown so to speak, have been the kind of person that gets the kids who are here and I think that's a huge element of the success we're in at the moment". Equally, there is reference to the challenging context of teachers working in School B and the effect this has had on Professional Development. As one teacher described, "I think it's taken on a new type of prominence because of the quick change in expectations and all these things being implemented and us feeling left behind…it's a serious box-ticking exercise". For some teachers, the *unwelcome imposition of ineffective training* is linked to the relationship with partner School A and the organisation of training across the MAT. The understandable need to centralise training and share good practice was not always welcomed and created a feeling of inferiority amongst some staff in School B where historical baggage was always near the surface. "It's always been 'them' and 'us'" said one teacher; another considered the approach patronising.

In the interviews conducted twelve months later, it appeared little had changed. The quantitative outcomes supported an improved teacher perception of Professional Development while the theoretical constructs created from elaborative coding confirmed a continuing mixed picture. More *structured CPD* was evident as one teacher noted "possibly more direction as well I think". However, this was accompanied, presumably owing to the need to improve standards quickly, by *external control of training* which created further frustrations for some participants. "Again, there's a lot of things being imposed…. Nothing about what do you want to do, what do you need to do, what would help you, but you've got to do this because we've got to tick this box, so we did it and they ticked the box so everyone's happy." Whilst this sentiment isn't representative of all the teachers interviewed, it highlights a crucial dilemma facing school leaders in the drive to improve standards: how can Professional Development be tailored for the benefit of individuals whilst at the same

time responding to the need to raise standards quickly and in a cost-effective way? I will return to this issue when considering comparative data across three schools in Chapter 9. In the meantime, in the section below, I analyse the same data through a role ordered matrix to identify other factors and specific leadership strategies which influenced outcomes and views as observed by the groups interviewed.

The role ordered matrix in Table 7.6 overleaf provides a thematic snapshot of teacher perceptions of Professional Development according to role in the school. It therefore helps to answer research questions 4 and 5 which considers the impact of external factors actions taken by school leadership. Table 7.6 and evidence from teacher interviews show that Professional Development is characterised by several factors, some of which were welcomed by teachers and others less so. For example, there is evidence that some training has been personalised, borne out by a senior teacher "what can we do to support them on the next step of their journey?" There is also significant evidence to show that Professional Development has been approached from the perspective of two schools working together in partnership rather than individually and this is confirmed by another senior leader. "One is part and parcel of the other because it is planned from a Federation point of view." Unfortunately, some teachers in School B regarded the centralisation of training less favourably: "that was my least favourite experience, going over there". For such teachers it seemed to confirm the belief that one school was better than the other, and therefore under-valued the role of teachers working in School B. Despite attempts to negate this view, some School B teachers looked unfavourably on training in general: "sometimes I feel we're paying lip service, ticking a load of boxes, getting everybody together to do things where we've had to because we've been in special measures".

The wide range of teacher perceptions of Professional Development becomes even more apparent when the views of the four specific teacher groups are considered. Senior leaders and NQTs are more positive about Professional Development and tend to describe training designed to benefit the individual and the school.

Table 7.6: Role Ordered Matrix – Professional Development

Position in School	Perception of Professional Development	Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change	Perception of change over time
SLT	CPD planned across the Federation Sense of satisfaction in training	More creative thinking Training planned across schools Training conducted on both school sites Personalised training	Training changed to focus on Hargreaves' JPD model More personalised training Development of policies out of training CPD has become more thorough
ML	More Opportunity Separateness Sense of 'them and us'	Amalgamation of training across partnership Training driven by 'special measures'	Increased sense of cynicism over time Externally driven training Sense of being undervalued
ET	Box ticking exercise Feeling of being left behind Imposed training disproportionately applied	Centralised training across Federation Training not tailored	CPD imposed and not differentiated Training accelerated by external events No increase in trust Staff appear separate
NQT	Over use of power point More development of people as a result of partnership Training seen as sound and successful	More direction and structure to training SLT provided more energy and dynamism	Less time for training after NQT year Time pressure limits impact of training

Middle leaders and experienced teachers describe a process less well received, with insufficient time allocated and dominated by the need to respond to external pressures. Senior leaders are adamant that Professional Development is bespoke but also structured for maximum impact across both schools. They see teachers brought together to work on strategies based on the Hargreaves' model of joint development practice: a more solutions lead process, than the usual 'sharing good practice'. NQTs appear to share this view: "people have been able to develop themselves professionally and I think that's been a really big bonus and it's helped us within our school". Middle leaders and experienced teachers, however,

appear less convinced. Their view, as characterised in Table 7.6, is flavoured by two issues. Firstly, that Professional Development is guided by the requirements of Ofsted and the DfE, rather than the needs of teachers. Secondly, training across two schools, however well explained, appears predicated on the notion that one school is successful and one is not. This creates resentment rather than acceptance. It's probably best summarised in this middle leader comment "we are still 'us' and 'them'…. I guess it hasn't changed".

7.4 Collegial Support

7.4.1 Collegial Support – Quantitative analysis years one / two

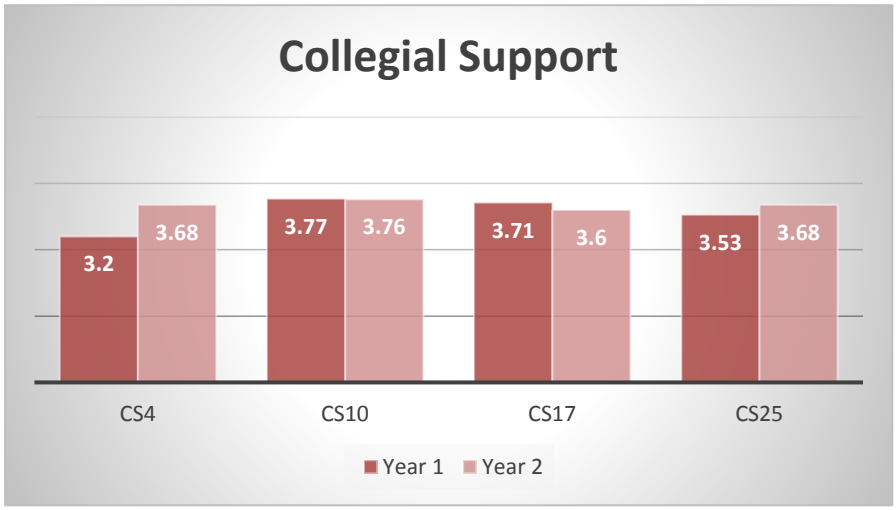

Figure 7.3: Collegial Support in years one and two

Quantitative outcomes from questionnaires indicate that teachers in School B have a positive perception of Collegial Support. Teachers were generally in agreement with all four statements with an average score of 3.55. All four of the modal scores also indicated positive teacher perceptions. In year one of the study, participants reacted particularly positively to statements CS 10 and CS 25.

Table 7.7: Collegial Support – Teacher perceptions quantitative outcomes

Year one		Year two	
Mean	Statement	Mean	Statement
3.77	Teachers are willing to help out wherever there is a problem (CS 10)	**3.76**	Teachers are willing to help out wherever there is a problem (CS 10)
3.53	Teachers work co-operatively in groups (CS 25)	**3.68**	Teachers work co-operatively in groups (CS 25)
3.20	Teachers trust each other (CS 4)	**3.68**	Teachers trust each other (CS 4)

Table 7.7 and Figure 7.3 summarise the main findings and show that, in year two, teacher perceptions of Collegial Support became more positive with the average of the four means strengthening to 3.68. Three of the four mean scores improved and the fourth mean declined by a mere 100th decimal place. All modal scores in year two also showed positive teacher responses.

7.4.2 Collegial Support – Qualitative analysis year one / two

Teacher perceptions of Collegial Support varied significantly and contrasted sharply with the outcomes of the quantitative whole school data. All groups interviewed recognised the extra pressures upon staff in the light of the Ofsted 'special measures' judgement and the redundancies which followed. As one senior leader observed "I think that trust has taken a bit of a battering over the redundancies apart from anything else". Other groups interviewed recognised the impact of School B's context and recent history on teacher perceptions of Collegial Support. The impact of the Ofsted judgement, according to one middle leader, was profound. "Once you get over the shock and the heartbreak that you are in special measures…you feel the pressure and it's almost like on your shoulder there's just someone always watching you." Levels of trust were also affected and some teachers felt 'blamed' for the schools' current circumstances: "it was very much 'you're the reason we are in it'. you are the teachers, it's your fault".

Interview evidence indicated that Collegial Support was not a strength across School B, but there was plenty of evidence of its impact elsewhere. One NQT noted "within our department, I think we are in a very strong position this year …. I know that we are all

working together". By contrast, an experienced teacher suggested that staff were being used as scapegoats: "I hate that. It doesn't happen often but when it does it's quite spectacular."

By year two, when School B had obtained a better Ofsted judgement and with a new headteacher in place, responses to the levels of Collegial Support changed markedly. One middle leader commented "I think there's complete trust between teachers within this school". This was echoed by an NQT, "I'd say there have been changes here and I think there's a lot more trust across the school". Such a change in view may partly be explained by the teacher who pointed to an increased sense of job security following the previous year's round of redundancies: "for the most part, I feel that a lot of people feel a lot safer within their jobs".

Table 7.8: Collegial Support – Summary Themes and Theoretical Constructs

Summary Themes	Year one Significant trust in some departments Special measures judgement undermines trust Redundancies undermine trust Pressure to improve creates blame culture	Year two Improving trust across school Variable trust across partnership Job security improves trust
Theoretical construct	Uncertainty undermines trust	Trust re-emerging

(Based on Auerbach &Silverstein, 2003)

A summary of the main themes and constructs for Collegial Support for teacher interviews in years one and two is outlined in Table 7.8. Here the external pressures of School B's 'special measures' judgement, combined with a phase of planned teacher redundancies, weakened the feeling of Collegial Support despite significant levels of trust existing within some departments. The perception prevailing in year one can be summarised by the construct *uncertainty undermines trust* and this difficult period in School B's history is described by a senior leader who appears almost helpless. "We've done absolutely everything we can and I think lots of members of staff can see that…that's really, really difficult and its almost like you become the enemy." The concept that some senior members of staff consider themselves

‘the enemy’ is confirmed by other teachers who refer to “a bit of a blame culture” and people “panicking”.

Table 7.9: Role Ordered Matrix – Collegial Support

Position in School	Perception of Collegial Support	Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change	Perception of change over time
SLT	Trust in Partnership continues to grow Redundancies affect sense of trust Some staff bitterness	Reduce staff Increased workload for those left Redundancies Attempts to reduce effects of redundancies	Support is varied Improved trust in some areas Trust across Federation improving particularly at senior level More partnership roles
ML	Blame culture developed after ‘special measures’ judgement Trust in School B but division across Federation Lack of trust and sense of the inevitable	Special measures causes a blame culture Sense that teachers are useless	External factors affect strategies Increase in sense of blame Greater sense of inferiority of teachers in School B Greater sense of camaraderie in difficult times
ET	Scapegoating Chasm Increase of Chinese whispers Sense of being at the bottom	Void created by headteacher leaving Chinese whispers increase	Deterioration in Collegial Support Events affect atmosphere Support seems to decrease
NQT	Support is good within departments Support less good between departments and across schools	Changes in staff and roles Better working together	Huge wall has disappeared More trust developing Some resentment remains

Twelve months later, perceptions had begun to change. Improving standards and a new headteacher, although temporary, had positive impact on teacher perceptions. “I think its better than it was by a long way” commented an NQT about Collegial Support both within School B and across the partnership of schools. “It’s no longer them and us, it's them and us in a much smaller way.” An experienced teacher reinforced that view: “individuals have helped us”. Although this period is best summarised by the theoretical construct *trust re-emerging*, it is worth noting that, for some teachers, improvements were much less evident. An experienced teacher said “I don’t think my opinion has changed”.

Analysis of teacher interviews by role confirms a contrasting view of Collegial Support over time combined with a perception of limited improvement by year two. A summary of findings is presented in Table 7.9 and shows that, while senior leaders and NQTs express a growing sense of Collegial Support within School B and across the partnership, middle leaders and experienced teachers are much less convinced. They refer to the emergence of a 'blame culture' originating from the actions of school leaders once Ofsted had placed the school in special measures and an increasing sense of uncertainty as redundancy put jobs at risk.

Table 7.9 reveals how each group interviewed perceived the changes happening in School B at this time and how actions and strategies manifested themselves. Despite the optimism of senior leaders, there remained clear recognition of the impact of redundancies. As one senior teacher explained "I think there have been a number of staff who are quite bitter about what has happened to them". Middle leaders and experienced teachers are much more explicit in their views, commenting upon the void created caused by the departure of the headteacher after an Ofsted monitoring visit, a reduction in the 'self-worth' of teachers in the light of the special measures judgement, and the increasing use of 'Chinese whispers' as a means of finding out the latest school developments. For those staff, Collegial Support is much more limited and, according to one NQT, even more so between the two partnership schools." I don't think we've reached a position where we can consider trust between teachers across the schools."

The quantitative and qualitative outcomes for Collegial Support seem to follow a similar pattern similar to the findings for Collaborative Leadership and Professional Development, that is quantitative results show more positive teacher perceptions than those expressed in the group interviews. How can we explain this? Firstly, the interviews enabled teachers to express in-depth views and extend their comments more broadly than in questionnaire responses. More importantly, the qualitative responses for Collegial Support enabled teachers to express views about 'trust' between teachers rather that 'trust' in a more general sense. The questionnaire, for example, did not invite responses about 'trust' based on hierarchy or role but it is clear that some teachers in the interviews were keen to express how whole school developments were influenced by the actions of senior leaders and external factors which were beyond their control.

These differences between the quantitative and qualitative findings create rich data. The mixed methods approach provides a more comprehensive view of teacher perceptions in School B during a difficult period in its development.

7.5 Teacher Collaboration

7.5.1 Teacher Collaboration – Quantitative analysis year one / two

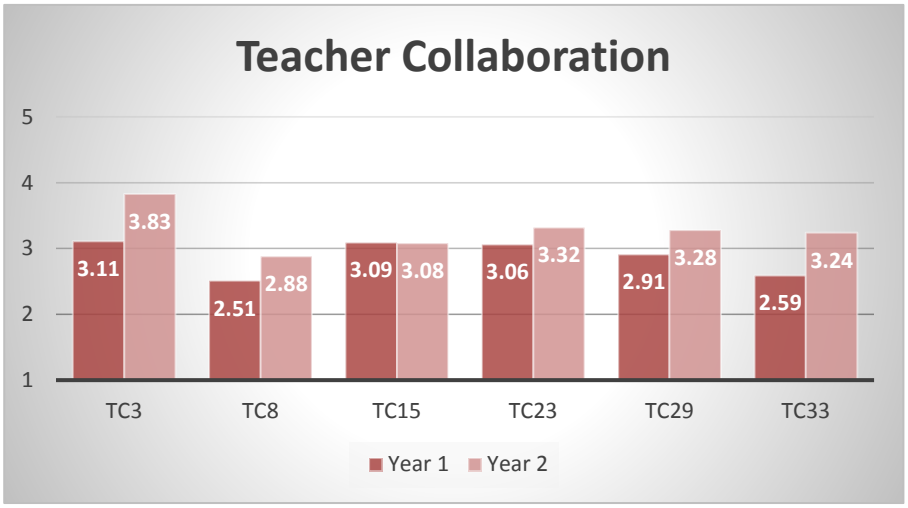

Figure 7.4: Teacher Collaboration in year one and two

The individual scores for Teacher Collaboration in School B, summarised in Figure 7.4, provided a standard deviation which was less than half of the mean, indicating that the means for Teacher Collaboration were good indicators of an average. Table 7.10 includes statements of particular interest and shows that mean scores were slightly more negative than positive about Teacher Collaboration in year one. For example, the average score for the six items relating to Teacher Collaboration produced a mean of 2.88 indicating that teachers either disagreed with the statements presented or neither agreed nor disagreed. Three of the statements, TC 8, TC 29 and TC 33[37] scored between 2 and 3, whilst the most positive scores were TC 15 and TC 23.[38] The overall conclusions from year one confirm that teacher

[37] TC 8 Teachers spend considerable time planning together.
TC 29 Teachers work together to develop and evaluate projects.
TC 33 Teaching practice disagreements are voiced openly and discussed.
[38] TC 15 Teachers take time to observe each other teaching.
TC 23 Teachers are generally aware of what other teachers are teaching.

perceptions of Teacher Collaboration are less than positive, and probably reflect the context of School B as seen from perceptions of other cultural components in year one.

Despite the more negative views expressed in year one, perceptions of Teacher Collaboration noticeably improve in year two of the study. The average mean of the six statements, for example, improves markedly to 3.27 and only TC 8 “teachers spend considerable time planning together” scored a less than positive mean. Indeed, responses to all year two statements suggest perceptions have improved and indicate that successful strategies had encouraged more collaboration to occur. The year two outcomes, listed in Table 7.10, support this theory. Statements TC 3, TC 23 and TC 15 show that teachers have a more positive perception of ideas focused on improving the planning of lessons and quality of teaching. This is borne out by the qualitative findings.

Table 7.10: Teacher Collaboration – Teacher perceptions quantitative outcomes

Year one		Year two	
Mean	Statement	Mean	Statement
3.09	Teachers take time to observe each other teaching (TC 15)	**3.83**	Teachers have opportunities for dialogue and planning across year groups and subjects (TC 3)
3.06	Teachers are generally aware of what other teachers are teaching (TC 23)	**3.32**	Teachers are generally aware of what other teachers are teaching (TC 23)
2.59	Teaching practice disagreements are voiced openly and discussed (TC 33)	**3.08**	Teachers take time to observe each other teaching (TC 15)
2.51	Teachers spend considerable time planning together (TC 8)	**2.88**	Teachers spend considerable time planning together (TC 8)

7.5.2 Teacher Collaboration – Qualitative analysis year one / two

Analysis of paired interviews in year one of the research provides improving perceptions of Teacher Collaboration within School B but less so across the partnership with School A. Senior leaders were clear that there were significant efforts being made to develop collaboration, “I think there is encouragement to work together and certainly training days, time is being built in to try and encourage subject areas to work together”. Experienced teachers also confirmed the positive perspective of Teacher Collaboration within School B. “I think in (name of school) there is good collaboration. We share resources, we try not to re-

invent the wheel every single time." Middle leaders were keen to see more working together."I think that it is critical and crucial to move a department to outstanding, you have to be sharing best practice, you have to be collaborating with those in your team." Middle leader perceptions of Teacher Collaboration with partner School A, on the other hand, were less positive. "I think again in terms of the partnership, it is hit and miss depending on your department." This view was confirmed by an NQT: "across the two schools I haven't seen much evidence other than some of the INSET meetings…".

By year two, perceptions of Teacher Collaboration within School B had improved further but remained mixed about collaboration across the MAT. Senior leaders reported that the need for further improvement in standards, following Ofsted's monitoring visits, intensified efforts to spread good practice through increased Teacher Collaboration. This was noted by an NQT: "I have seen a lot of staff talking to each other more, just generally, and then that leads far more easily into the general helping with all kinds of ideas that go across subjects". However, year two perceptions about Teacher Collaboration across the partnership varied. While senior leaders were adamant that collaboration had improved, others were less convinced. One middle leader said that she was "paying lip service to it really" and that "there'd been no real collaboration regarding subject to subject".

A summary of the main themes and constructs for Teacher Collaboration is provided in Table 7.11 and confirms the positive and improving perspective of teachers over time, contrasting with a less positive view of collaboration across the partnership. Year one therefore is summarised by the theoretical construct *collaboration improving and responding to change* and is perhaps, best exemplified by a senior leader: "I would say it is probably variable. I think it is variable by subject, by subject leader, by the characteristics of those roles." The same teacher went on to explain the challenges facing School B and its local partnership moving forward. "We've moved a long way, but you've only got to look at the size of our populations to see there is that culture to break within the people who have lived in the town." This highlights the specific context of School B where teachers work in partnership with a much larger, more successful and popular school.

Despite the variety of views, the combined themes emerging from year two can be summarised by the construct *collaboration improves trust* since this best describes the increasing co-operation between Schools A and B. Several teachers noted "there's no

competition anymore, it's just that we're working together, so that's helped" and "I think this year in (school name) there has had to have been more collaboration purely because where the sixth forms have been merged".

Table 7.11: Teacher Collaboration – Summary Themes and Theoretical Constructs

Summary Themes	Year one Variable collaboration Strong collaboration within and between specific departments Limited but improving collaboration across Federation	Year two More collaboration Variable collaboration within and between departments Limited but improving collaboration across Federation
Theoretical construct	Collaboration improving and responding to change	Collaboration improves trust

(Based on Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003)

Analysis of the qualitative data using the role ordered matrix in Table 7.12 highlights how Teacher Collaboration developed over time, the views of the four groups interviewed and the context in which developments took place. Contextually, senior leaders point to the significant cultural barriers that seem to exist. "We are trying to break a massive culture within the town where School A has been high achieving, high flying, whereas School B has been a technical college with behavioural issues." Table 7.12 identifies the strategies senior leaders have used to overcome those barriers to improve Teacher Collaboration between schools.

The use of training days, the creation of a common marking policy, sharing of resources and best practice are specifically identified strategies to improve collaboration, particularly across both school sites. The impact of these strategies is, however, disputed, and confirms the earlier finding of a split between the perspectives of groups interviewed. Senior leaders and NQTs refer to significant progress, improving collaboration and shared initiatives. This is not a view shared by middle leaders and experienced teachers who refer to collaboration as 'one-way'. Feelings of resentment and continuing suspicion are evident. "I get collaborated with when somebody wants something." For these teachers, Teacher Collaboration within School B is a strength, but the development of ever closer ties with School A are greeted less favourably.

Table 7.12: Role Ordered Matrix – Teacher Collaboration

Position in School	Perception of Teacher Collaboration	Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change	Perception of change over time
SLT	Variable across school Variable across partnership Variable by subject Trying to overcome barriers Trying to change a 'massive culture.' Moved a long way	Encouragement to work together Use of training days Looking to break a town wide culture Development of specific initiatives	Massive progress Initiatives shared across partnership Remaining suspicion between some middle leaders
ML	Driven in some depts. Variable Hit and miss Inconsistent	Development of marking policy across partnership Resources developed collaboratively Sharing of best practice within school and between schools	Some improving collaboration Other collaboration is lip service Collaboration rules different between schools Increasing sense of resentment
ET	Good collaboration within dept. Sharing of resources within dept. Depends on relationships Examples of distrust and resentment	Sharing of resources Sharing of ideas within depts.	Less collaboration across partnership Collaboration tends to be one way Collaboration remains varied
NQT	Little evidence of collaboration across sites A feeling of 'them and us' Different view if teachers teach across both sites	Feeling that teachers from School B always go to School A. Sixth form between two schools merged on site of School A	Improving collaboration Sense of inevitability Collaboration takes place School A site

7.6 Unity of Purpose

7.6.1 Unity of Purpose – Quantitative analysis year one / two

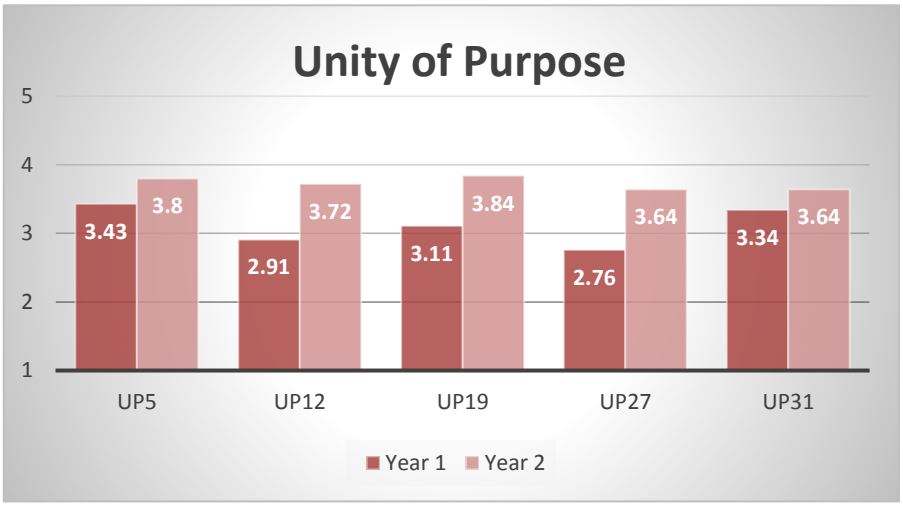

Figure 7.5: Unity of Purpose in year one and two

Despite varied responses to several of Gruenert and Valentine's measures of school culture, quantitative outcomes from questionnaires indicate that teachers in School B have a consistently positive perception of Unity of Purpose. In year one teachers scored more than 3 in three of the five statements, and a similar proportion of modal scores also indicated positive teacher perceptions. Table 7.13 summarises the most notable quantitative outcomes and shows that participants reacted particularly positively to the statements UP 5 and UP 31.[39] The statement with which teachers were in least agreement was "the school vision reflects the values of the community" (UP 27).

Perceptions of Unity of Purpose by teachers in School B significantly improved in year two of the study. Table 7.13 shows that all five of Gruenert and Valentine's statements scored a more positive response from teachers than in year one, and all statements scored between agree or neither agree nor disagree with an overall mean of 3.73. All five modal scores showed that teachers were in agreement with the statement asked. Most notable were positive teachers' responses to the statement UP 19, UP 5 and UP 12.[40]

[39] UP 5 Teachers support the vision of the school.
UP 31 Teaching performance reflects the vision of the school.
[40] UP 19 Teachers understand the vision of the school.
UP 5 Teachers support the vision of the school.
UP 12 The school vision provides a clear sense of direction for teachers.

Table 7.13: Unity of Purpose – Teacher perceptions quantitative outcomes

Year one		Year two	
Mean	Statement	Mean	Statement
3.43	Teachers support the vision of the school (UP 5)	**3.84**	Teachers understand the vision of the school (UP 19)
3.34	Teaching performance reflects the vision of the school (UP 31)	**3.80**	Teachers support the vision of the school (UP 5)
3.11	Teachers understand the vision of the school (UP 19)	**3.72**	The school vision provides a clear sense of direction for teachers (UP 12)
2.91	The school vision provides a clear sense of direction for teachers (UP 12)	**3.64**	The school vision reflects the values of the community (UP 27)
2.76	The school vision reflects the values of the community (UP 27)	**3.64**	Teaching performance reflects the vision of the school (UP 31)

7.6.2 Unity of Purpose – Qualitative analysis year one / two

Analysis of paired interviews confirms an improving perception of Unity of Purpose in School B across the period of the study, although some participants referred to a lack of clarity about how information was communicated. In addition, concern was expressed about the medium term, as the third headteacher in two years was due to take up post. Despite the continuity afforded by the executive headteacher of the MAT, already well known to staff in School B, the more immediate changes in leadership would inevitably affect perceptions of staff about the future direction of the school.

For the purposes of this study, Unity of Purpose reflected in the quantitative findings is not fully reflected in teacher interviews, although some teachers were clear about a core purpose as this comment by a senior teacher illustrates: “when we first federated, the vision was the vision was that there would be ‘two schools one purpose’ and I think that kind of strap line has kind of stuck”.

While recognising the importance of a vision that provides a clear direction for the future, there was some frustration that School B’s current situation made future planning more difficult. One experienced teacher commented “I think our vision has been muddled a little. Within this school it’s difficult at the minute to have a clear vision because of politically all the stuff that’s going on.” This view was echoed by an NQT: “I wouldn’t be 100 per cent

clear on what our vision is here, mainly because we've had quite a turbulent few years going through special measures and things like that".

Table 7.14: Unity of Purpose – Summary Themes and Theoretical Constructs

Summary Themes	Year one Inconsistent and changing vision Determination to improve External events affect school direction and vision	Year two Clear vision from leadership Optimistic vision for partnership Vison affected by changing structure Changes in headship affects vision
Theoretical construct	Turbulent vision	Determined vision challenges uncertainty

(Based on Auerbach &Silverstein, 2003)

By year two, the general tone of interviews had become more optimistic, despite lingering and specific reservations, and this is reflected in teachers' comments. Senior staff, are quite clear about the future direction of School B and its role in the partnership. Changes in headteacher and removal from 'special measures' created a sense of progress. Other teachers too embraced optimism: "I think (the executive headteacher) knows what he is doing" and "whatever the vision is, we're getting there aren't we?" Additional analysis of themes based on elaborative initial and secondary coding reflects the positive and at the same time turbulent view of Unity of Purpose seen in teachers' comments above and summarised in Table 7.14.

The determined and clear vision provided by the executive headteacher and senior teachers, contrasts with the instability felt by some teachers during a period of turbulence and uncertainty created by the threat of redundancy, frequent inspection visits and anxiety about the future. There is debate amongst participants about the concept of Unity of Purpose as it relates to a partnership rather than an individual school. "When we first became an academy we were told we were going into a partnership, but we are still going to be two schools, you have your values and they'll have theirs." The same teacher continued "but I think if we are a partnership we should have similar values". Another teacher provided a more succinct view

of the difficulty relating Unity of Purpose to more than one school: “across the partnership as a whole, I don’t think they’ve made the link yet, or I haven’t seen any evidence of the link of what the vision is for the two schools”. She continued “there should be one vision, but I think it is quite difficult to put the same vision across two such different schools”. In short, Table 7.14 shows the overarching themes from year one, and these findings are summarised in the theoretical construct *turbulent vision* as a means of charting School B’s abstract journey in the words of its participants.

Despite the increasing optimism inspired by the executive headteacher and senior teachers, year two findings for Unity of Purpose are influenced by specific school structural changes which affect attitudes and perceptions. The removal of School B’s sixth form and it's relocation onto School A’s campus, caused considerable resentment and frustration for some teachers and this is reflected in their views of Unity of Purpose in year two. “The school feels different without a sixth form…It’s the worst thing ever” expressed one teacher, while another went further “our kids did well in the sixth form. I think it’s just another **** nail in the coffin to be honest…. I don’t know what the vision is!”. These views, while not necessarily representative, are important indicators of an unfinished journey and are therefore reflected in the year two themes in Table 7.14 and in the theoretical construct *determined vision challenges uncertainty*. This summarises some of the remaining anxiety inherent throughout the interviews, and confirms the impact of significant change upon attitudes and perceptions of those involved.

The clear difference in perceptions according to role, apparent in the analysis of other cultural factors in School B, is also reflected in Unity of Purpose. The role ordered matrix in Table 7.15 shows that middle and experienced teachers, in particular, whilst acknowledging that some progress has been made, have a much more negative views of Unity of Purpose and of the future in general. By contrast, senior leaders are much more optimistic but at the same time realistic about the way ahead. “Despite the knocks, it's almost like we are a ship that’s got a bit of damage to it, and so you clean it up, and you make it all nice and then you tackle what comes next and you get a bit battered again, and you make it good and sort it out, and you move on.”

Table 7.15: Role Ordered Matrix – Unity of Purpose

	Perception of Unity of Purpose	Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change	Perception of change over time
SLT	One vision is a reality	New strategies give direction to a 'battered ship' Headteacher has clear vision and its communicated	Improving vision External factors have accelerated actions DfE intervention has impacted upon change
ML	Unity based on values Improving but significant challenge Negative identity	Executive headteacher has greater presence at School B Removal of sixth form Suggestion that schools should be amalgamated	Blurred vision because of several headteachers in short succession The vision for the school and partnership is now developing School B remains an easy target for criticism The community perception is still negative Situation has deteriorated
ET	Muddled vision Vision difficult in challenging times	Greater presence by executive headteacher More join activities More presentations	Creation of academy has changed vision Wider vision creates more threats and dangers
NQT	Vision not 100 per cent clear New vision in turbulent times Unequal vision across partnership	No obvious vision for two schools executive headteacher trying to create partnership vision New temporary headteacher has made a big impact	Increasingly clear vision but future remains uncertain

Table 7.15 highlights the events and strategies that have shaped Unity of Purpose and influenced perceptions. Specifically, the clear vision and greater presence provided by the executive headteacher, the impact of the new temporary headteacher, the removal of the sixth form and increased number of shared activities have all influenced teachers' perceptions. For senior leaders, Unity of Purpose has grown stronger, and there is greater optimism about the

future. Similarly, NQTs were confident about the vision:" I think across the federation we're fairly clear at the moment…. the headteacher has made things very clear as to where we are going". Experienced teachers and middle leaders, however, remain sceptical. The vision is blurred because of changes in leadership, and despite some improvement, the community perception remains negative. All of this was summed up by one middle leader:" our identity is completely wrapped up in people's negative opinions. This school is an easy target…The perception is that we're crap!"

In summary, the combined quantitative and qualitative outcomes for teacher perceptions of Unity of Purpose, particularly in year two, are amongst the strongest indicators yet observed in the analysis of school culture in School B. The qualitative evidence correlates with the quantitative findings and despite some reservations, reinforces the need for a strong vision to secure improved outcomes, improved standards and teacher 'buy in'. I now move on to analysis the sixth and final Gruenert and Valentine cultural component, Learning Partnership.

7.7 Learning Partnership

7.7.1 Learning Partnership – Quantitative analysis year one / two

Teacher perceptions based on mean scores were generally less than favourable about Learning Partnership in School B with three of the four measures scoring between 2 and 3 and only one measure scoring between 3 and 4. Three of the four modal outcomes also scored 3 and the average of the means was 2.86, the weakest score of any of the six Gruenert and Valentine factors so far considered. Table 7.16 and Figure 7.6 summarises the main quantitative findings and shows that the strongest aspects of Learning Partnership were LP 21 and the weakest was LP 35.[41]

Perceptions of Learning Partnership had marginally improved twelve months later, but the average of the mean at 3.09 was the weakest year two score of all the cultural factors. In addition, only one of the modal scores shows agreement by teachers whilst three of the modal scores show either disagreement, or neither agreement nor disagreement.

[41] LP 21 Teachers and parents communicate frequently about student performance.
LP 35 Students generally accept responsibility for their schooling.

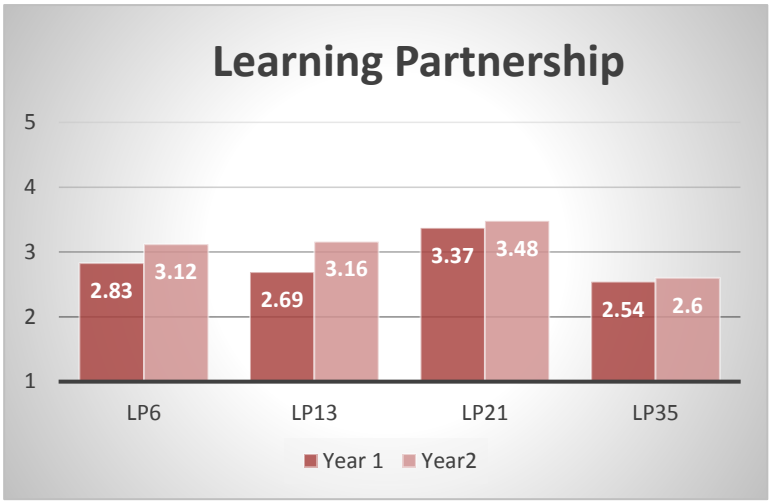

Figure 7.6: Learning Partnership in year one and two

The strongest and weakest statements in year two were the same as in year one. The overall view therefore from the quantitative findings is that teachers do not see Learning Partnership as a strength, although some improvement is recognised over the period of the study.

Table 7.16: Learning Partnership – Teacher perceptions quantitative outcomes

Year one		Year two	
Mean	Statement	Mean	Statement
3.37	Teachers and parents communicate frequently about student performance (LP 21)	**3.48**	Teachers and parents communicate frequently about student performance (LP 21)
2.83	Teachers and parents have common expectations for student performance (LP 6)	**3.16**	Parents trust teachers' professional judgements (LP 13)
2.69	Parents trust teachers' professional judgements (LP 13)	**3.12**	Teachers and parents have common expectations for student performance (LP 6)
2.54	Students generally accept responsibility for their schooling e.g., they engage in learning (LP35)	**2.60**	Students generally accept responsibility for their schooling e.g., they engage in learning (LP 35)

7.7.2 Learning Partnership – Qualitative analysis year one / two

Views expressed in teacher interviews agreed with the outcomes from the quantitative analysis. The prevailing view from all groups was that relations with parents had improved and was continuing to improve, although that had not always been the case as one teacher explained "we are not having the fights we used to a few years ago". The level of expectation between groups, however, varied and remained a concern: "I don't think there's a common expectation".

Table 7.17: Learning Partnership – Summary Themes and Theoretical Construct

Summary Themes	Year one Improving partnership is a challenge Lack of shared expectations Improved partnership with students Significant variation across partnership	Year two Improving partnership Fragile relationships More support from parents Increased confidence from parents
Theoretical construct	Varied but improving partnership	Greater confidence in partnership with parents

(Based on Auerbach &Silverstein, 2003)

By year two, perceptions had continued to improve. "I think there's been a change in twelve months and I think it is fairly noticeable". Additional analysis of themes based on elaborative initial and secondary coding summarised in Table 7.17 confirms a generally improving trend in the partnership between teachers, parents, and students and this also extended across the MAT. A senior teacher noted "where there's an opportunity, we are pulling together certainly across the partnership". Despite the different expectations of some students and their parents, and the challenges this posed to improving standards and outcomes, the emerging themes from Table 7.17 support the theoretical construct *varied but improving partnership.* This is reinforced by the comments of an NQT: "I've actually been pleasantly surprised that when I have had to speak to parents, they actually share my view or the school's view most of the time".

The sense of improving parent partnership, however fragile, is a theme which continued to emerge in year two of the research and is summarised by the construct *greater confidence in partnership with parents.* A middle leader reflected the increasingly supportive stance of local parents: "you get the odd one, who is angry with everything, and blames the school for everything but I don't think on the whole they're all right, they're quite supportive".

Table 7.18: Role Ordered Matrix – Learning Partnership

	Perception of Learning Partnership	Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change	Perception of change over time
SLT	Pulling together across partnership	Similar strategies across both schools More robust approach to reinforcing standards	Improvement in support from parents
ML	Parents relatively supportive Lack of common approach	Routine parent meetings	Parents remain fairly supportive
ET	Strategy seems pointless	More support from senior leaders	Little change if any in parental perceptions
NQT	No common expectation Fewer disagreements	Common strategy across schools More support from new headteacher	Noticeably positive change in parental perceptions

One explanation for the improving perception in Learning Partnership and the relationship with parents, however marginal, emerges from the role ordered matrix in Table 7.18. Here a more robust approach from senior leaders, particularly the new headteacher, had an impact by re-enforcing standards and expectations. An NQT explained that "the new headteacher has given a real positive lead…massively it has made a change". Both senior leaders and NQT's report an improving situation, while a middle leader also concluded that parents were "fairly supportive here".

I have now considered all the quantitative and qualitative data from Gruenert and Valentine's six school culture components and assessed teacher perceptions of each. In the following section, I examine teacher perceptions of school culture as a single component and summarise the cumulative findings of all the data collected.

7.8 Overall school culture and conclusions

In the final part of this chapter, I answer the five main research questions for School B.[42] The findings are divided into two sections: quantitative and qualitative results of teacher perceptions of school culture, and leadership strategies and other factors which influence cultural change.

7.8.1 School culture – Quantitative and qualitative findings of teacher perceptions in year one and two (Research questions 1-3)

The quantitative measures below in Figure 7.7 and Table 7.19 overleaf show that teacher perceptions of school culture were less than positive in year one but improved over the period of the study. Modal scores also strengthened between years one and two. Teacher perceptions of school culture measured as a single factor are supported by the cumulative outcomes from Gruenert and Valentine's six components. Figure 7.8 on page 154 shows the mean score from each cultural component over the full period of the study. Three of the six measures, Professional Development, Collegial Support and Unity of Purpose indicated a positive rather than negative score and all measures improved over time.

Half of the cultural factors in year one, however, scored less than 3, although all factors, as shown in Table 7.19 and Figure 7.8 scored between 3 and 4 in year two. The overall quantitative conclusion, therefore, is that teacher perception of school culture in School B was equally positive and negative in year one but strengthened over the course of the study.

The cumulative mean scores in Table 7.19 were also more positive about overall school culture in years one and two when compared to responses to question 36. Figure 7.9 shows the cumulative strengthening of school culture for each factor with most improvement

[42] Research questions:
1 What are teacher perceptions of school culture within and across case study schools?
2 How does school culture change in each school and across schools?
3 How do the components of school culture vary within schools and between schools?
4 What are the factors that initiate or influence the process of change in school culture?
5 What are the leadership strategies that develop school culture?

observed in Collaborative Leadership, Teacher Collaboration and Unity of Purpose. Teacher responses to individual questions in year one reveal divided perceptions of school culture.

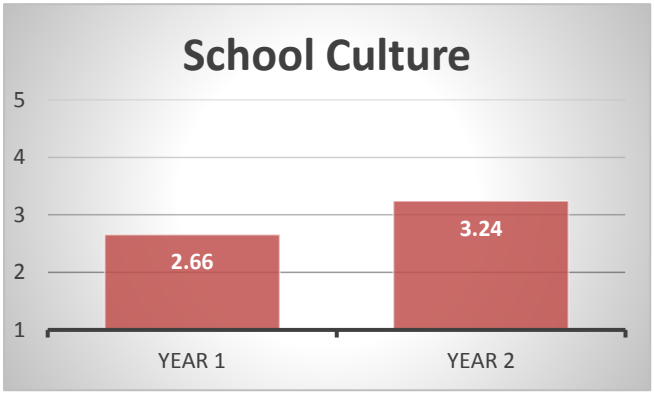

Figure 7.7: Overall school culture

Table 7.19: School culture by component in year one and two

School B	Year one	Mean	Year two
Collaborative Leadership	2.98		3.43
Professional Development	3.53		3.73
Collegial Support	3.55		3.68
Teacher Collaboration	2.88		3.27
Unity of Purpose	3.11		3.73
Learning Partnership	2.86		3.09
School culture, mean of above components	3.15		3.48
Q36 School culture	2.66		3.24

16 of the 36 questions in the Gruenert and Valentine survey scored less than 3, including 6 relating to Collaborative Leadership. There is also divided recognition of the school's vision and the extent of teacher collaboration. By year two, however, only three statements scored less than 3 and one statement, PD 30 scored a positive 4.[43]

[43] Questionnaire statements with mean of 4 or more in year two:
PD 30 The school values overall improvement.
Questionnaire statements with mean of 3 or less in year two:
PD 9 Teachers regularly seek ideas from seminars, colleagues and conferences. (2.92)
TC 8 Teachers spend considerable time planning together. (2.88)
LP 35 Students generally accept responsibility for their schooling. Eg. they engage in learning (2.6)

Qualitative perceptions of school culture support the quantitative analysis and show improvement over time. In year one, the effect of 'special measures' and its impact on staff morale and well-being was clearly apparent. It would be reasonable to expect that school culture was wholly negative during this period of time. In reality, however, there are signs of real resilience and a determination to improve standards as can be seen from the positive responses to Unity of Purpose and Collegial Support. By year two, there is a distinct and noticeable improvement in school culture and this is supported by a teacher comment: "yes its coming, it's changing" and "from my point of view, school culture has improved, is getting better, more positive".

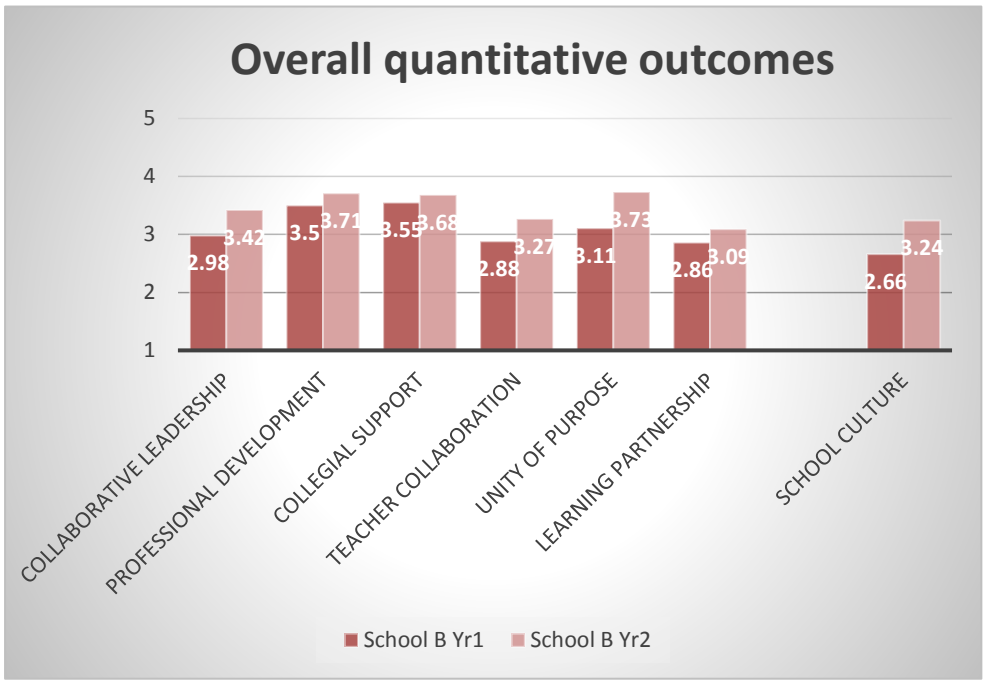

Figure 7.8: School culture by component in year one and two

Several factors have a significant effect on school culture and how it changes during the period of the study. Firstly, initial data was collected during a period of time when School B was judged as requiring special measures by Ofsted. The impact of this on the morale of teachers was significant and resulted in a variety of responses from a determination to succeed to a resignation of failure. Secondly, School B's partnership with School A, firstly as a federated partner and then as part of a multi-academy trust, also had a significant effect upon school culture. For some teachers the partnership was seen as a benefit and an opportunity to share good practice and use new ideas. For others, the partnership was seen as

a ‘one-way street’ where School B was always the weaker partner and in effect, being directed by its more successful neighbour.

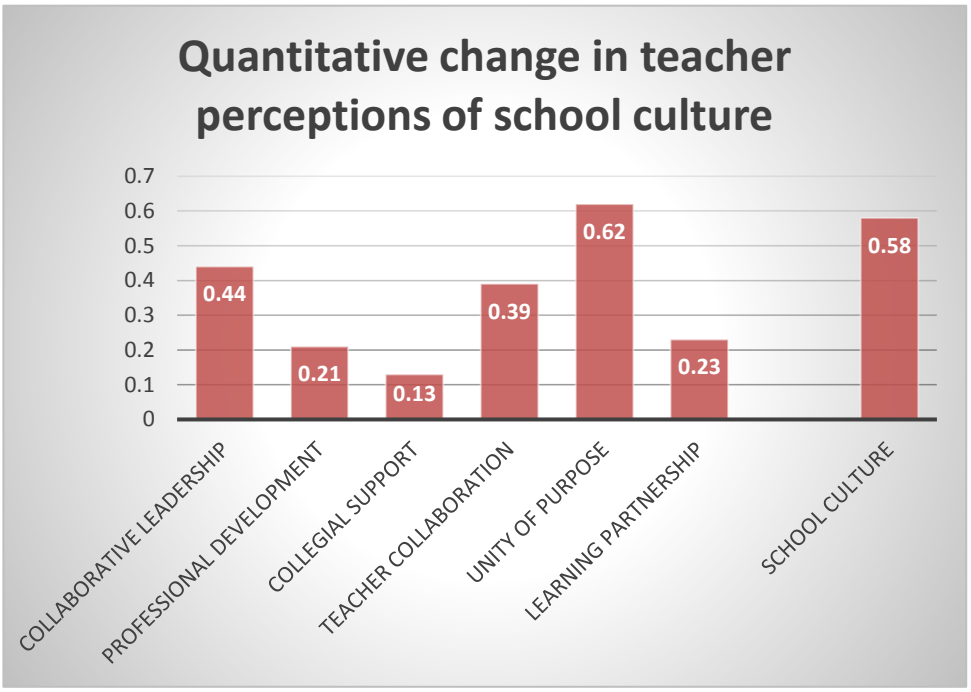

Figure 7.9: Quantitative improvement in teacher perceptions of school culture

Table 7.20: Teacher perceptions of school culture according to role

Position in School	Perception of school culture in years one and two	Perception of change over time	Example comment
SLT	Improving	Improving	
ML	Challenging	Some positive signs	From the staff perspective, I think they can see there’s a Federation culture developing (year two)
ET	Mixed	Developing	It reminds of me of two people having a relationship, if one person isn’t ready to have a relationship because of personal issues they have themselves then that relationship won’t work. (year one)
NQT	Family oriented	Improving	I think there is a big difference in culture between the two schools. (year two)

Table 7.20 summarises teacher perception by role. While there appears to be general agreement amongst School B teachers that school culture improves over time, also shown in Figure 7.9, the views of experienced teachers and middle leaders are more mixed, particularly

with reference to the MAT relationship with school A. Table 7.20 presents a more detailed analysis of school culture by role and includes specific references to leadership strategies and other factors which have influenced teacher perceptions. If perceptions of school culture are linked to feelings of success and well-being, it follows that strategies to improve academic outcomes will ultimately improve school culture. The problem is that leadership strategies to improve outcomes often require drastic and swift actions to improve the quality of teaching. These are not always welcomed by staff because of increased monitoring of teaching, often accompanied by the need to change teaching methods. In School B, poor student achievement required urgent action to improve standards. This included the need to share ideas and resources with its more successful partner school, and the removal of School B's sixth form in order to consolidate resources on one site. Despite the unwelcome reaction of some teachers, by year two of the study, it was clear that standards in School B were improving; the new headteacher was having an impact. School culture was perceived as healthier. Table 7.21 highlights leadership strategies and other factors which had positive and negative effects on teachers' perception of school culture. For example, more personalised training, greater in-school and cross-school collaboration, and the sharing of ideas and resources combined with the increased visibility of the headteacher are all welcomed by staff.

By contrast, the suspicion that strategies are being driven as a consequence of the 'special measures' judgement are seen, particularly by middle leaders and experienced teachers, to confirm a sense of inferiority amongst School B teachers. The restructuring of posts and responsibilities, on-going redundancies and the feeling of a 'blame culture' undermined attempts to create a more positive working atmosphere.

The summative collection of theoretical constructs in Table 7.22 helps conclude the analysis of School B over twelve months and provides a theoretical narrative of its educational journey (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). The organisation of this construct creates a personal story that describes the subjective experience of the research participants. It shows, in year one, a difficult and divisive period of development where change is required and often imposed to secure an improvement in standards. The theoretical narrative, in year one, which summarises the collection of theoretical constructs, can be described as *reluctant improvement* as teachers respond to the external and internal challenges needed to secure better outcomes for students.

Table 7.21: Leadership strategies / factors influencing school culture

Position in School	Collaborative Leadership	Professional Development	Collegial Support	Teacher Collaboration	Unity of Purpose	Learning Partnership
Senior Leadership Team	Regular meetings Greater consultation More transition work	More creative thinking Training planned across schools Training conducted on both school sites Personalised training	Reduce staff Increase on workload on those left Redundancy Attempts to reduce effects of redundancies	Encouragement to work together Use of training days Looking to break a town wide culture Development of specific initiatives	New strategies give direction to a 'battered ship' Headteacher has clear vision and its communicated	Similar strategies across both schools More robust approach to reinforcing standards
Middle Leaders	Movement of staff More contact between schools	Amalgamation of training across partnership Training driven by 'special measures'	Special Measures causes blame culture Sense that teachers are useless	Development of marking policy across Partnership Resources developed collaboratively Sharing of best practice within school and between schools	Executive headteacher has greater presence at School B Suggestion that schools should be amalgamated	Routine parent meetings
Experienced Teachers	Change of roles Redundancies Forced training	Centralised training across Federation Training not tailored	Void created by headteacher leaving Chinese whispers increase	Sharing of resources Sharing of ideas within depts.	Greater presence by executive headteacher More joint activities More presentations	More support from senior leaders
NQTs	Cross fertilisation of ideas Greater movement between schools	More direction and structure to training SLT provided more energy and dynamism	Changes in staff and roles Better working together	Feeling that teachers from School B always go to School A. Sixth form between two schools merged on site of School A	No obvious vision for two schools Executive headteacher trying to create partnership vision New temporary headteacher has made a big impact	Common strategy across schools

In year two of the study, the constructs identify change in the pace of developments and can be summarised by the narrative *emerging optimism growing success* since this is the

rhetoric of the quantitative and qualitative findings. With new leadership, a renewed determination and signs of success, School B appears to be emerging into a brighter future with a more positive culture, despite the views of some staff who remain resistant to change. Here then is the story of a school where teachers have always seen themselves as the 'underdog' in a town where School A, even before federation and MAT development, was seen as more successful.

Table 7.22: Theoretical Constructs in year one and two

Cultural factors	Year one	Year two
Collaborative Leadership	Collaboration creating improvement Sense of inferiority caused by instability and uncertainty	Strengthening collaboration Individual disconnect with pace of change
Professional Development	Creative approaches to CPD Unwelcome imposition of ineffective training	Structured CPD External control of training
Collegial Support	Uncertainty undermines trust	Trust re-emerging
Teacher Collaboration	Collaboration improving and responding to change	Collaboration improves trust
Unity of Purpose	Turbulent vision	Determined vision challenges uncertainty
Learning Partnerships	Varied but improving partnership	Greater confidence in partnership with parents

(Based on Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003)

The period encompassing the research is turbulent with significant external scrutiny, but with a governing Trust determined to provide a whole-town solution to student under-achievement. Some teachers, particularly a few middle leaders and experienced staff, seem jaded in their response to change; for them, the seemingly regular change of headteachers, regular visits by Ofsted, redundancies, falling rolls and constant comparison with their more successful neighbour, is difficult to endure. And yet, the drive provided by the executive headteacher and new headteacher of School B who joined mid-way through the research, provides vigour and resilience to which most teachers respond. Increased Collaborative Leadership, Collegial Support and a clear vision for the future (Unity of Purpose) help to strengthen school culture across all measures and provide an increasingly optimistic view of the future.

Chapter 8

Case Study School C

8.1 School C context

In this chapter, I consider the creation and development of school culture in the third of my three case study schools. First, I outline School C's context and its educational journey over recent years which was punctuated by frequent changes in leadership. In the second section, I examine how the quantitative and qualitative outcomes obtained help us understand the development of school culture based on analysis of Gruenert and Valentine's factors, and summative findings from questionnaires and teacher interviews. I then return to my research questions to assess how school culture has developed over the longitudinal period of the study.

School C is a much larger than average co-educational [44] 11-18 comprehensive school in an English city. The school was a relatively recent creation following a re-organisation of secondary education in the locality which, in this case, caused the closure of two underperforming secondary schools. This was designed to improve educational outcomes for children aged 11–18. The newly amalgamated school opened to great fanfare on a new large campus with purposely designed buildings. The expectation was that outcomes would be 'world class' within ten years.

The first headteacher of School C was appointed well before the school opened to provide sufficient planning time for success. However, within three years of opening, the headteacher resigned and was replaced with a temporary appointment for only a few months. In the following year, a permanent headteacher was appointed but after two years Ofsted judged the emerging school to require improvement and then special measures just twelve months later. That headteacher resigned and a new academy trust was appointed to take over School C. It was at this point that the research study began. In the first year of the study, School C has its fourth headteacher within less than five years and was judged to require special measures.

In the following sections, I investigate the strength of culture in School C over a 12 month period and consider the strategies and development of the school as it sought to improve

[44] School roll of 1300 students with a capacity of 1700.

outcomes and emerge from an inspection judgement of inadequate. This analysis of culture begins with the first of Gruenert and Valentine's cultural factors, Collaborative Leadership.

8.2 Collaborative Leadership

8.2.1Collaborative Leadership – Quantitative analysis year one / two

Figure 8.1: Collaborative Leadership in year one and two

The individual scores for Collaborative Leadership in School C, as summarised in Figure 8.1, produced a standard deviation which was less than half of the mean, indicating that the means for Collaborative Leadership were good indicators of an average. Overall in year one, scores for Collaborative Leadership were less than positive with an average of the means of 2.67 The modal scores also reflect this outcome. Of the eleven modal scores for Collaborative Leadership in year one, only two were positive whilst four were negative. Table 8.1 summarises the items of particular interest and shows that, in year one only, one statement "teachers are encouraged to share ideas" received a positive response, and this was quite marginal. The remaining ten statements scored responses where teachers disagreed with the statements put to them. Table 8.1 shows those responses that were most negative. For example, in years one and two teachers did not think that "school leaders take time to praise teachers that perform well".

Table 8.1: Collaborative Leadership – Teacher perceptions quantitative outcomes

Year one		Year two	
Mean	Statement	Mean	Statement
3.08	Teachers are encouraged to share ideas (CL 34)	**3.48**	Teachers are encouraged to share ideas (CL 34)
2.99	Teachers are kept informed on current issues in the school (CL 20)	**3.34**	Teachers are kept informed on current issues in the school (CL 20)
2.93	School leaders support risk taking and innovation in teaching (CL 28)	**3.28**	School Leaders value teachers' ideas (CL 2)
2.69	School Leaders value teachers' ideas (CL 2)	**2.80**	Teachers are rewarded for experimenting with new ideas and techniques (CL 26)
2.40	Leaders in this school trust the professional judgments of teachers (CL 7)	**2.79**	Teachers are involved in the decision making process (CL 14)
2.25	School leaders take time to praise teachers that perform well (CL 11)	**2.77**	School leaders take time to praise teachers that perform well (CL 11)

Overall, perceptions improved in year two of the study, but these were marginal.

8.2.2 Collaborative Leadership – Qualitative analysis year one / two

Analysis of paired interviews suggests growing optimism and improving teacher perceptions of Collaborative Leadership in School C, although this improvement is confined to the very recent changes initiated by a newly installed academy trust. In previous years, perceptions of Collaborative Leadership were often poor and had been so since the opening of the amalgamated school some years earlier. Teachers commented on the significant 'baggage' following amalgamation and the divisions remaining amongst staff members. "I think it's been very difficult as a school" reflected one middle leader, whilst a senior teacher lamented "we've been an amalgamated school for ** years, but there are still people who hark back to the old schools which again is a massive frustration". The negative legacy was a constant theme as one teacher described "I don't think (school name) has ever managed to establish its own niche, its own culture, and its own stamp". More recently, however, there were signs of renewed confidence in the more positive atmosphere in School C: "I think the last probably

six months have been the most stable it's been for a while". The praise continued "I think they've done a great job getting to where they are, but now we need to know where that journey is going to lead, and we need to know really what these elements are". Collaborative Leadership was also deemed to have improved. "I get the impression from the staff that were here that they think things have improved, that's for sure "and "it's more a friendly approach, so you know they're listening too."

Paired interviews conducted in year two of the study presented both improving perceptions of Collaborative Leadership and serious reservations. "I personally truly believe it has improved tremendously over the last twelve months" insisted one teacher. Another teacher said that Collaborative Leadership had improved by 100 per cent. However, others commented "I don't think its changed over the last twelve months" and "well I would say that it has gone backwards, not forwards".

Analysis of Collaborative Leadership based on initial and secondary coding revealed a sense of increasing optimism, combined with deep frustration caused by the past actions of senior leaders and a legacy of division and mistrust. Table 8.2 summarises the themes and constructs identified in years one and two of the study, and paints a picture of a school community racked by internal tensions over many years, struggling to overcome the past and create a new sense of purpose and optimism.

Three theoretical constructs can be identified for year one interviews and all reflect the history, challenges and perceived future as described by the participants. The construct *history of division and frustration,* highlights conflicts within the original Senior Leadership Team who, according to some teachers, provided contrasting visions for school improvement and offered different strategies to solve problems. As one teacher illustrates " I wouldn't say people worked particularly collaboratively. I think there was quite a clash of personalities in the senior team which probably was the downfall of it and then because we've had so many different headships." The construct *depth of challenge* highlights the difficulties encountered in forging Collaborative Leadership and a sense of common purpose. The interviews revealed significant resistance to change and deep-seated resentment. One teacher pointed to the "pockets of resistance" which enabled some teachers to say that "they've done this to us" whilst another reinforced the inability of some staff to let go of the past. "When I first

arrived, staff actually introduced themselves to me as 'I'm from this one, they're from that one'."

Table 8.2: Collaborative Leadership – Summary Themes and Theoretical Constructs

Summary Themes	Year one Limited collaboration Frustration 'Baggage' from past lingers Problem of identity after amalgamation Frequent changes in leadership	Year two Collaboration not embedded Context hinders progress Clarity emerging Improved leadership Change creates improvement Accelerated improvements
Theoretical construct	History of division and frustration Depth of challenge Renewed optimism	Legacy of past Change underway

(Based on Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003)

Despite the significant 'baggage' and loyalty to the two previous schools, some teachers noted a recent improvement in Collaborative Leadership under the authority of the incoming Trust and executive headteacher. The construct *renewed optimism* reflects this observation and is supported by a range of interview comments. One teacher said "so collaboration widely, in principle, is absolutely fantastic because we're getting experiences from elsewhere, but the day-to-day collaboration is very very new". Another teacher observed "from speaking to other staff who have been here for years, they were saying that things have definitely started to improve again".

Whilst the legacy of the past is still evident in the second round of interviews, the weight of teacher opinion is notably more positive about Collaborative Leadership in year two of the study allowing therefore the creation of two constructs: *legacy of the past* and *change underway.* The legacy of earlier decisions remains significant for some teachers: "I think what's happened here is that people haven't been accountable… and people have fallen into poor practice" and "I think there is a significant amount of historic ownership of leadership here and people protecting their own roles". By contrast, there is also evidence that *change is underway* and a more collaborative approach to leadership has been initiated: "there is more

collaboration now" and "if stakeholders are involved in the decisions, then it becomes more clear".

Analysis of the qualitative data via themes and theoretical constructs provides an holistic perspective of teacher perceptions of Collaborative Leadership. In order to complete the analysis, I now consider the same data using a role ordered matrix to identify views of teacher groups and leadership strategies employed over the two years of the study.

The role ordered matrix in Table 8.3 provides a thematic snapshot of teacher perceptions by role and shows sharply divided views of Collaborative Leadership within year and over time. In year one, a senior leader in School C said "I think we very much work as a team" but felt this did not extend to collaborative leadership in the rest of the school. He referred to "the really negative people who either still harp on about the 'old days' when it was 'better' or they've come in and they just want to moan and they're negative". Senior leaders were also coming to terms with a new academy trust and an executive headteacher who was based in school for two days a week. "I also think the collaboration with us and the rest of the Trust is beginning to grow stronger as well" said one senior teacher.

The role ordered matrix shows perceptions of middle leaders heavily influenced by past events and their experience of previous school leaders. There is little sense of Collaborative Leadership: constant change and lack of clarity undermined their contribution to the school. "I think it's the amount of change, that's the thing" said one middle leader who continued "I think also what's happened is, because we've been systematically changing the different priorities and things like that, people have become a little bit more insular". The effect of Collaborative Leadership, as they saw it, was dramatic. "There is no collaboration, there is no feeling of 'we are (school name) staff' when you talk about we're staff at (school name), you talk more about your departments." The depth of feeling and resentment over events since the school opened was acute. "It's taken us out of our x year history and dumped us into this 'we're going to do it this way now'. Again, it's nice and it's great and we will get used to it, it will get better, but for the moment it does take you that sharp intake of breath, doesn't it?"

Table 8.3: Role Ordered Matrix – Collaborative Leadership

Position in School	Perception of Collaborative Leadership	Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change	Perception of change over time
SLT	Work as a team Growing stronger Limited collaboration Legacy of past Frustration	New executive headteacher on site two days per week SLT in charge day to day Better collaboration	Divided SLT Silo working Ofsted undermines collaboration
ML	Limited collaboration Divided SLT Excessive change restricts collaboration Pockets unsupportive No sense of identity Lack of continuity	Excessive change Day to day limited collaboration Not a stable SLT No location to meet No clarity	Little change Too few SLT at meetings Collaboration not embedded Lack of accountability
ET	Improving situation More opportunities Dependent on SLT Relies on interpersonal skills of SLT An understanding headteacher	Opportunities to input Open atmosphere SLT variable More listening from SLT	Significant improvement More clarity Better SLT More open atmosphere
NQT	Improving situation More sharing of information More clarity of direction	New headteacher More information from headteacher Teachers kept up to date More valued	More collaboration Moving forward More ideas requested

Perceptions of experienced teachers and NQTs in year one were in stark contrast to their middle leader colleagues. Experienced teachers reported improving perceptions of Collaborative Leadership. “I think it has improved recently” said one teacher. She continued “there’s been an opportunity for me to give an input”. The recent arrival of an executive headteacher who gave staff an opportunity to discuss school improvement was warmly welcomed as this NQT confirms, “I’d say that things have improved, definitely, in the last six months or so. I would say with the new headteacher coming in, I think there has been a lot more sharing of information; it’s certainly been made clear what we’re intending to do”. The sharing of ideas was also encouraged “and they’ve been starting to set up groups to deal with the key areas”.

By year two, there is a clear division in perceptions of Collaborative Leadership between the four teacher groups. Experienced teachers and NQT's have a more positive perspective of developments than their senior staff or middle leader counterparts. The appointment of a full time headteacher to work with the executive headteacher appeared to accelerate collaboration. "I think it's helped by the change in leadership" said one NQT whose views were supported by an experienced teacher "I think leadership has made a big turnaround". Senior teachers and middle leaders, by contrast, describe little or no improvement in Collaborative Leadership. Established senior teachers are even more critical suggesting "we haven't been part of any strategic decision at all" whilst middle leaders saw no improvement either. "They don't seem to take our comments on board" commented one middle leader who continued "I think we could do much more collaboration than we're currently doing".

Comparison of quantitative and qualitative outcomes for teacher perceptions of Collaborative Leadership show important similarities over the period of the study. Quantitative outcomes, indicated neither positive not negative perceptions, but there was a marginal improvement from year one to year two. Similarly, outcomes from interviews showed a division in perceptions between the four staff groups but there was a marginal improvement in perceptions between interviews held between year one and two.

8.3 Professional Development

8.3.1 Professional Development – Quantitative analysis year one / two

Quantitative outcomes from questionnaires indicate that teachers in School C have more positive than negative perceptions about the school's approach to Professional Development with four of the five statements in year one scoring between 3 and 4. The average of the five individual means was a marginally positive at 3.20 whilst only two of the five modal scores indicated positive teacher perceptions.

Figure 8.2: Professional Development in year one and two

Table 8.4: Professional Development – Teacher perceptions quantitative outcomes

Year one		Year two	
Mean	Statement	Mean	Statement
3.80	The school values overall improvement (PD 30)	**3.80**	Teachers utilize professional networks to obtain information and resources for classroom instruction (PD 1)
3.28	Professional development is valued by the school (PD 16)	**3.80**	The school values overall improvement (PD 30)
3.27	Teachers maintain a current knowledge base about the learning process. (PD 24)	**3.52**	Professional development is valued by the school (PD 16)
3.13	Teachers utilize professional networks to obtain information and resources for classroom instruction (PD 1)	**3.39**	Teachers maintain a current knowledge base about the learning process (PD 24)
2.55	Teachers regularly seek ideas from seminars, colleagues and conferences (PD 9)	**3.07**	Teachers regularly seek ideas from seminars, colleagues and conferences. (PD 9)

Figure 8.2 and Table 8.4 summarise the main quantitative findings for Professional Development findings and shows that in year one teachers were in agreement with statement PD 30, PD 16 and PD 24.[45] By year two of the study, teacher perception of had further improved. The average of the five mean scores strengthened to 3.52 with four of the five

[45] PD 30 The school values overall improvement.
PD 16 Professional Development is valued by the school.
PD 24 Teachers maintain a current knowledge base about the learning process.

model showing teacher agreement. Two aspects of Professional Development, as shown in thable 8.4, were particularly strong: “teachers utilize professional networks to obtain information and resources for classroom instruction” (PD 1) and “the school values overall improvement”. (PD 30)

8.3.2 Professional Development – Qualitative analysis year one / two

Analysis of paired interviews suggests generally positive teacher perceptions of Professional Development and this continues into year two of the study, with a growing emphasis on whole school training designed to improve standards quickly. Some teachers perceived a lack of differentiation, but there was a clear view that CPD is taken seriously and has an impact on student outcomes. In year one, teachers comment on the extent of training, “I think we have lots of CPD here”. “I think the school invests in the staff” said one teacher. Another added “there are different people going on different course. I’m just completing my Master’s degree” and “since we’ve had this new Leadership Team I’ve been sent on a couple of courses”. Twelve months later, Professional Development seems to have become more focused on whole school priorities but there is still a recognition that ongoing CPD is important: “with professional development I feel quite privileged really”. There also is some perception that whole school priorities have stifled individual training: “apart from the in-school training that we have, I can say that I haven’t done anything else. I am a bit reluctant to ask, in a way, because I don’t want to spend anybody’s money.” However, as the following shows, there is recognition that improving student outcomes is the main priority: “I think with Ofsted, there is a lot more pressure to have high quality teaching”.

Detailed analysis of teacher interviews based on elaborative coding confirmed marginally improving perceptions of Professional Development and greater focus on whole school training. These outcomes tend to match the outcomes from the quantitative data. Table 8.5 overleaf summarises the main qualitative outcomes and, in year one, identifies two complementary theoretical constructs *response to context* and *leadership creates improvement agenda.* The sense that Professional Development is responding to the context of the school’s academic outcomes is identified by several teachers: “but I think professional development has been taken more seriously that what it ever has been before”. One senior leader also reflects on the impact of past CPD and comes to the conclusion “I don’t always necessarily think we’ve got it right when it comes to whole school professional

development". The urgent need to address school underperformance is reflected in the increasing prescription of training at a whole school level resulting in the construct *leadership creates improvement agenda.* This sense of urgency is evident in the views of teachers "but certainly for some people I've spoken to its been 'I've been told I'm doing this'". Another teacher recognises the centralisation of training: "the whole school has had more training recently".

Table 8.5: Professional Development – Summary Themes and Theoretical Constructs

Summary Themes	Year one More investment in people Centralised training Insufficient differentiation Improving personalisation	Year two Common language Centralised strategy Improves focus Teaching and Learning a priority Accelerated development
Theoretical construct	Response to context Leadership creates improvement agenda	Training to improve teaching

(Based on Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003)

By year two, the emphasis on centralised Professional Development had become even more acute: "the only training I've done is the in-house training". The new school leadership utilised a training programme organised by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) to focus training on teaching and learning and used personnel from the lead school in the Trust to deliver focused training. This construct *training to improve teaching* is noted by teachers: "three training days were devoted to that, so we all spent three days working together and you got this new common language". Not all teachers however, appreciated the focus on whole school training and this led to conflicting views: "me as a person I wouldn't say I'm any more developed than twelve months' ago". With teacher perceptions still generally positive about Professional Development, I now analyse by role and investigate any change in perception over the period of the study.

The role ordered matrix in Table 8.6 summarises teacher perceptions by role and shows agreement with the increasing centralisation of training. Senior teachers focus on the investment made in staff training but suggest this may not have had the required impact: "I think we could have been doing slightly different training that would have been more

purposeful for us". Whilst middle leaders acknowledge the school's investment in Professional Development, they are also critical of its focus: "so I would say my development didn't get pushed as much as it should have done". Experienced teachers and NQTs reflect a more positive view and recognise the importance of CPD for school improvement. Their view was that the new leadership had invested heavily in CPD, provided a more personalised and centralised approach at the same time: "I feel I've been able to have the chance to develop professionally more since we've had the new leadership team" and "I think since we've had this new senior leadership team, it has changed".

Table 8.6: Role Ordered Matrix – Professional Development

Position in School	Perception of Professional Development	Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change	Perception of change over time
SLT	Investment in staff No differentiation in training Training directed	Lots of CPD Clear direction	TEEP has impact
ML	Limited development Variable development Frustration	Limited CPD Self-designed CPD	Variable CPD Introduction of TEEP
ET	Improving CPD Personalised	Focused CPD	Restricted CPD In school priority Reduced funding
NQT	Improving CPD CPD taken more seriously Freedom to choose Training encouraged Good opportunities	New SLT TEEP focus NQT Meetings	Ofsted increases pressure More emphasis on training Introduction of TEEP coaches High staff turnover

Another NQT was more specific. "In terms of CPD outside of school, then I think we do have quite a bit of freedom." The advantage of SSAT's training programme, as recalled by a senior leader was "every single person had to do it …….and I think that had quite a unifying effect because we all did the same training". Experienced teachers and NQTs were particularly positive about this approach to training since it allowed for the development of TEEP (Teacher Effectiveness Enhancement Programme) coaches. As the matrix above illustrates and these NQTs said, "I think there's also been chance for people to develop in different positions as well within the school which we've never really had before" and "so I do think there's more emphasis now on professional development and training".

8.4 Collegial Support

8.4.1 Collegial Support – Quantitative analysis year one / two

Scores for Collegial Support in year one, summarised in Figure 8.3 and Table 8.7 were more positive than negative, with an average of the means of 3.15 which suggests marginally positive teacher perceptions. The modal scores were even more positive with three of the four scoring 4, indicating positive teacher views. There were particularly positive scores for two statements, CS 10 and CS 17.[46] The weakest score, with a mean of 2.74 was for CS 4[47] and potentially reflects the continuous change and multiple challenges faced by staff in School C that we have already observed from earlier quantitative and qualitative data.

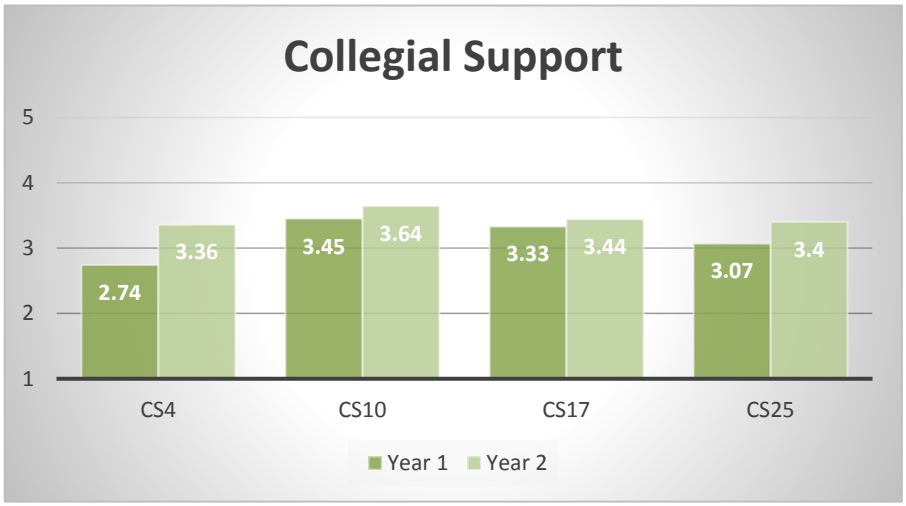

Figure 8.3: Collegial Support in year one and two

Teacher perceptions of Collegial Support became more positive in year two with an average of the means improving to 3.46 and all four modal outcomes scoring 4. Statements with the two most positive scores in year one, CS 10 and CS 17,[48] are again the most positive in year two but with stronger support from staff. The weakest score is reserved for the statement which enquires about trust between teachers CS 4,[49] but the mean for responses is much

[46] CS 10 Teachers are willing to help wherever there is a problem.
CS 17 Teachers' ideas are valued by other teachers.
[47] CS 4 Teacher's trust each other.
[48] CS 10 Teachers are willing to help out wherever there is a problem.
CS 17 Teachers' ideas are valued by other teachers.
[49] CS 4 Teachers trust each other.

stronger at 3.36 than its year one equivalent of 2.74. This potentially reflects the improving pattern between year one and year two scores evident for other cultural components.

Table 8.7: Collegial Support – Teacher perceptions quantitative outcomes

Year one		Year two	
Mean	Statement	Mean	Statement
3.45	Teachers are willing to help wherever there is a problem (CS 10)	**3.64**	Teachers are willing to help wherever there is a problem (CS 10)
3.33	Teachers' ideas are valued by other teachers (CS 17)	**3.44**	Teachers' ideas are valued by other teachers (CS 17)
3.07	Teachers work cooperatively in groups (CS 25)	**3.40**	Teachers work cooperatively in groups. (CS 25)
2.74	Teachers trust each other (CS 4)	**3.36**	Teachers trust each other (CS 4)

8.4.2 Collegial Support – Qualitative analysis year one / two

Teacher perceptions of Collegial Support varied significantly and whilst there was some limited improvement in perceptions between years one and two, there remain sharply contrasting views which conflict with the overall picture from quantitative outcomes. As with perceptions of Collaborative Leadership, memories of past experiences in the school are reflected in some teachers' views and it is important to separate these from perceptions within the time period of the study. Overall, Collegial Support can be summarised by one teacher who makes the distinction between vertical and horizontal aspects of trust within School C. "Vertically, trust has been very limited. I think at the beginning it was 'we were all in it together' and there was a degree of trust because nobody had done anything to misplace that trust…but I do think trust horizontally is much better." In other words, the new school leadership which took control of School C shortly before the study began, inherited an atmosphere where trust in leadership was much more limited than trust between teachers. This is confirmed by a teacher who also suggested that vertical trust was dependent upon who was involved: "I think within areas trust is good, for the most part…. Vertically, with my Line Manager not a problem at all, I don't know really for other people, I think trust there is fine, that's not a problem."

Whereas quantitative data indicates some improvements in Collegial Support in year two, there is less evidence from the interviews. There was acknowledgement that "this year has been a really difficult year in that there have been a lot of anonymous complaints going on. There are people out there complaining about everybody else." The threat of redundancies took its toll on Collegial Support in year two and further undermined trust; "and because of that it puts a strain on the whole staff body". Nonetheless, there is evidence that staff want to create greater trust and more collegiality, as this interview extract shows, "I think most people are desperate to have trust in that whole focus, I really think that we want to. We are professionals, we know that if we can create that, we can be so much more successful. We really want it, don't we?"

Detailed analysis of the interview data using elaborative coding highlights a series of key themes which, in turn, produce the year one theoretical constructs *legacy of mistrust* and *emerging confidence.* The legacy of mistrust is deep-rooted and can be traced to the closure of the two former predecessor schools and the creation of an amalgamated school. "A lot of staff, I would say, lower down there is a 'them and us' no matter how much we try and break it down. I don't know whether that's improving or not," said one teacher. Another added "I think there are still massive inconsistencies". Detailed coding also identifies the impact of staff changes on Collegial Support and shows that in a period of high staff turnover, trust is often undermined. "I do think, with staff turnover being so high as well, especially in our department, we had most of our department leave last year, so obviously that's difficult because you're building new relationships, getting used to new ways of thinking and ways of doing." Despite the negative impact on Collegial Support, Table 8.8 also highlights a more optimistic construct *emerging confidence* which is supported by comments from teachers who suggest that trust within departments is a strength. "I think everybody trusts within department people enough in terms of if they wanted to speak to them about a problem" and "yes, I think there is a lot of trust more so within areas within departments. I have no problem in going up to my head of department and telling him that I've had the worse lesson in the world."

Table 8.8: Collegial Support – Summary Themes and Theoretical Constructs

Summary Themes	Year one Limited vertical trust 'Baggage' hinders trust in leadership Desire for improvement Staff turnover undermines trust Good horizontal trust	Year two Trust undermined Impact of redundancies Legacy of past Significant challenges for leadership Signs of improvement Willing audience
Theoretical construct	Legacy of mistrust Emerging confidence	Scale of task Emerging optimism

(Based on Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003)

Two further constructs emerge in year two of the study, *scale of task* and *emerging optimism.* Here, the heavy legacy of past events affect the current culture. This mistrust is sometimes described in extreme terms as poisonous. "I will be very honest with you… the lack of trust, the poison that just runs through. It's not making this school a very nice place to work." These views, whilst not widespread, reveal the challenge facing the executive headteacher and headteacher who joined the school in the second year of the study. Trust was further undermined by the need to cut costs. "When it (redundancy notice) was given to those people, they were almost in a state of shock and panic then, whereas I was going 'no, it doesn't mean we're all going to lose our jobs."

It was clear that teachers wanted a working environment where trust was strong both vertically and horizontally. The second round of interviews revealed this and empathy with the new school leaders who were trying to address fundamental issues. "It's not that I don't trust them and I think the people we've got at the moment have tried really, really hard to do something that has been a difficult job." A willingness to see improvement is also evident and is explicit in the construct *emerging optimism.* There is a clear willing audience for improvement. "I think overall I could ask anybody in this school for help with something and they would help me…. I think people are willing" and "I think within subjects there is a tendency to have a lot of support within departments. That can be seen because subjects would work together and there is sharing of resources." In short, despite the challenges, the

interviews provide some support for the quantitative outcomes that Collegial Support is marginally stronger in year two than year one.

The role ordered matrix in Table 8.9 shows opinion divided between groups but with signs of improvement from half those interviewed. Senior teachers are clear that vertical trust, or trust in them, was limited. “They don’t trust us” said one senior leader. The ‘baggage’ of the past was often manifest in negative relations with other leaders in the academy and where events were influenced by “the voice that shouts the loudest”. Senior Leaders recognised the challenge facing teachers and how the pressure to improve outcomes often undermined relationships. “I think the core subject teams have really taken a beating. This isn’t related to that, it’s just another pressure. The pressure the English teachers are under, the maths teachers are under is huge and they are absolutely exhausted by it.”

Table 8.9: Role Ordered Matrix – Collegial Support

Position in School	Perception of Collegial Support	Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change	Perception of change over time
SLT	No trust in SLT ‘Baggage’ Negativity	‘Baggage’	Variable Anonymous complaints Little improvement Poisonous Culture undermined
ML	Limited vertical trust Trust needs to return Good horizontal trust Want improvements	Regular meetings Feeling of being let down	Trust missing for a long time Poisonous Demoralising
ET	Good level of trust Good listeners Good in depts.	Can talk to others Big trusted group TEEP increases trust	Trust is improving More sharing of resources
NQT	Trust is good Good trust in depts. Little support	High turnover affects trust	Much more structure Increasing support

Similarly, middle leaders had a less than positive view of Collegial Support. Despite regular meetings, they agreed that vertical trust remained a problem but trust within departments was generally good. “I think trust has been missing for a very long time. I think that comes back to collaborative leadership, doesn’t it?” said one middle leader. The legacy of mistrust was deep-seated, but not universal. The school amalgamation cast a long shadow over

relationships between staff, particularly between senior and middle leaders. By contrast, two of the four groups had a much more positive view of Collegial Support, perhaps because it relied less on line management and hierarchy, as this comment from an experienced teacher shows: “I think I can go and tell anybody what I want to tell them and they will listen…. so, you can see there’s a ‘big trusted’ group going on.” This positive view of experienced staff continues into year two of the study: “I think because we have more teacher interaction with the TEEP sessions I think you’re making more contacts, so it probably has improved”. NQTs, whose only knowledge of the school’s past are stories told by more experienced teachers, were particularly positive about Collegial Support. There is recognition that a high turnover of teachers undermined trust and, as one NQT reflected, “it just depends on the people who are here because obviously they change the atmosphere, change the willingness to discuss”. Overall, the view of NQTs is summarised as follows: “I think there is a lot of support.”

8.5 Teacher Collaboration

8.5.1 Teacher Collaboration – Quantitative analysis year one / two

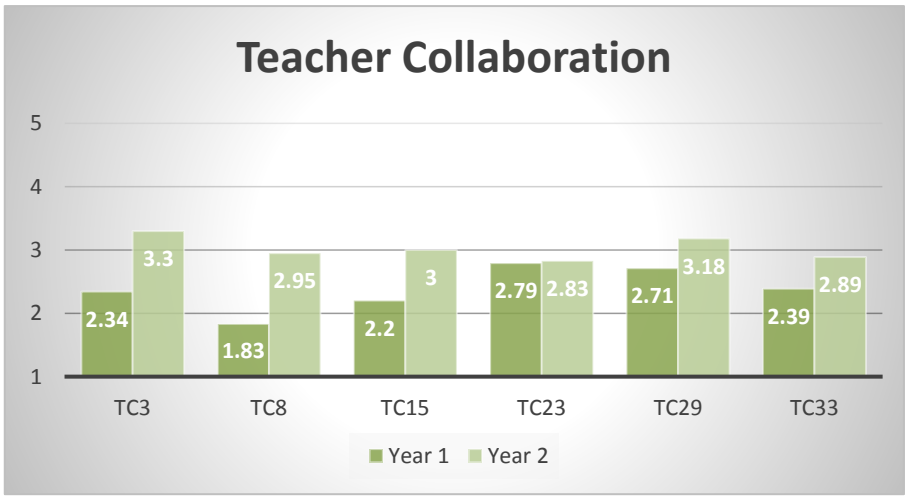

Figure 8.4: Collaborative Leadership in year one and two

The individual scores for Teacher Collaboration in School C were the least positive in years one and two for any of Gruenert and Valentine’s six factors. Figure 8.4 and Table 8.10 includes data of particular interest and shows that mean scores were more negative than positive about Teacher Collaboration in the first year of the study. For example, the average score for the six items relating to Teacher Collaboration produced a mean of 2.38 indicating

that teachers disagreed with the statements presented. The statement TC 23[50] produced the most positive score at 2.79 but even this suggest that teachers still disagreed with the statement. The weakest response with a mean of 1.83 was TC 8[51] and scored the most negative perception of any response. Moreover, half of the six modal scores also produced negative teacher perceptions and only one, "teachers are generally aware of what other teachers are teaching" (TC 23), produced a positive response.

Table 8.10: Teacher Collaboration – Teacher perceptions quantitative outcomes

Mean	Statement	Mean	Statement
2.79	Teachers are generally aware of what other teachers are teaching (TC 23)	**3.30**	Teachers have opportunities for dialogue and planning across year groups and subjects (TC 3)
2.71	Teachers work together to develop and evaluate projects (TC 29)	**3.18**	Teachers work together to develop and evaluate projects (TC 29)
2.39	Teaching practice disagreements are voiced openly and discussed (TC 33)	**3.00**	Teachers take time to observe each other teaching (TC 15)
2.34	Teachers have opportunities for dialogue and planning across year groups and subjects (TC 3)	**2.95**	Teachers spend considerable time planning together (TC 8)
2.20	Teachers take time to observe each other teaching (TC 15)	**2.89**	Teaching practice disagreements are voiced openly and discussed (TC 33)
1.83	Teachers spend considerable time planning together (TC 8)	**2.83**	Teachers are generally aware of what other teachers are teaching (TC 23)

There was a noticeable improvement in the scores for Teacher Collaboration in year two but the overall average of the means at 3.03 was the least positive for any cultural factors. Teacher perceptions about opportunities to plan lessons represented by TC 3 [52] improved markedly from year one to year two whilst TC 23 [53] improved very marginally. Modal scores for Teacher Collaboration also strengthened in year two with five of the six measures indicating neither agreement nor disagreement from teachers. Overall, the quantitative measures for teacher collaboration reflect the context of School C in its development and mirrors some of the more negative perceptions seen in other cultural factors.

[50] TC 23 Teachers are generally aware of what other teachers are teaching.
[51] TC 8 Teachers spend considerable time planning together.
[52] TC 3 Teachers have opportunities for dialogue and planning across year groups and subjects.
[53] TC 23 Teachers are generally aware of what other teachers are teaching.

8.5.2 Teacher Collaboration – Qualitative analysis year one / two

Outcomes from interviews provide a more positive and improving perception of Teacher Collaboration than is initially suggested by the outcomes of the quantitative data. Whilst there are clear areas where collaboration is more limited and affected by ongoing issues, teacher comments show an improving trend, particularly within established departments. In the first year of the study, one teacher was effusive about Teacher Collaboration: "we've got some amazing people, haven't we? I couldn't ask for anywhere better. I love this place, because of the staff." Other teachers were equally positive. "We work very well together. We share resources and we're always there to discuss the teaching and we've got to the extent where we can talk about a student and we'd see we're on the right page." Teacher Collaboration is seen as particularly good in subject areas. "I think in departments it's probably quite good." But there is also an acknowledgement that the strength of collaboration is sometimes conditional on leadership. "A good head of department makes a huge difference." In year two, there is a sense that "some teams have strengthened" owing to the regularity of meetings but there is also recognition that "other teams have totally disintegrated" and teacher collaboration is much more limited and peripheral.

Table 8.11: Techer Collaboration – Summary Themes and Theoretical Constructs

Summary Themes	Year one Teamwork and collaboration good in departments Collaboration dependent on leadership Continuation of sub-cultures Widespread collaboration never established	Year two Collaboration in pockets Variable strengthening of collaboration Significant improvement in some teams
Theoretical construct	Developing teamwork 'Baggage' not overcome	Continuing history of division Determination to improve collaboration

(Based on Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003)

Analysis of teacher interviews using elaborative coding confirms an improving trend in Teacher Collaboration but highlights some specific areas of interest and concern as outlined

in Table 8.11. In year one, the emerging themes emphasise the legacy of earlier years combined with a strong sense of teamwork in some curriculum areas. This combination of themes is summarised into two constructs: *developing teamwork* and *baggage not overcome.* Better working together, with a collaborative approach to problem-solving, is reflected by the following teacher: "we've actually picked up on how the students are engaging within the classes as well, so it seems to show there's a lot of team working happening there… that makes it much easier for yourself as well as a teacher". Another went further to suggest that Teacher Collaboration is more widespread. "Yes, because I think not only in subjects but across subject areas." By contrast, the construct '*baggage' not overcome* emerges as a theme where collaboration was never present, or where there remained obstacles to be overcome, as these extracts illustrate: "I think within some departments, there are still distinct cliques of previous schools" said one. "I was told when I first arrived, well 'I was from such and such' and it seemed to be a divide…when you've got bright young things coming in, they are effectively switched off by an undercurrent of negativity." Teachers refer to lost opportunities in the early days of the new school so much so that one suggested "I don't think this place has ever actually established a (school name) culture".

By year two, the impact of Professional Development centred on whole school improvement emerged with a positive effect on Teacher Collaboration, although divisions, remain. Coding of year two interviews creates a series of themes from which the constructs *continuing history of division* and *determination to improve collaboration* emerge. At interview some teachers pointed to the entrenched negativity of others: "it kind of begs the question why those people are still in the building"? Overall, however, there were many more examples of teachers talking positively about Teacher Collaboration:" I believe that we have improved significantly" and "we share practice and we share different things that we've found and do". Sharing as part of collaboration was identified by some teachers who had experienced the benefits of working together. "Everyone is willing to share and if you want something on a certain point in a subject or topic and you can't find anything, there's someone you can ask all the time." Shared lesson planning further developed collaboration: "what we've done, generally, is we've said each different member of staff will take a year group and they'll plan the next couple of weeks and then that's like the template lesson and then the others are free to edit and change it".

Table 8.12: Role Ordered Matrix – Teacher Collaboration

Position in School	Perception of Teacher Collaboration	Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change	Perception of change over time
SLT	Good in depts. Sharing not universal Depends on individual HOD	Sharing Limited meetings and opportunities Staff rarely come together	Still largely in pockets
ML	More united teams	Some collaborative planning Collaboration depends on leader	Significant improvement
ET	Good Collaboration Good teamwork Good across subjects	TEEP training effective	Ofsted driven Much more collaboration Improved confidence
NQT	Good in depts. Less good elsewhere	TEEP celebration Sharing lessons Use templates Useful training days Regular meetings have impact	Improving collaboration TEEP includes collaboration

When viewed by specific roles within School C, perceptions of Teacher Collaboration are most positive within three of the four groups interviewed. In year one, senior leaders highlight divisions among staff that tend to be long-standing. “There are still some people who don’t want to share things: ‘it’s mine, I’ve created it and you’re not having it’ sort of thing.” By year two, some senior teachers still held a more pessimistic view of collaboration but pointed to positive signs: “I think the teachers also feel that there’s not a sense of collaboration between. I think there are pockets of great collaboration throughout the school.” Middle leaders, experienced teachers and NQTs were united in a positive perspective of Teacher Collaboration and this further strengthened in year two. Here experienced teachers pointed to the help available: “if you are stuck, and you are stuck, and we all have those days, there is always someone you can ask” and “I teach further across the school, just so supportive, just so amazing”. NQTs also reflected on the support available to them: “so each lesson that’s in the shared folder has about three or four different versions of teachers that have taken the template and edited it and changed it, so everybody’s put their own brand on it and everyone’s free to access it”.

The strengthening of Teacher Collaboration is a feature which, according to role, continues into year two as shown in Table 8.12 and the following: "so when you're planning a lesson now, it's for the range and not just for your own group, so you've got a template then people can personalise for their own groups in time" and "obviously, through Ofsted in a sense, all the teachers needed to improve their teaching and learning skills. Because of that I think we are collaborating that much more within those sessions." Centralised training seems to have strengthened collaboration.[54] Experienced teachers and NQTs, were frequently positive about the impact of this training: "I think the introduction of TEEP has encouraged more collaboration between teachers" and "we have these TEEP meets we meet in those groups as well. I think that has helped in discussing things. We get them to bring a lesson, then talk through it, what was good about it, what didn't work, so we can share ideas, share activities around." Finally, some groups identify the importance of leadership in encouraging collaboration, as middle leaders explain: "but we plan collaboratively and I don't mean we all sit down together around a table and go 'oh let's drill through every lesson', but we have planned the schemes of work more collaboratively" and "the training actually opened my eyes to what I needed and this comes back to is collaborative leadership what the school needs now? I had to do something, I had to be drastic and I had to show people what the levels were expected to do so when we started doing the planning, I modelled it."

The cumulative evidence from the qualitative data shows that the new school leadership in School C had utilised whole school training to bring people together and this, in turn, developed more Teacher Collaboration. Whilst the quantitative outcomes show the least positive perceptions of all Gruenert and Valentine's cultural components, the interviews provide good evidence from individuals and groups that Teacher Collaboration strengthened despite the hostile legacy. This is testament to the school's leadership as they sought further to improve standards and strengthen culture.

[54] TEEP, Training co-ordinated by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust.

8.6 Unity of Purpose

8.6.1 Unity of Purpose – Quantitative analysis year one / two

Teacher perceptions of Unity of Purpose in School C are the third strongest of Gruenert and Valentine's cultural factor after Professional Development and Collegial Support. The average of the means in year one at 2.88 shows that teachers' perceptions are marginally negative about Unity of Purpose, but become more positive in year two with the average of the means strengthening to 3.17. There is also a strengthening of the modal scores between years one and two, and a noticeable improvement in teachers' support for the vision of the school. This outcome is mirrored in the summary findings listed in Figure 8.5 and Table 8.13 where year one statements tend to strengthen considerably by year two. Support for the vision of the school, based on the statement UP 5[55], strengthened markedly from 3.05 to 3.51.

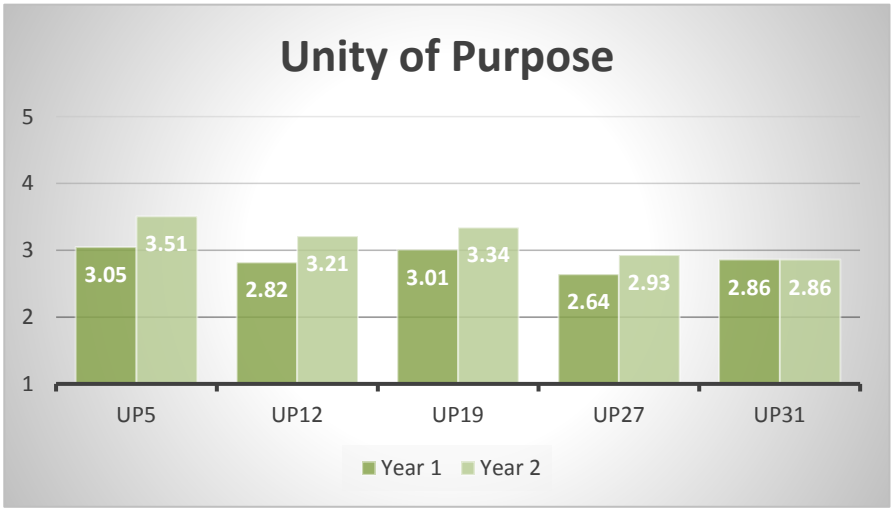

Figure 8.5: Unity of Purpose in year one and two

This is also echoed in the second strongest statement UP 19[56] which improves from 3.01 in year one to 3.34 in year two. Three of the statements in year one, UP 31, 12 and 27 show teachers tending to disagree and this reduces to two statements in year two.

[55] UP 5 Teachers support the vision of the school.
[56] UP 19 Teachers understand the vision of the school.

Table 8.13: Unity of Purpose – Teacher perceptions quantitative outcomes

Year one		Year two	
Mean	Statement	Mean	Statement
3.05	Teachers support the vision of the school (UP 5)	**3.51**	Teachers support the vision of the school (UP 5)
3.01	Teachers understand the vision of the school (UP 19)	**3.34**	Teachers understand the vision of the school (UP 19)
2.86	Teaching performance reflects the vision of the school (UP 31)	**3.21**	The school vision provides a clear sense of direction for teachers (UP 12)
2.82	The school vision provides a clear sense of direction for teachers (UP 12)	**2.93**	The school vision reflects the values of the community (UP 27)
2.64	The school vision reflects the values of the community (UP 27)	**2.86**	Teaching performance reflects the vision of the school (UP 31)

8.6.2 Unity of Purpose – Qualitative analysis year one / two

Interviews about Unity of Purpose produced responses in which teachers who had been in School C for several years seized the opportunity to describe events prior to the period of the research study. The history of School C, following the amalgamation of two its two predecessor schools, dominated the discussion around Unity of Purpose and could not be excluded from the research finding. The excitement, anticipation and high expectations fostered by the founders of the newly built school were quickly replaced by division and acrimony as frequent changes in leadership and declining standards became the norm. It was a period seared into the memories of those involved and produced a colourful context for the interviews. In the early years of the school "we just didn't get people on board enough with the change. There were a huge number of people who resented that the old schools closed" said one teacher. The early aspirations had soon faded, as another explained, "we've never succeeded in having a mission statement where everyone can say 'that's what we stand for'. Instead, divisions set in and the original vision 'got lost in the tensions'."

Moving forward to the years covered by this study, the new executive headteacher had introduced a ten-point improvement plan which helped clarify the vision. This was welcomed by teachers. "It's been made really clear in terms we're saying these are the ten areas we are focusing on; this is what we're doing for the next year or so." The sense of a new direction was also reportedly evident amongst the students. "I'd say yes; the students are definitely clear about what's going on." By year two, with the appointment of a permanent

headteacher, the perception of purpose with a clear vision improved. “I think that was a leap, not even a step, a leap in the right direction.” The new leadership’s efforts to ‘put students first’ was welcomed. “Now I think it’s much more focused on the student and I think that the leadership we’ve got now is much more focused on making sure that each student does their very, very best and I just get that impression and that feeling, and that attitude has changed from the top.”

Table 8.14 Unity of Purpose – Summary Themes and Theoretical Constructs

Summary Themes	Year one Lost early vision followed by years of conflict Years of frequent changes in leadership ‘Baggage’ carried forward New clear impetus Clear direction from supportive SLT	Year two Ofsted dominated vision Leap in right direction Increasing optimism again Impact of new headteacher Inclusive of all staff
Theoretical construct	‘Baggage’ dominates vision Renewed clarity of direction	Renewed purpose instilling confidence

(Based on Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003)

More detailed analysis of the interview data using elaborative coding identifies themes which can be summarised into two theoretical constructs: ‘b*aggage’ dominates vision* and *renewed clarity of direction.* As we have seen above, the ‘baggage’ of School C’ is still significant and remains uppermost in the minds of teachers: “but they (some staff) didn’t buy into this fantastic new facility, they bought into ‘I’ve got a brick from the old building’ sort of thing.” Frequent changes of school leadership make it more difficult to tackle the legacy issues which therefore persisted. “But then the next few heads, however many heads we’ve had, I’ve lost track, those they were just invisible, I don’t recall them being visible at all.” A particular style of leadership was also part of the ‘baggage’ as recalled by an experienced teacher describing the headteacher’s confrontational style. “Do you remember the conversation where we went to a meeting where the headteacher said ‘you’re either one of them or one of us’?” People did try to deal with it sensitively, but it was just such a

thoughtless comment, that then set the tone." Finally, a clear initial vision had been further clouded between senior leaders and as this quote illustrates: "I think the most significant impact was those two deputy leaders, because actually they set the tone for everything. Well you can imagine, they had two completely different visions."

Despite the profound challenges caused by their legacy, there is real enthusiasm for the future: "I think the whole plan, the new plan, has been shared well and there was a briefing where bits and pieces were mentioned about it". Another teacher added "we know where the Leadership Team want the school to go and we now know where we want to get to". The above provides evidence to support the theoretical construct *Renewed clarity of direction.*

In year two, teacher perceptions surrounding Unity of Purpose improve further as the themes in the summary Table 8.14 illustrate. Teachers saw the arrival of the new permanent headteacher as a very positive step. "It's exciting" said one teacher, who continued, a vision "may be just a collection of words, it may be insincere in some cases, but actually it gives you something. The first thing the new headteacher did was say 'here's our statement'". The clarity of the new vision was entirely well received and justifies the construct *renewed purpose instilling confidence.* There was confidence, hope for the future as this teacher explains "I think the impression he's given me is wow – I hope he's wow, he's got to be."

When the interview data is examined using the role ordered matrix in Table 8.15 overleaf, clear differences emerge about Unity of Purpose between the four groups. Ironically, senior leaders seem to be the least enthusiastic about a new clear, vision. Much of the discussion with members of SLT focused on the early vision of the school and subsequent difficulties encountered. There was an acknowledgement that now "we've got a 10-point plan" but much of this, it was suggested, was Ofsted driven. By year two, senior leaders continued to lament the past and suggested previous heads had not been given sufficient time by Ofsted to implement improvements. Their view was that obstacles to raising standards remained and they were unconvinced by the vision. As one senior teacher explains "I don't think we've got this kind of common language". Middle leaders were also critical of some leadership strategies. But unlike their senior teachers, middle leaders were more optimistic about the future: "I am hopeful that we can actually move…. This is something we can all hang our hat on now". The vision has become clearer and the plan explicit; Unity of Purpose has strengthened.

Table 8.15: Role Ordered Matrix – Unity of Purpose

Position in School	Perception of Unity of Purpose	Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change	Perception of change over time
SLT	Previous plan highjacked Unconvincing vision 'Baggage' remains Remaining resentment Unhappy staff	New 10-point plan Clear direction Change in SLT	Lack of vision Inconclusive vision No common language Values on paper only
ML	Lost early vision Ivory tower leadership Divided leadership No unified vision	Repeated changes in leadership New leadership	Clear leadership Exciting vision Increased optimism
ET	Good new plans Much more sharing Supportive SLT Impact of new headteacher	New headteacher Clear direction New Trust New leadership	Attitude changed from top New impetus
NQT	Improving clarity Increasing opportunities Clear direction More ownership	SWOT completed 10-point plan Opinions invited Students involved TEEP champions Teachers talking about teaching	Increasing change More people on board Individual charters Unsure of impact

Other groups focused less on the past but were also realistic about the teachers who remain unconvinced. An experienced leader explained: "we're always going to have the ones who are going to moan about everything". Nonetheless, experienced and NQTs saw a clearer, positive vision "since the head's come in it has really changed. I think it's been really clear to pupils we've got a totally new purpose". Twelve months later, experienced and NQTs reported an improving vision, a clear ten-point plan and effective training to support teaching and learning and a raising of standards. Leadership was perceived to be accessible and welcoming. "It's not only the students, but staff can go and talk. I think I could speak to the executive headteacher very easily because he's that type of person and he's open, and I think the new headteacher gives me the impression that he is the same." Another experienced teacher confirmed it was the new leadership that created excitement for the new vision: "I think it's changed considerably". "At the end of the day we are talking about the future, these young people are the future and they are the ones who are going to serve society eventually and we invest in them."

The summative evidence from the quantitative data about Unity of Purpose shows improving teacher perceptions over time and this accelerates when the new multi-academy trust becomes more embedded and appoints a permanent headteacher. There is a new clear vision and optimism about the future. The qualitative evidence mirrors the quantitative outcomes but shows the extent of challenge facing the leadership of School C. The legacy of division, rancour and negativity which had taken root in the early years of the school, created a culture difficult to change. Nonetheless, the interviews show that considerable progress was made over the period of the study and a new enthusiasm for change was taken up by most teachers. Unity of Purpose strengthened.

8.7 Learning Partnership – Quantitative analysis year one / two

The individual scores for Learning Partnership in year one, summarised in Figure 8.6 and Table 8.16, were more negative than positive; an average of the means of 2.51 suggests slightly negative teacher perceptions. The modal scores were also slightly more negative than positive with two of the four scoring 2, indicating negative teacher views. There were particularly negative scores for one statement: “students generally accept responsibility for their schooling e.g. they engage in learning” (LP 35).

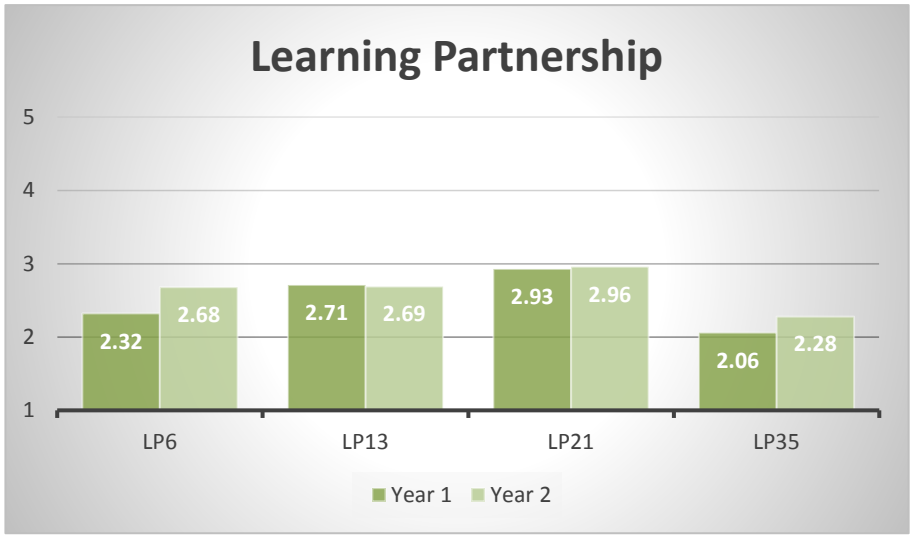

Figure 8.6: Learning Partnership in year one and two

Teacher perceptions of Learning Partnership in year two improve but only marginally, and suggest that the relationship between staff at School C and parents was not as positive as

senior leaders would wish. This did not improve significantly in year two. In fact, the average of the mean scores for Learning Partnership in year two was the weakest year two score of all Gruenert and Valentine's cultural factors. The modal scores for Learning Partnership in year two improved but only marginally and the statement "students generally accept responsibility for their schooling e.g. they engage in learning" (LP 35) was scored as a negative 2.

Table 8.16: Learning Partnership – Teacher perceptions quantitative outcomes

Year one		Year two	
Mean	Statement	Mean	Statement
2.93	Teachers and parents communicate frequently about student performance (LP 21)	**2.96**	Teachers and parents communicate frequently about student performance (LP 21)
2.71	Parents trust teachers' professional judgements (LP 13)	**2.69**	Parents trust teachers' professional judgements (LP 13)
2.32	Teachers and parents have common expectations for student performance (LP 6)	**2.68**	Teachers and parents have common expectations for student performance (LP 6)
2.06	Students generally accept responsibility for their schooling e.g. they engage in learning (LP 35)	**2.28**	Students generally accept responsibility for their schooling e.g. they engage in learning (LP 35)

8.7.2 Learning Partnership – Qualitative analysis year one / two

Teacher interviews about Learning Partnership revealed the scale of challenge facing School C in the attempt to improve relationships with parents and students. The history of parental engagement seems to fall into four distinct periods, two of which are covered by the period of the research study. In the first years after the new school was opened, teachers describe an early phase of optimism where standards and expectations were set high. "I think when the school opened there was this real swell of pride, uniforms were immaculate." However, students and parents were not held to account, particularly on uniform, and a malaise set in. This decline was further accelerated by a headteacher who, according to one teacher, "didn't really care what they (the students) looked like if they were here, wouldn't recognise poor behaviour, so again kids got away with things". The impact of this approach to uniform, discipline and standards eventually led to School C being placed under special measures by Ofsted.

Table 8.17: Learning Partnership – Summary Themes and Theoretical Constructs

Summary Themes	Year one 'Baggage' of past undermined partnership Past inconsistencies Direct action to improve partnership Improving consistency	Year two Focus on student progress Varied support from parents Value of education varied Significant recent challenges
Theoretical construct	Past actions hinder progress Clearer direction established	Improved strategy Parent partnership increasingly challenging

(Based on Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003)

In the third phase of development, in the first year of this study, there is an improvement in Learning Partnership as a result of the more robust approach by the new Trust leadership. This was recognised by teachers. "I think it's better, now, more supported now than it has been in the past." By the final phase, the second year of this study, the challenge facing teachers had become more acute again as the student demographic and erosion of support from parents remained difficult: "I think our growing challenge is the new arrival students" and "we're getting a lot of young people whose parents have not got a history of valuing education because it's been denied to them on various levels". The effect, is that perceptions of Learning Partnership hardly improved between years one and two, as one teacher explained: "I don't detect any change".

Detailed analysis of teacher interviews using elaborative coding techniques and summarised in Table 8.17, identifies a series of themes in year one which generate two contrasting theoretical constructs: *past actions hinder progress* and *clearer direction established.* The legacy of past actions, evident in many of the cultural factors examined in School C, undermined the actions of the new school leadership. A middle leader identified years of inaction. "It's caused a lot of strife because parents have gone 'but for years and years mister they've been wearing their jeans, what's your problem now?' and 'why does his facial piercing have any impact on his learning?'".

The drive to improve standards, as reported by teachers, was a feature of the new school leadership and the themes that emerge from interviews confirm its positive impact on Learning Partnership. “I think since we’ve had the new headteacher, he constantly sends letters home to try and tell parents exactly what we’re going to be doing. There was a massive crackdown on uniform exactly as he started and letters went home.” By year two, the initial momentum of improvement in perceptions of Learning Partnership had become more challenging and difficult to maintain. The themes that emerge convey a changing landscape, some of which is demographic, social and economic. The cumulative effect is summarised by complementary theoretical constructs: *improved strategy* and *parent partnership increasingly challenging.* Leadership strategies included structural changes in pastoral support to improve consistency of behaviour and uniform; a post for behaviour and safety was created. The challenge, however, according to several teachers remained the indifferent support for school by a significant minority of parents. This had a direct impact on their sons and daughters: “I think the majority of parents and students have a common goal, and teachers: they know what the expectations are, they know where they want to go. But I still believe there are a large number of students who are not interested…they can’t see the reasons for doing it and if you do phone parents, some of them aren’t interested either.”

When the interview outcomes are analysed using the role ordered matrix in Table 8.18 overleaf, a unanimous view emerges, consistent with the other perspectives we have seen. In fact, there is probably greater consensus about Learning Partnership on the part of those with different roles in the school, than any other of Gruenert and Valentine’s cultural factors. In year one, for example, all groups recognised the extra efforts being made to improve home-school relations and referred to letters home, increased volume of telephone conversations with parents or the raising of expectations in student uniform.

There is a common perception by teachers, reported in this case by a senior leader, that “there is quite often not enough support and contact between home and school”. Despite this, there are some improvements as identified by these middle leaders: “I can see that his behaviour has improved” and “I feel more confident to be able to lay that out to students”. Parental support remains vital and all teacher groups report a varied picture as summarised by an experienced teacher and NQT, “there are some parents who don’t really show that they are there for the children” and “perhaps it is parental expectations, if they don’t push their children, obviously they’re not going to attend after-school revision sessions”.

Table 8.18: Role Ordered Matrix – Learning Partnership

Position in School	Perception of Learning Partnership	Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change	Perception of change over time
SLT	Limited home contact Not enough support from home More ownership Many parents have different mind-set Not sufficient focus on progress	Efforts to raise aspirations	Improvement in relationships Not enough change
ML	Initial pride Lost opportunity Increased tension Improving situation Improving consistency	Challenging students Increasing numbers	Limited change Deterioration No consistency
ET	Variable parental interest Barriers with parents Large numbers not interested	Parent mail New technologies No breakthrough	No change identified
NQT	Evidence of impact Raising expectations Value of education varied	Frequent letters home from headteacher Crackdown on uniform	More challenges

The consensus of views between teacher groups established in year one continued in year two. All are of the view that a changing demographic has made the establishment of positive Learning Partnership harder to achieve. There are increasing numbers of 'hard to reach' parents and children and the value placed on education by many parents varies considerably. An NQT explained "I've worked pastorally before, done a lot of home visits, said to students 'you need to come into school' and parents have called out of top windows and said, 'oh it's ok, she's just having a day off today' …. so again, it's about placing the value on education".

The cumulative evidence for Learning Partnership shows a significant degree of unanimity between all groups interviewed and the quantitative data. There is some improvement in the relationship between home and school, but the challenges remain huge and the context is becoming more difficult.

8.8 Overall school culture and conclusions

In the final part of this chapter, I answer the five main research questions for School C. The findings are divided into two sections: quantitative and qualitative results of teacher perceptions of school culture, and leadership strategies and other factors which influence cultural change.

6.8.1 School culture – Quantitative and qualitative findings of teacher perceptions in year one and two (Research questions 1-3)

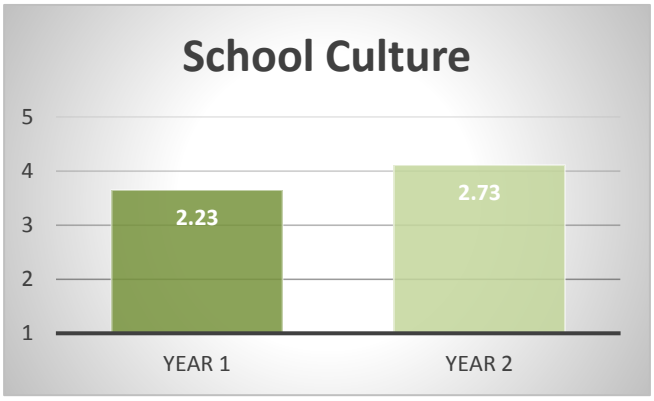

Figure 8.7: Overall school culture

The quantitative measures indicated in Table 8.19 and Figure 8.7 show that teacher perceptions of school culture were relatively negative but strengthened over the period of the study. Modal scores also strengthened between years one and two. Responses to question 36[57] about overall school culture were also generally negative. Teacher perceptions of school culture measured as a single factor are supported by the cumulative outcomes from analysis of Gruenert and Valentine's six components. Table 8.19 and Figure 8.7 show the mean score from each cultural component over the full period of the study. None of the six factors scored above 3 in year one [58], although four factors (Collaborative Leadership, Professional Development, Teacher Collaboration and Unity of Purpose) scored above 3 but less than 4 in year two.

[57] SC 36 This school has a strong positive culture.
[58] Likert scale: 5 strongly agree, 4 agree, 3 neither agree nor disagree, 2 disagree, 1 strongly disagree.

Table 8.19: School culture by component in year one and two

School C	Year one	Mean	Year two
Collaborative Leadership	2.67		3.05
Professional Development	3.20		3.52
Collegial Support	3.15		3.46
Teacher Collaboration	2.38		3.03
Unity of Purpose	2.88		3.17
Learning Partnership	2.51		2.65
School culture, mean of above components	2.80		3.15
Q36 School culture	2.23		2.73

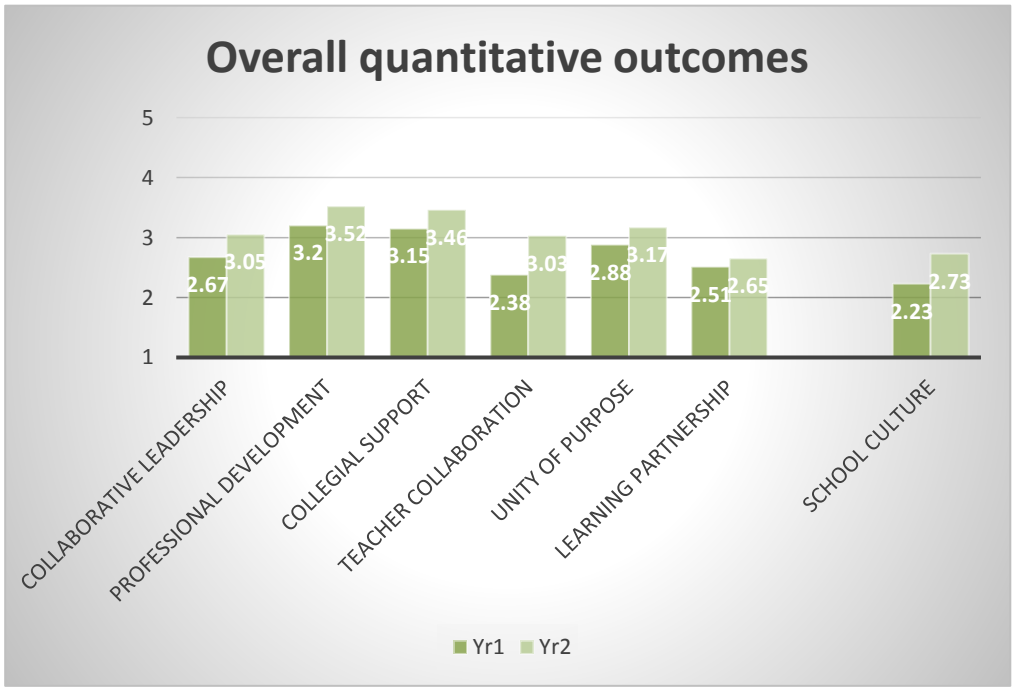

Figure 8.8: school culture by component in year one and two

The scale of quantitative improvement in teacher perceptions between years one and two is also shown in Figure 8.9. Here, the strength of school culture, together with perceptions of

Teacher Collaboration, improve over the 12 months of the study. The scale of improvement is also noticeable when considering teacher responses to individual statements in the Gruenert and Valentine survey. In year one, teacher responses to 26 of the 36 statements scored less than 3.

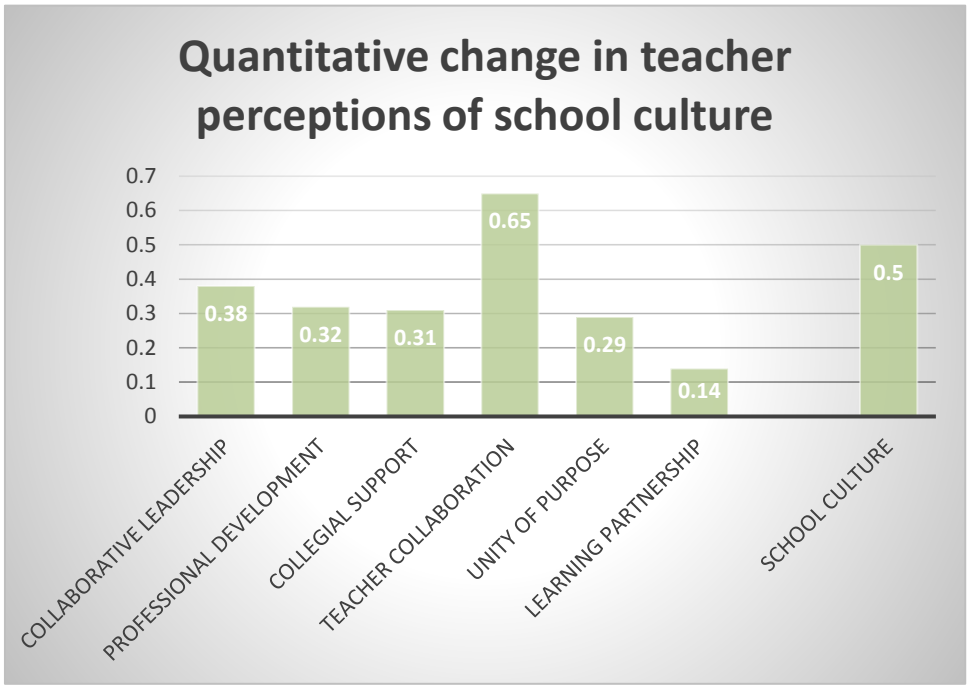

Figure 8.9: Quantitative improvement in teacher perceptions of school culture

By year two, this number had fallen to fourteen although no responses scored 4 or more in either year. The overall quantitative conclusion therefore is that school culture in School C was negative at the beginning of the study but became more positive over twelve months particularly in perceptions of mutual support, sense of vision and direction and collaboration between senior leaders and teachers.

8.8.2 School culture - Qualitative analysis year one / two

Qualitative perceptions of school culture support the quantitative analysis and strengthened over the period of the study. In year one for example, one teacher commented: **"**we've been an amalgamated school for ** years but there are still people who hark back to the old schools which again is a massive frustration". Another commented that "there is no collaboration. There is no feeling of 'we are (school name) staff." By year two, there are

some signs of improvement. “I’d say that things have improved, definitely, in the last six months or so. I would say with the new headteacher coming in I think there has been a lot more sharing of information, it’s certainly been made clear what we’re intending to do.”

Additional qualitative findings support that conclusion and also provide additional insights as seen from the perspective of teachers belonging to different groups. Table 8.20 summarises these perceptions by role and shows increasing optimism amongst the four groups, particularly following the appointment of a permanent headteacher. Aspects seen in the analysis of each statement on the teacher questionnaire appear in the summative views. For example, senior leaders, middle leaders and experienced teachers confirm that school culture is improving and there is a greater sense of optimism.

Table 8.20: Teacher perceptions of school culture according to role

Position in School	Perception of school culture in year one and two	Perception of change over time	Example comment
SLT	Mixed	Too early to say	I think people are very optimistic with (new headteacher. Now we’ve got a new headteacher (year two) Actually I feel sad that we don’t have a ‘(school name) way’ and actually this school has a face, people see us, we have a face, but the (school name) doesn’t have a heart, we don’t have anything that runs through us where we all say ‘this is how we do it at (school name), come on chips are down but we all stick together(year two)
ML	Developing	Greater optimism	I think the school culture is developing and I think it is impacted by its history and the expectations of everything. (year one) I must admit, seeing the new headteacher, I don’t want to get too hopeful (year two)
ET	Developing	Improving	I wouldn’t say it has developed completely, I think it’s more, it’s like a boat on waves, dipping coming up, dipping coming up and then a big wave hits it and it suddenly comes up (year one) I think it does tend to be a calmer place (year two)
NQT	Positive	Positive and improving	I’d say the strength of the culture is, there is beginning to be communication more throughout the school, (year one) As the uniform has improved, I think the culture has improved (year one) I think it’s getting there, to where it needs to be. (year two)

8.8.2 School culture – Leadership strategies and other influencing factors (Research questions 4 and 5)

Whilst most groups are more optimistic, the 'baggage' of the past is apparent, and this is clearly seen in Table 8.21 which considers leadership strategies and other factors affecting perceptions of school culture. Here middle leaders refer to excessive change, limited CPD, and a feeling of being let down by previous senior leaders. Experienced teachers too suggest that there has not been a school culture breakthrough although they see encouraging signs with improved professional development, the adoption of a new training programme, the arrival of a new headteacher and a more listening senior leadership team. NQTs seem even more optimistic about developments. They suggest teachers are more valued and kept up to date by senior leaders. They also point to the use of shared lesson templates, sharing of lesson plans, involvement of students in learning and raising expectations in the wearing of uniform.

The factors which influence school culture and the leadership strategies adopted, provide a picture of School C and its development; a theoretical narrative of 12 months of its history. The summative theoretical constructs presented in Table 8.22 illustrate a personal story that describes the subjective experience of the research participants and shows a school still burdened by the effects of amalgamation. The theoretical narratives therefore, which bring together the theoretical constructs, cannot be limited to the twelve months of the research. The impact of School C's amalgamation remained raw for many of the research participants and provides compelling evidence of how school culture is affected by transformational change. In year one, the two theoretical narratives can be described as *unresolved history* and a *new beginning*. The *unresolved history* summarises a divided teaching community, with a legacy of mistrust in senior leaders and the effect of lost opportunities. A *new beginning* refers to the challenges faced by the executive headteacher of School C's new MAT, the beginnings of progress and the establishment of a new vision. In year two, developments can be summarised by the narratives *strengthening culture* and *lingering doubts*. Quantitative and qualitative evidence clearly show a healthier school culture emerging in year two driven by the determined leadership of the new headteacher and increased opportunities for collaboration at all levels. By contrast, the legacy of the past lingers, particularly in the views of middle and experienced teachers. For them, whilst acknowledging the progress made, the jury is still out; only time will determine if School C will ultimately forge its own identity.

Table 8.21: Leadership strategies /factors influencing school culture

Position in School	Collaborative Leadership	Professional Development	Collegial Support	Teacher Collaboration	Unity of Purpose	Learning Partnership
Senior Leadership Team	New executive headteacher on site two days per week SLT in charge day to day Better collaboration	Lots of CPD Clear direction	'Baggage'	Sharing Limited meetings and opportunities Staff rarely come together	New 10-point plan Clear direction Change in SLT	Efforts to raise aspirations
Middle Leaders	Excessive change Day to day limited collaboration Not a stable SLT No location to meet No clarity	Limited CPD Self-designed CPD	Regular meetings Feeling of being let down	Some collaborative planning Collaboration depends on leader	Repeated changes in leadership New leadership	Challenging students Increasing numbers
Experienced Teachers	Opportunities to input Open atmosphere SLT variable More listening from SLT	Focused CPD	Can talk to others Big trusted group TEEP increases trust	TEEP training effective	New headteacher Clear direction New Trust New leadership	Parent mail New technologies No breakthrough
NQT	New headteacher More information from headteacher Teachers kept up to date More valued	New SLT TEEP focus NQT Meetings	High turnover affects trust	TEEP celebration Sharing lessons Use templates Useful training days Regular meetings have impact	SWOT completed 10-point plan Opinions invited Students involved TEEP champions Teachers talking about teaching	Frequent letters home from headteacher Crackdown on uniform

Finally, here is the story of School C. The product of an amalgamation of two 11-18 secondary schools which has struggled to find its own identity and improve standards, despite its new expensive buildings. The 'baggage' of the post-amalgamation years is clearly evident in year one of the study and has a negative impact on school culture. The work of the multi-academy trust, however, including that of the executive headteacher and more recently the new headteacher, brings renewed hope and this is seen through the improved perceptions of school culture in year two in both the quantitative and qualitative outcomes. The journey is a long one, however, and teacher perceptions remain fragile.

Table 8.22: Theoretical Constructs in year one and two

Cultural Factors	Year one	Year two
Collaborative Leadership	History of division and frustration Depth of challenge Renewed optimism	Legacy of past Change underway
Professional Development	Response to context Leadership creates improvement agenda	Training to improve teaching
Collegial Support	Legacy of mistrust Emerging confidence	Scale of task Emerging optimism
Teacher Collaboration	Developing teamwork 'Baggage' not overcome	Continuing history of division Determination to improve collaboration
Unity of Purpose	'Baggage' dominates vision Renewed clarity of direction	Renewed purpose instilling confidence
Learning Partnerships	Past actions hinder progress Clearer direction established	Improved strategy Parent partnership increasingly challenging

(Based on Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003)

Chapter 9

Cross case analysis

9.1 Analysis of school culture across case study schools

In this chapter, I bring together evidence from the previous chapters and examine school culture across three case study schools. I return to the original research questions and consider these through the lens of participating schools. This will demonstrate the comparative strength of school culture across cases and the strength of individual cultural components as identified by Gruenert and Valentine (1998). Cross case analysis will show: how culture changes, the factors that initiate and influence cultural change, and the leadership strategies that further develop or undermine the strength of school culture. In short, the cumulative evidence from three cases will provide a detailed picture of how school culture develops and is influenced by leadership actions or other internal and external factors. I begin considering the strength of school culture across the cases and how this changes over time.

9.1.2 School culture across cases

This section answers part of research question 1 "What are teacher perceptions of school culture within and across case study schools?" Figure 9.1 shows the mean scores for teacher perceptions of school culture from all three case study schools in year one. This evidence was gathered from a single questionnaire item (Q36) about school culture, rather than from an accumulation of questions about individual school cultural factors. With a mean score of 3.65, on a Likert scale 1-5[59], school A has the most positive school culture, School B with a score of 2.66 has a weaker school culture, whilst School C has the weakest mean score of 2.23. Qualitative evidence about school culture in year one and two closely mirrors the quantitative findings, with most participants in School A expressing a positive perception of school culture. The following comments by a School A teacher demonstrates this: "I think there is a strong school culture here and I think they're trying to make a strong culture across the federation, but I think they're struggling at the moment". In School B, teacher perceptions

[59] Likert scale 1 – 5 where 5 demonstrates very positive teacher perceptions of school culture and 1 weak perceptions of school culture

of school culture show an improving trend: “from my point of view, school culture has improved, is getting better, more positive”. Similarly in School C, teacher perceptions about school culture, whilst not as positive as in the other two schools, are increasingly positive. “I’d probably put developing still, I feel a bit more secure that we are heading the right way, I’m still a little bit wary that because of Ofsted there’s a pressure to change things very quickly” and “I wouldn’t say it has developed completely, I think it’s more like a boat on waves. I would say it’s improving, definitely improving”.

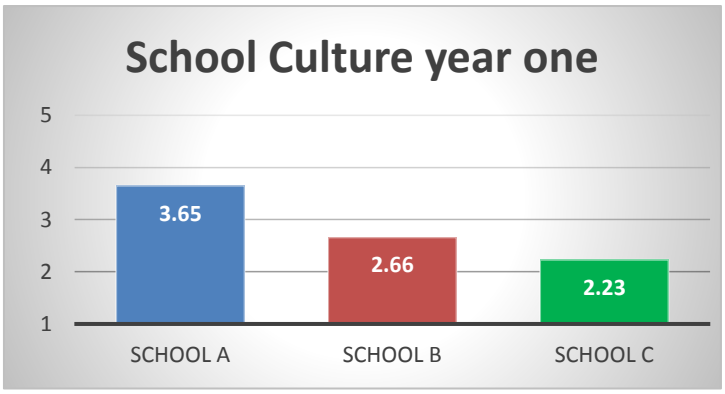

Figure 9.1: Overall school culture year one

Key: School A School B School C

In year two, teacher perceptions of school culture strengthen in each school as illustrated in Table 9.2. There is no change in the order of cultural strength between schools, with perceptions remaining most positive in School A and least positive in School C. Qualitative evidence again supports the quantitative outcomes with participants in School A continuing to express the most positive views of school culture as this extract demonstrates: “I think we have a unique culture”. Teachers in School B are also more positive about school culture, “yes it’s coming, it’s changing” and “from my point of view, school culture has improved, is getting better, more positive”. In School C the general view is that, school culture has strengthened but teachers’ views are mixed: “I think it’s getting there, to where it needs to be. But I think over the last year we’ve focused a lot on behaviour, I don’t think we’ve put the same focus on teaching and learning and progress”. In the later sections of this chapter, I examine what contributes to different perceptions of school culture and consider those factors

which strengthen or undermine cultural development. First, I illustrate the extent of cultural change across all three case study schools over the duration of the research.

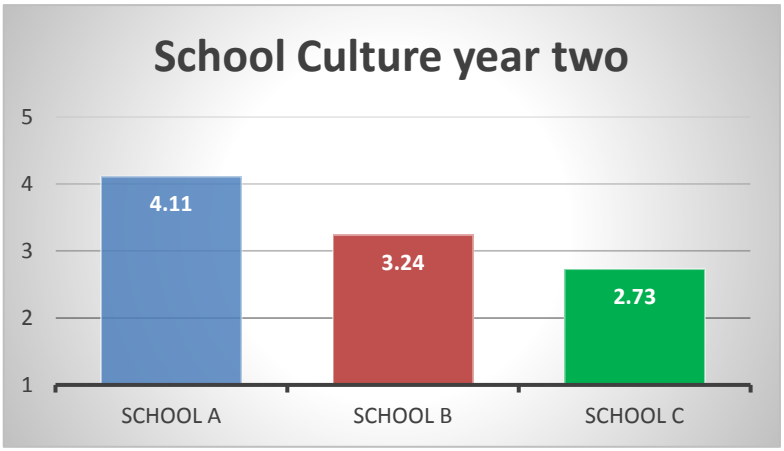

Figure 9.2: Overall school culture year two

9.1.3 School cultural change across cases.

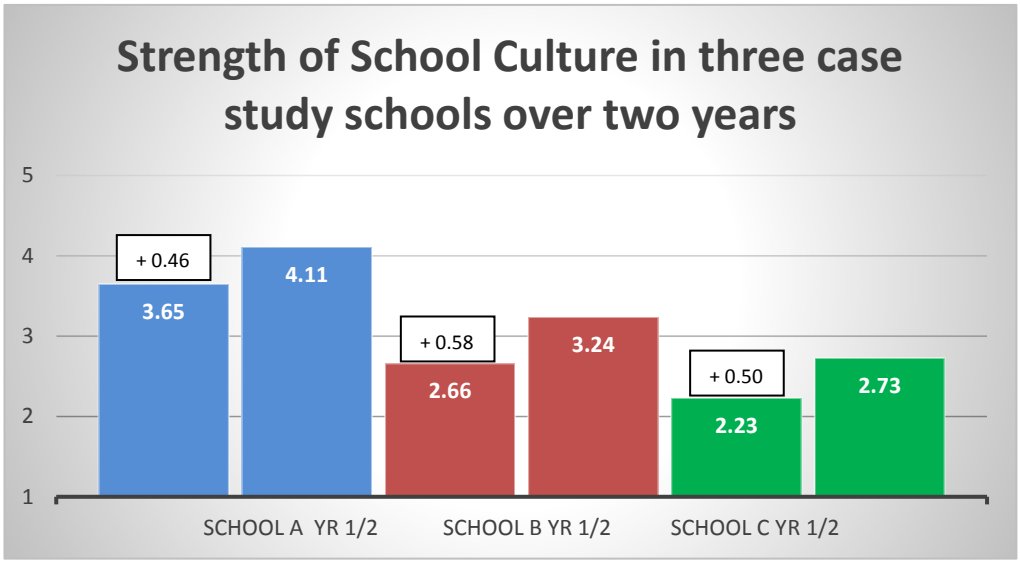

Figure: 9.3 Overall school culture year one and two

In this section, I aim to answer the second part of research question 2: how does school culture change in each school and across schools? Figure 9.3 compares mean scores from teacher questionnaires and shows a strengthening perception of school culture across all three case study schools. The extent of this 'strengthening' can be estimated by the difference between the mean scores in year one and two and suggests that perceptions improved mostly

in School B, which witnessed an improvement in means from 2.66 to 3.24. School A and C also saw a strengthening of teacher perceptions but not of the same magnitude as School B. Teacher perceptions in School A increased from 3.65 to 4.11 whilst School C's improvement was by an even larger margin, moving from 2.23 to 2.73. The reasons for overall improvement will be considered later, but it is worth noting that the schools with the largest improvement in teacher perceptions, 0.58 and 0.50 respectively, were home to a more challenging cohort of students and had Ofsted judgements of 'Special Measures' or 'Requires Improvement' as the study began.

9.1.4 Overall school culture year one – the cumulative effect of Gruenert and Valentine's cultural factors

The comparative analysis of overall school culture has, thus far, been derived from a final, single, overarching question on the teacher questionnaire. It is reasonable, however, to analyse school culture by examining the summative effect of Gruenert and Valentine's individual cultural components. In this way, as well as achieving another measure of overall school culture, it is possible to see the individual factors, that contribute to the findings.

Table 9.1: Cumulative school culture factors year one – summative means

	School A Yr1	School B Yr1	School C Yr1
Collaborative Leadership	3.42	2.98	2.67
Professional Development	3.88	3.5	3.2
Collegial Support	3.88	3.55	3.15
Teacher Collaboration	3.22	2.88	2.38
Unity of Purpose	3.5	3.11	2.88
Learning Partnership	3.24	2.86	2.51
School Culture (Mean of components)	3.52	3.15	2.8
School Culture (Q36 mean)	3.65	2.66	2.23

Table 9.1 shows the individual means for each of Gruenert and Valentine's cultural factors and a summative mean of cultural components alongside the mean of question 36. These

figures are graphically represented in Figure 9.4 and show year one and two comparisons of each cultural factor. Analysis of Table 9.1 and Figure 9.4 confirms that teachers in School A have the most positive perception of school culture, with teachers in School C having the most negative perception. The cumulative score from Gruenert and Valentine's factors strengthens, along with the outcomes, from the single question in the survey. However, comparison of the means differs. In question 36, the mean scores for school culture were 3.65 in School A, 2.66 in School B and 2.23 in School C.

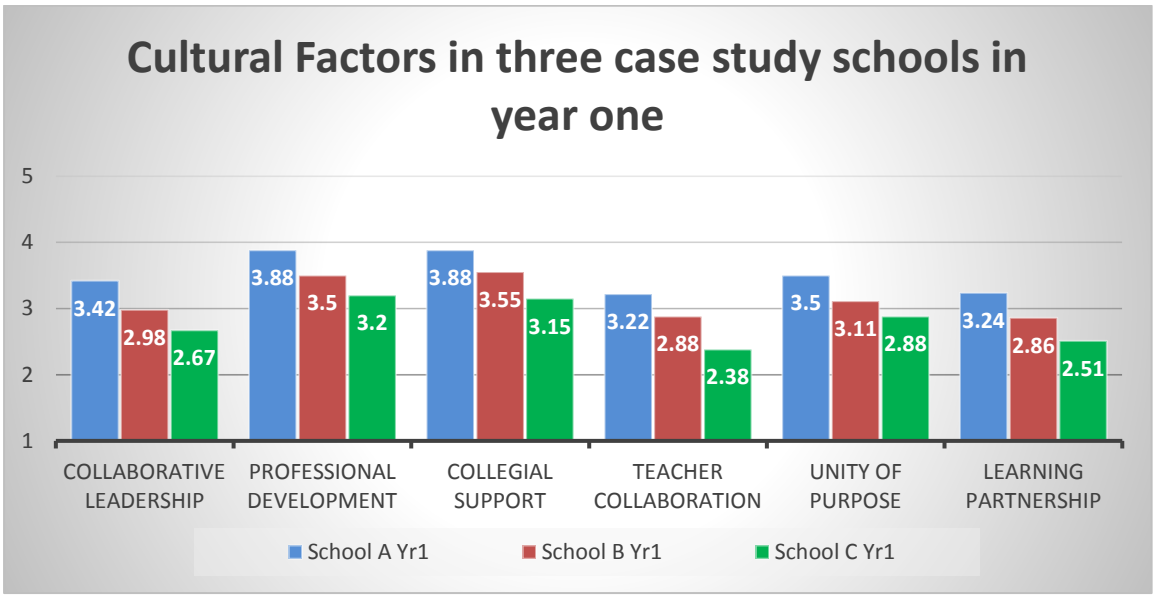

Figure 9.4: Cross case / cultural component analysis in year one and two

The mean calculated from individual cultural components was 3.52 in School A, 3.15 in School B and 2.80 in School C. The implications of these outcomes, whilst not changing individual school ranking, seem to suggest that the cumulative mean showed more positive teacher perceptions of school culture than the overarching question in School B and C and less positive perception of school culture in School A. I suggest therefore that teachers were less positive about school culture in Schools B and C when faced with a specific question about school culture, but more positive when considering individual cultural components. The reverse was the case for teacher perceptions in School A. There may be a rational explanation for this outcome. First, the questionnaire used aggregated views of 35 questions into six cultural categories; respondents tend to be reluctant to use the extreme scores of 1 or 5. Question 36, however, gives the respondents a single opportunity to express a view about

their understanding of school culture and so may be more likely to elicit more robust responses.

9.1.5 Overall school culture year two – The cumulative effect of cultural factors

Table 9.2 shows the individual means for each of Gruenert and Valentine's cultural factors in year two and a summative mean of means. These figures have been graphically represented in Figure 9.5 and provide a year two comparison of each cultural factor using the same colour referencing.

Table 9.2 Cumulative school culture factors year two

	School A Yr2	School B Yr2	School C Yr2
Collaborative Leadership	3.77	3.42	3.05
Professional Development	4	3.71	3.52
Collegial Support	4.16	3.68	3.46
Teacher Collaboration	3.47	3.27	3.03
Unity of Purpose	3.92	3.73	3.17
Learning Partnership	3.51	3.09	2.65
School Culture (Mean of components)	3.81	3.48	3.15
School Culture (Q36 mean)	4.11	3.24	2.73

Analysis of Table 9.2 and Figure 9.5 confirms that teachers in School A have the most positive perception of school culture, with teachers in School C having the least positive perception. The cumulative score from Gruenert and Valentine's factors varies from the outcomes of the single question 36 in the questionnaire. In School A the mean of teachers' perception of school culture in question 36 is 4.11, but only 3.81 in the cumulative score.

By contrast, mean scores for School B were very similar at 3.24 for the single question and 3.48 for the cumulative score. Scores for School C also differed and show that the cumulative score at 3.15 indicated a much stronger school culture than the single question 36, which had a mean of 2.73. All the cumulative means strengthened over the period of the study, but the gap between the highest and lowest mean score was only 0.65 for the cumulative factors against a gap of 1.39 for the single question. I suggest that teachers in School A were more positive about the strength of school culture when culture was considered on an individual basis. They were less positive about the strength of school culture as an accumulation of individual factors although, even in this scenario, School A mean scores were the strongest of the three schools. In contrast to School A, teachers in School B and C were more positive about the strength of school culture as an accumulation of individual factors than when it was considered as a single question. A single question about culture might elicit a more polarising response that when culture is considered through questions on individual cultural components.

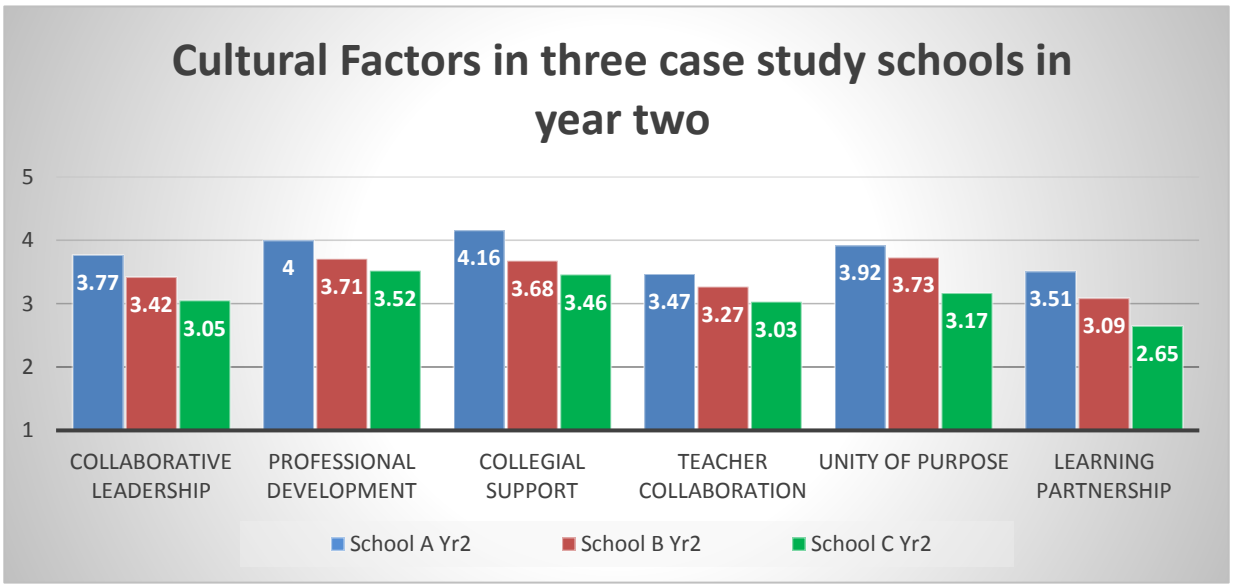

Figure 9.5: Cross case / cultural component analysis in year two

9.1.6 Overall school culture year one and two – The cumulative effect of cultural factors

Table 9.3 below shows the individual means for each Gruenert and Valentine's cultural factors in year one and two and a summative mean of means. These figures are represented in Figure 9.6 and provide an overall comparison of each cultural factor over two years.

Table 9.3 Cumulative school culture factors year one and two

	School A Yr1	School A Yr2	School B Yr1	School B Yr2	School C Yr1	School C Yr2
Collaborative Leadership	3.42	3.77	2.98	3.42	2.67	3.05
Professional Development	3.88	4	3.5	3.71	3.2	3.52
Collegial Support	3.88	4.16	3.55	3.68	3.15	3.46
Teacher Collaboration	3.22	3.47	2.88	3.27	2.38	3.03
Unity of Purpose	3.5	3.92	3.11	3.73	2.88	3.17
Learning Partnership	3.24	3.51	2.86	3.09	2.51	2.65
School Culture (Mean of components)	3.52	3.81	3.15	3.48	2.8	3.15
School Culture Q 36 mean	3.65	4.11	2.66	3.24	2.23	2.73

In Figure 9.6 each school is represented by two coloured bars; the first bar of each school indicates the mean score of teacher perception for the individual factor listed in year one, whilst the second bar illustrates the score for year two. In every case, teacher perceptions of all individual cultural factors strengthen from year one to year two. There are no exceptions. Teachers in School A have the most positive perception of the individual cultural factors over the period of the study, whilst teachers in School C have the least positive perception. There are some cultural factors where teacher perceptions are similar over two years whilst there are others where there is noticeable variance of views. For example, perceptions of Professional Development and Collegial Support produce similar scores across the three case study

schools but there are wider divisions in perceptions of Collaborative leadership, Teacher Collaboration and Learning Partnership.

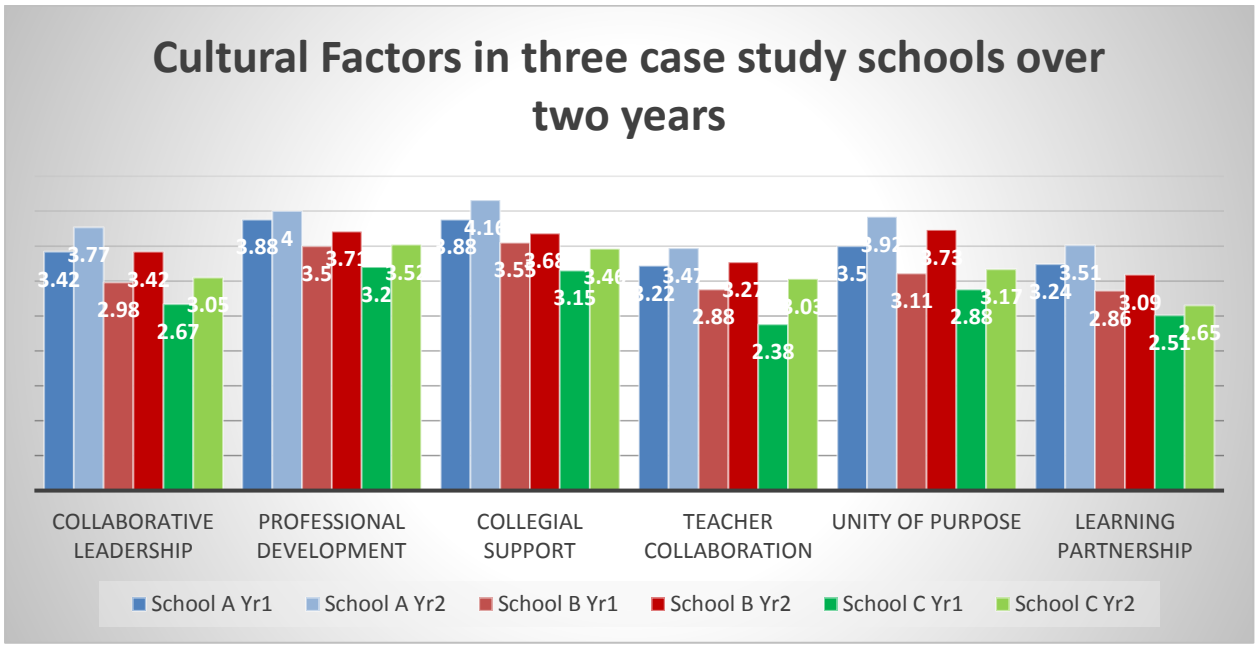

Figure 9.6: Cross case / cultural component analysis year one and two

9.1.7 Overall school culture year one and two – The cumulative effect of cultural factors

Analysis was undertaken to discover if there were statistically significant relationships between teachers' perceptions of school culture and each of the following variables:

- case study schools (sub-research question 1a)
- gender (sub-research question 1b)
- position in school (sub-research question 1c)
- years in education (sub-research question 1d)
- years in case study school (sub-research question 1e)

The following null hypothesis was tested:

there is no significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of school culture and each case study school (1a)

there is no significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of school culture and the gender of the respondent (1b)

there is no significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of school culture and the role of the teacher in his or her school (1c)

there is no significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of school culture and the number of years they have spent in the teaching profession (1d)

there is no significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of school culture and the number of years they have spent in the case study school (1e)

Anova tests were conducted to determine if there were any relationship between teachers' perceptions of school culture and the results from each case study school. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 9.4 below and shows a p value ≤ 0.05 for four of the six outcomes obtained. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of school culture and each case study school (1a) was rejected.

Table 9.4: Anova test showing statistical relationship between case study schools

Dependent Variable: SC36 - School Culture

Scheffe

(I) School	(J) School	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
School A	School B	-.993*	.197	.000	-1.48	-.51
	School C	-1.416*	.155	.000	-1.80	-1.03
School B	School A	.993*	.197	.000	.51	1.48
	School C	-.423	.198	.104	-.91	.06
School C	School A	1.416*	.155	.000	1.03	1.80
	School B	.423	.198	.104	-.06	.91

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Further Anova tests were conducted to determine if there were any relationship between teachers' perception of school culture and their role in the school, their years spent in teaching or years spent working in the case study school. P values for these groups were consistently above 0.05 except for those colleagues teaching between 6 – 10 years in the same case study school where the p value was 0.02. Nonetheless, the overall analysis indicates that the null hypothesis showing no significant relationship between teachers'

perception of school culture and role in school, their number of years in education and years in school was accepted. Independent T tests were also conducted to determine if there was any relationship between gender and teachers' perception of school culture. The p value obtained in this analysis was well above 0.05 and therefore the null hypothesis, that there is no significant relationship between gender and teachers' perception of school culture, was accepted.

In summary, whilst statistical tests suggest that gender, role in school, and number of years in education and years in the case study schools have no relationship to questionnaire outcomes, the same tests indicate a relationship between case study schools. Results are not random. Teacher perceptions showed a significant relationship according to school.

9.2 The components of school culture across case study schools

In this section, I consider each of Valentine's school culture components to answer the second part of research question 3; "how do the components of school culture vary within schools and between schools?" In particular, I examine how teacher perceptions vary between the case studies. I consider the strength of teacher perceptions and how these change over time as a prelude to the next section which considers the factors which initiate change or contribute to it. As discussed in Chapter 5, a key feature of this study is the use of themes and constructs, where themes are abstract summaries which emerge from the data and codes and constructs are abstract concepts that organise a group of themes by fitting them into a theoretical framework. In this chapter, analysis of each cultural component is assisted by a table showing summary themes and constructs. Additional tables in Appendix 13 show teacher perceptions across schools by role and perceptions of changeover time.

9.2.1 The components of school culture across case study schools: Collaborative Leadership

Figure 9.7 shows the quantitative outcomes for teacher perceptions of Collaborative Leadership across case study schools. The quantitative findings show that views of Collaborative Leadership strengthened over time in all cases, with School B seeing the most improvement in teacher perceptions. Teachers in School A were the most positive about

Collaborative Leadership in their school, whilst teachers in School B were the least positive. Teachers in School A also showed the least improvement in perceptions of Collaborative Leadership across the period of the study.

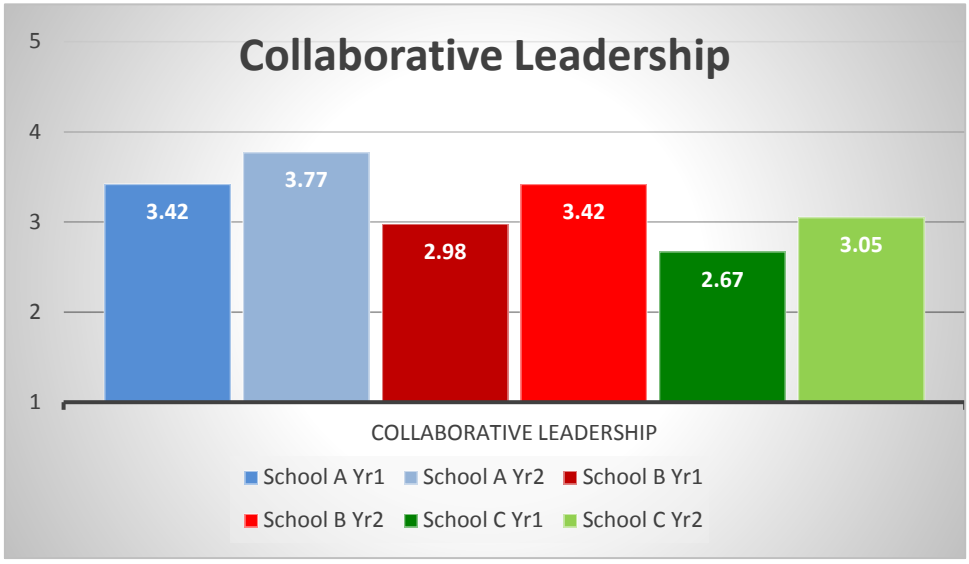

Figure 9.7: Comparative measures of Collaborative Leadership across case study schools

Table 9.5 shows a comparison of summary themes and constructs from each of the case studies and provides further insight into teacher perceptions of Collaborative Leadership. Here, Collaborative Leadership strengthens across all schools but also shows divisions amongst teachers. In School A, summary themes in year two are more positive about Collaborative Leadership than in year one and two and this is seen in the constructs where participation in collaboration is described as energetic and where there are fewer reluctant participants. By contrast, School B's growing collaboration described in year one and two is accompanied by feelings of insecurity and instability caused by fear of unemployment as school rolls fall. The constructs for School B suggest that collaboration improves in year two, but much uncertainty and some cynicism remain. Teacher perceptions in School C are most affected by past events. Here, themes are significantly influenced by the baggage of history, where problems of identity and trust linger. Although themes and constructs describe change and improvement, the way forward appears challenging.

Qualitative comparisons of Collaborative Leadership are also derived from comparing the role ordered matrix outcomes for each school and provide a perspective from the paired interviews. Appendix 13.1 shows vertical (analysis by school) comparison of Collaborative Leadership in which the views of all interview pairings are represented and compared across cases. This shows that Collaborative Leadership was strongest in School A and weakest in School C. Horizontal comparisons (analysis across schools by role) show that senior team members in Schools A and B refer to the growth and development of Collaborative Leadership in their schools whilst opinions of senior leaders in School C appear more divided. Similarly, middle leaders in Schools A and B indicate that Collaborative Leadership is improving whilst teachers in School C present a less positive picture. In contrast, experienced teachers in School C appear most positive about Collaborative Leadership, whilst teachers in the other two schools express more reservations. Finally, newly qualified teachers are the most positive about Collaborative Leadership and appear to appreciate the efforts of school leaders to share information. Cumulatively, the summative comments of teachers in the three schools suggest that Schools A and B have more positive perceptions of Collaborative Leadership than teachers in school C and this outcome compares favourably with findings from quantitative data. If Appendix 13.1 shows qualitative perceptions of Collaborative Leadership by role and by school, Appendix 13.2 shows how teacher perceptions changed over time. Using a horizontal and vertical analysis, positive changes to Collaborative Leadership are evident in Schools B and C whilst two of the three groups of middle leaders imply improvement in Collaborative Leadership.

To summarise, the quantitative and qualitative evidence indicates that Collaborative Leadership is strongest in School A and less strong, although improving in Schools B and C.

Table 9.5: Collaborative Leadership – Summary themes and theoretical constructs over time

School A	Year one	Year two
Summary Themes	Improving collaboration and professionalism Established routines Two-way process Limited, top down collaboration Avoiding discussion of key issues	Stronger and improving collaboration External factors provide momentum Perspective controls participation Closer co-operation and positive experience Developing teamwork
Theoretical construct	*Action supporting collaboration* *Strategy with narrow focus*	*Energetic participation in collaboration* *Individuals act as barriers to co-operation*
School B Summary Themes	Growing collaboration Increased momentum Feeling of inferiority Job losses Instability causing cynicism	Faster pace of effective collaboration Strategy disguised as collaboration External factors accelerating change Sense of helplessness
Theoretical construct	*Collaboration creating improvement* *Sense of inferiority caused by instability and uncertainty*	*Strengthening collaboration* *Individual disconnect with pace of change*
School C Summary Themes	Limited collaboration Baggage from past lingers Problem of identity after amalgamation Frequent change in leadership Recent improvements	Collaboration not embedded Context hinders progress Clarity emerging Improved leadership Change creates improvement Accelerated improvements
Theoretical construct	*History of division and frustration* *Depth of challenge* *Renewed optimism*	*Legacy of past* *Change underway*

9.2.2 The components of school culture across case study schools: Professional Development

The quantitative finding for all schools, summarised in Figure 9.8, show that perceptions of Professional Development were amongst some of the most positive recorded. In all three case study schools, teachers valued opportunities for Professional Development highly and

perceptions improved over the period of the study. Whilst teachers in School A had the most positive perception of Professional Development, teachers in School C recorded the strongest improvement from years 1 to 2.

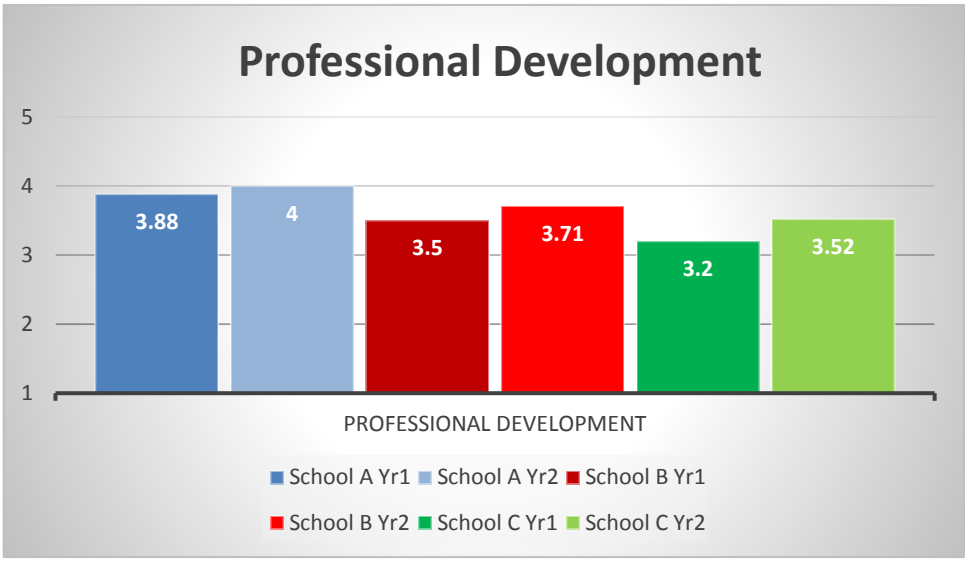

Figure 9.8: Comparative measures of Professional Development across case study schools

The qualitative analysis of teacher perceptions of Professional Development in year one and two are summarised in Table 9.6 and in Appendix 13.3 and 13.4. Table 9.6 compares the themes and constructs for Professional Development and highlights several positive characteristics of training: a common language; greater opportunities for development; personalisation; joint training and development linked to the quality of teaching. However, analysis of themes and constructs suggests teachers in School A and C are much more positive about CPD (continuous professional development) in their schools; how it is managed and how it relates to improving standards. These features are also evident in the constructs for Professional Development where most participants refer to increasing personalisation, improving standards and more opportunities for development. By contrast, some teachers in School B characterise their Professional Development as imposed, restrictive, not personalised and even externally driven.

Table 9.6: Professional Development – Summary themes and theoretical constructs

School A	Year one	Year two
Summary Themes	Effective training from supportive leadership Increased opportunities for progression Proactive rather than reactive training policy Improved joint school Professional Development	Proactive joint training across schools Personalised training from supportive leadership Good training opportunities to develop people
Theoretical construct	*Training as a priority for improving standards*	*Standards driven by personalised training*
School B		
Summary Themes	Creative opportunities to develop people Home grown success in training Box ticking exercises of limited value Pace of change restricts time for effective training	Joint development practice as a tool for development Variability of opportunity Greater direction and structure Imposition of training accelerated by external factors
Theoretical construct	*Creative approaches to CPD* *Unwelcome imposition of non-personalised training*	*Structured and effective CPD* *External control of training*
School C		
Summary Themes	More investment in people Centralised training Insufficient differentiation Improving personalisation	Common language Centralised strategy improves focus Teaching and Learning a priority Accelerated development
Theoretical construct	*Response to context* *Leadership creates improvement agenda*	*Training to improve teaching*

Appendix 13.3 shows a varied picture across the case study schools and this becomes more accentuated when analysis is conducted by role. All groups in School A, and three of the four groups in School C, have a positive view of the training they receive but middle leaders and experienced teachers in School B are more reticent. They see training as imposed or not personalised. This overall picture is confirmed in Appendix 13.4, which considers perceptions over time. Here middle leaders and experienced teachers in School B and School C describe some training as imposed or more restricted; the same groups in School A are more positive whilst acknowledging that joint training between staff in School A and B is still developing.

To summarise, the quantitative and qualitative evidence indicates that teacher perceptions of Professional Development is strongest in School A and School C, but less strong, although improving, in School B.

9.2.3 The components of school culture across case study schools: Collegial Support

The quantitative findings for all schools, summarised in Figure 9.9, shows that perceptions of Collegial Support were some of the most varied in this study. The levels of Collegial Support experienced differed markedly between teachers, although perceptions improved in all schools over the period of the study. Teachers in School A had the most positive perception of Collegial Support, whilst teachers in School C recorded the weakest score. Over the period of study, perceptions of Collegial Support improved most markedly in Schools C and A and to a lesser extent in School B.

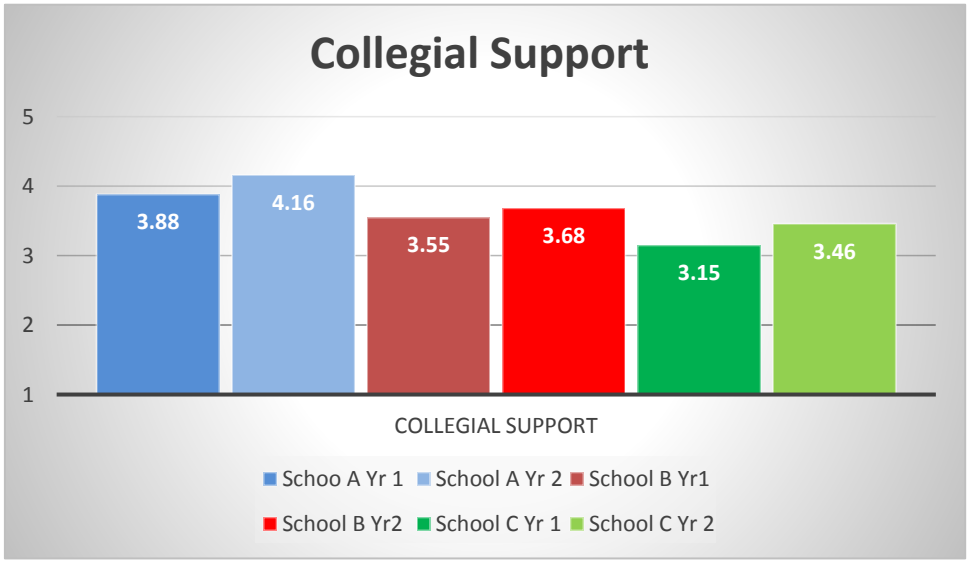

Figure 9.9: Comparative measures of Collegial Support across case study schools

The qualitative analysis of teacher perceptions of Collegial Support in years one and two are summarised in Table 9.7 and Appendix 13.5 and 13.6. Table 9.7 compares summary themes and theoretical constructs. It confirms the importance of trust, collaboration and teamwork in improving school culture. It shows that whilst Collegial Support appears to be

improving in all three schools, School B and School C are more affected by some teachers' sense of uncertainty, anxiety and lack of trust. Table 9.7 highlights the extent of the challenge faced by school leaders in developing more trust with teachers and between teachers and how job insecurity caused by increasingly challenging budgets, undermines relationships between colleagues. Despite the challenges, the constructs in Table 9.7 suggest that trust is emerging strongly in Schools A and B, and there is an increasing sense of optimism in School C.

Table 9.7: Collegial Support – Summary themes and theoretical constructs

School A	Year one	Year two
Summary Themes	Effective and improving teamwork Trusting and collaborative atmosphere	Barriers removed Co-operation challenges pre-conceptions Misunderstandings as part of change Mutual support improves teamwork
Theoretical construct	*Trust and teamwork underpin values*	*Trust overcomes change* *Trust central to school DNA*
School B		
Summary Themes	Significant trust in some departments Special measures judgement undermines trust Redundancies undermine trust Pressure to improve creates blame culture	Improving trust across school Variable trust across partnership Job security improves trust
Theoretical construct	*Uncertainty undermines trust*	*Trust re-emerging*
School C		
Summary Themes	Limited vertical trust 'Baggage' hinders trust in leadership Desire for improvement Staff turnover undermines trust Good horizontal trust	Trust undermined Impact of redundancies Legacy of past Significant challenges for leadership Signs of improvement Willing audience
Theoretical construct	*Legacy of mistrust* *Emerging confidence*	*Scale of task* *Emerging optimism*

Appendix 13.5 shows that levels of Collegial Support, and therefore 'trust' between teachers and between teachers and school leaders, improves over time, although there is some

variation between the schools and between groups. Three of the four groups in School A are positive about Collegial Support but some middle leaders highlight reservations. Two groups in School C also express a lack of trust and this is echoed sharply by middle leaders and experienced teachers in School B, who openly suggest a significant lack of trust in their relationship with teachers in partner School A. Over time, improvements in Collegial Support across the three case study schools also vary as shown in Appendix 13.6. Whilst no group in School A expresses any negativity about improvement in Collegial Support, middle leaders in both School B and C point to ongoing problems of trust between teachers and between other teachers and school leaders. Experienced teachers in School B also suggest that levels of Collegial Support had deteriorated over twelve months.

To summarise, the quantitative and qualitative evidence indicates that teacher perceptions of Collegial Support is strongest in School A, but less strong, although improving in Schools B and C.

9.2.4 The components of school culture across case study schools: Teacher Collaboration

The quantitative findings for all schools show that perceptions of Teacher Collaboration were among some of the weakest recorded. At the same time, comparison of teacher perceptions between years one and two, shown in Figure 9.10, also recorded some of the most improved scores. In year one and two, teachers in School A were most positive about Teacher Collaboration whilst teachers in School B were less positive. Perceptions in School C, however, were the lowest year one and two scores recorded over the period of the study. Perceptions of Teacher Collaboration improved in all schools in year two, but the greatest improvement occurred in School C, where the mean score rose from 2.38 in year one and two to 3.03 in year two.

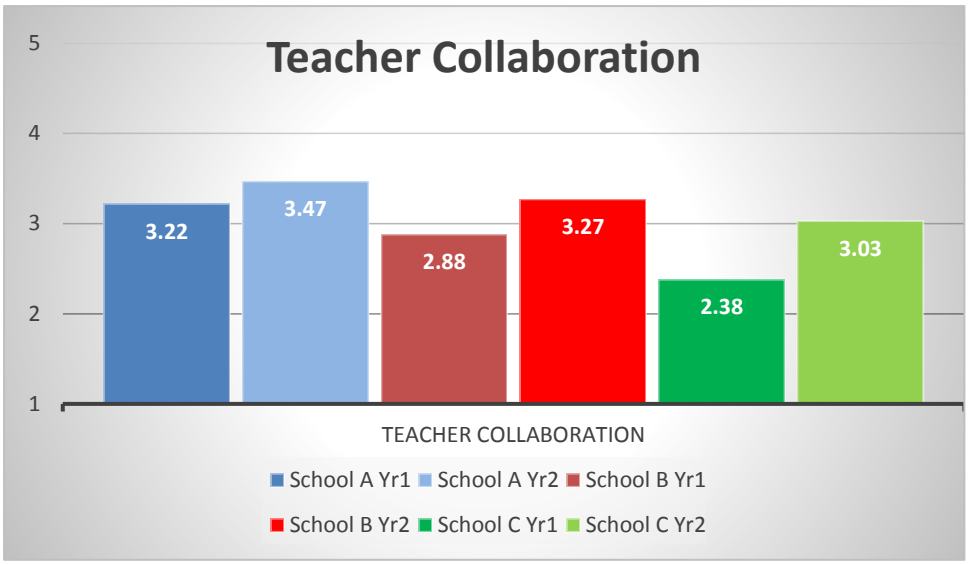

Figure 9.10: Comparative measures of Teacher Collaboration across case study schools

The qualitative analysis of Teacher Collaboration in years one and two are shown in Table 9.8 and in Appendix 13.7 and 13.8. Table 9.8 compares themes and constructs across the case studies. It confirms that collaboration is strong and embedded in School A, but much more varied, while at the same time improving in Schools B and C. The recurring themes of collaboration, trust and teamwork vary in strength across the three schools. The common feature is that trust and collaboration are strongest within established teams but, as evidence from Table 9.8 indicates, this can also create sub-cultures with teachers reluctant to change, as shown in Schools B and C. Whilst collaboration may be improving over time and supported by the quantitative findings, it is more limited, constrained by a continuing history of division or suspicion of a partner school seen as more successful and in the lead role within the MAT.

The constructs for Collaborative Leadership confirm improving overall perceptions in each of the three schools but whereas collaboration is embedded in School A, teachers in School B and C are faced with greater challenges to overcome. Some challenges are clearly deep-rooted and others derive from the change underway in the schools.

Table 9.8: Teacher Collaboration – Summary themes and theoretical constructs

School A	Year one	Year two
Summary Themes	Effective teamwork within departments Individuals provide momentum for collaboration Individuals restrict collaboration Growing integration	Neutral venue provides reassurance Stronger joint working and coming together Impact of external factors incentivised collaboration Reluctant collaborators
Theoretical construct	*Collaboration as core value* *Few non-collaborators*	*Leadership and external issues drive collaboration* *Minority unwilling to share*
School B Summary Themes	Variable collaboration Strong collaboration in and between specific departments Limited but improving collaboration across Federation	More collaboration Variable collaboration within and between departments Limited but improving collaboration across Federation
Theoretical construct	*Collaboration improving and responding to change*	*Collaboration grows trust*
School C Summary Themes	Teamwork and collaboration good in departments Collaboration dependent on leadership Ongoing issue of sub-cultures Widespread collaboration never established	Collaboration in pockets Variable strengthening of collaboration Significant improvement in some teams
Theoretical construct	*Developing teamwork and collaboration* *Baggage not overcome*	*Continuing history of division* *Determination to improve collaboration*

Table 9.8 shows strong levels of Teacher Collaboration from all teacher groups in School A and positive views about the improving collaboration with partner School B. Perceptions of teacher groups in School B are less positive. There is acknowledgement that collaboration occurs between teachers within the school but there is a mixed view about collaboration across the MAT. The qualitative evidence from teachers in School C about Teacher Collaboration appears to contradict scores from teacher questionnaires. For example, whilst there are comments which suggest that collaboration is not universal, there is plenty of evidence that collaboration is good within departments, and this is supported by information in Appendix 13.8 which illustrates change in perception over time. Teachers in School A

report that Teacher Collaboration continued to improve into year two but two of the four groups in School B were less positive. Middle leaders and experienced teachers in School B considered that Teacher Collaboration was more varied and there was a perception that views of teachers in School B were of less value than those in partner School A.

To summarise, the quantitative and qualitative evidence indicates that teacher perceptions of Teacher Collaboration is strongest in School A, although the most improvement can be seen in Schools B and C.

9.2.5 The components of school culture across case study schools: Unity of Purpose

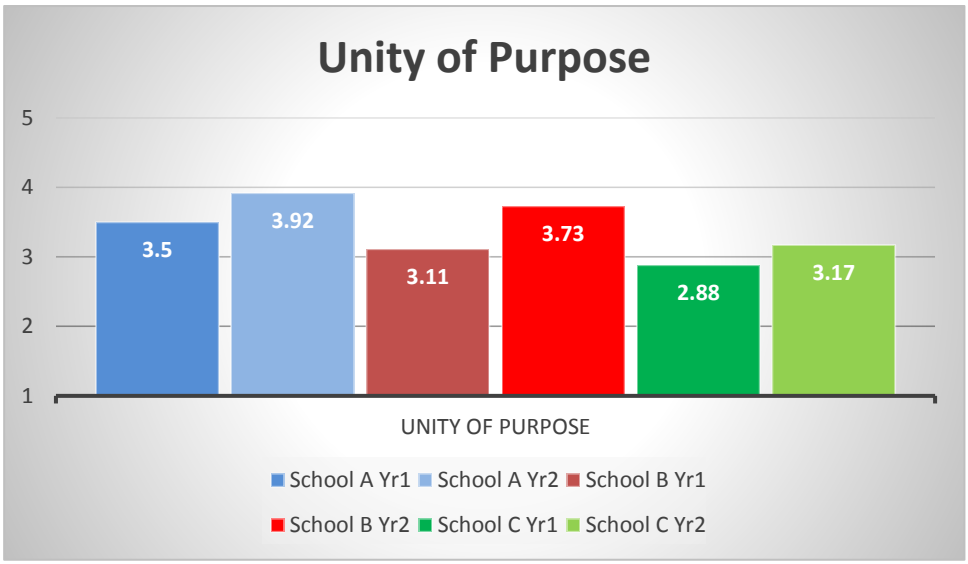

Figure 9.11: Comparative measures of Unity of Purpose across case study schools

The quantitative findings for all schools shown in Figure 9.11 illustrates that perceptions of Unity of Purpose were the third highest across both time periods of the study, although there were considerable differences of view between teachers. Teachers in School A were the most positive about Unity of Purpose closely followed by teachers in School B. Teachers in School C were the least positive by some margin. The reasons for this will be explored later in the chapter. All schools recorded an improvement in perceptions of Unity of Purpose, with the most improved score recorded by teachers in School B where perceptions strengthened from 3.11 in year one and two to 3.73 in year two.

The qualitative analysis of Unity of Purpose is analysed in Table 9.9 and Appendix 13.9 and 13.10. Table 9.9 brings together the themes and constructs for Unity of Purpose in each school and presents a revealing picture of developments over the period of the study. Whereas teacher perceptions of Gruenert and Valentine's cultural factors mostly present common views, the summative themes for Unity of Purpose show starkly idiosyncratic perspectives. In School A, for example, there is a strong vision, clear sense of purpose and realisation that some opinions will differ. Nonetheless, there is an increasing determination to improve further and this is expanded to a town-wide plan involving both partner schools. In School B the vison is less clear; there may be a determination to improve, but external factors distract the improvement process as the theoretical constructs illustrate. In School C there is a new exciting vision of the future, a sense of heading in the right direction, but this anticipation is tempered by the need to overcome the baggage of the past, which has created a cynicism amongst some teachers. For all schools, the prevailing desire is that the future be better for the students and staff, a more successful future, however daunting the challenge.

Appendix 13.9 shows perceptions of Unity of Purpose taken from the respective role ordered matrices in each case study chapter and allows for comparison between schools. It also allows for comparison with the emerging outcomes from the quantitative findings. Teachers from the four groups in School A are unanimous in their view that there is a strong, bold, well-established vision for their school driven by the school headteacher. Teachers in School A's partner school, however, suggest that, whilst perceptions of Unity of Purpose are improving, that purpose is still not fully established. Middle leaders and experienced teachers in School B spoke of a 'muddled' vision where some negativity amongst staff remained. Two of the teacher groups in School C referred to a more positive view of Unity of Purpose whilst middle leaders, and more surprisingly, some senior leaders reflected on a lost vision of the past.

Appendix 13.10, which illustrates change in perception over time, mirrors the comments above and shows an improving picture overall. There are, however, some differences between views of teachers in each school. Teachers in School A say that Unity of Purpose continues to improve, although it has taken some time. Three of the four teacher groups in School C suggest there is an increased optimism because of the appointment of a new headteacher. Teachers in School C recorded the most improved score for Unity of Purpose in the quantitative findings between years one and two. The introduction of new leadership may,

therefore, have been the stimulus for these improved perceptions. Teachers in School B remain divided. Perceptions of Unity of Purpose have improved but uncertainty remains and there is a sense that developments have been driven by external factors such as the extra scrutiny of performance imposed by Ofsted

Table 9.9: Unity of Purpose – Summary Themes and Theoretical Constructs

	Year one	Year two
School A Summary Themes	Huge and inspiring vision Strong sense of purpose Cynicism from minority	Common town wide vision Journey requires further mapping Strong determination to improve Clarity of purpose
Theoretical construct	*Inspiring drive to raise aspirations* *Acceptance of barriers*	*Clear common vision* *Unfinished map of future*
School B Summary Themes	Inconsistent and changing vision Determination to improve External events affect school direction and vision	Clear vision from leadership Optimistic vision for partnership Vision affected by changing structure Changes in headship affects vision
Theoretical construct	*Turbulent vision*	*Determined vision challenges uncertainty*
School C Summary Themes	Lost early vision followed by years of conflict Years of frequent changes in leadership Baggage carried forward New clear impetus Clear direction from supportive SLT	Ofsted dominated vision Leap in right direction Increasing optimism inspires increasing trust Positive impact of new headteacher New vision inclusive of all staff
Theoretical construct	*Baggage dominates vision* *Renewed clarity of direction*	*Renewed purpose instilling confidence*

To summarise, the quantitative and qualitative evidence indicates that teacher perceptions of Unity of Purpose is improving strongly in all schools.

9.2.6 The components of school culture across case study schools: Learning Partnership

The quantitative findings for all schools shown in Figure 9.12 illustrates that perceptions of Learning Partnership were the joint weakest scores recorded. Only School A teachers had a positive overall view about Learning Partnership and the relationship between school and parents, although perceptions improved in all three schools. Teachers in School B, and particularly School C, were less positive about the support provided by parents and, whilst perceptions improved in both schools by year two, the improvement in School C was very marginal.

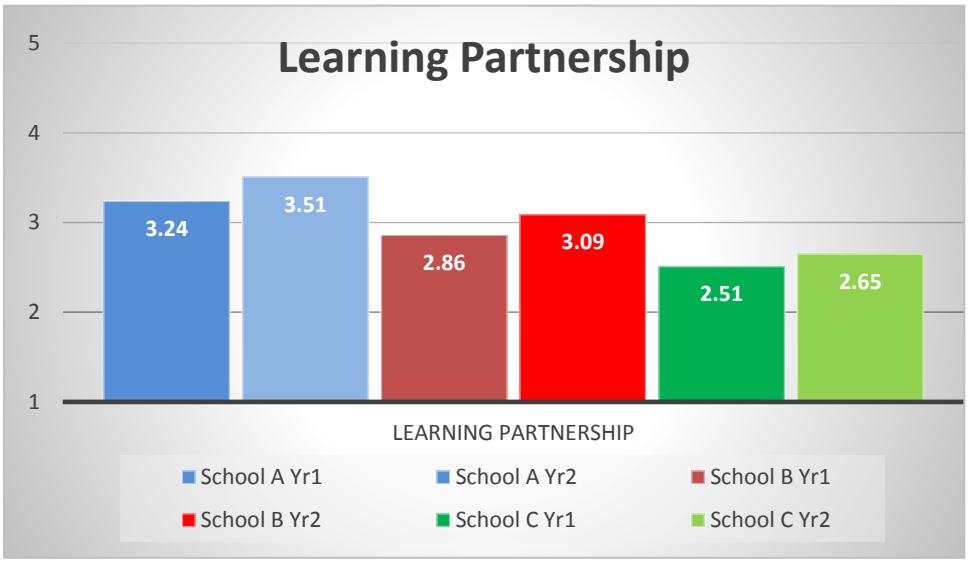

Figure 9.12: Comparative measures of Learning Partnership across case study schools

The qualitative analysis of Learning Partnership in years one and two is considered in Table 9.10 and in Appendix 13.11 and 13.12. Analysis of Table 9.10 provides a comparison of summary themes and theoretical constructs and explains the range of perception of Learning Partnership. In School A, the positive relations with parents is well-established and based on the good reputation of the school in the community. There is strength and uniformity in the relationship with parents but, even here, teachers in School A acknowledge that there are more challenges for their colleagues in partner School B. Despite the variability in home support, teachers in School B report that relations with parents have improved and there is more support from home. The theoretical constructs for School B confirm an improving

situation and this is supported by quantitative outcomes. Teachers in School C, on the other hand, whilst recognising the introduction of a clear strategy that provides consistency in school expectations and helps improve Learning Partnership, report on an increasingly challenging home – school environment, with an increasing number of parents who do not value education and who do not provide teachers with necessary support. This qualitative evidence supports the quantitative data and helps explain why Learning Partnership overall received one of the weakest scores in the study.

Table 9.10: Learning Partnership – Summary Themes and Theoretical Constructs

School A	Year one	Year two
Summary Themes	Strong stakeholder buy in Good relationships and acceptance of standards Strength of partnership not uniform across town schools	Emerging partnership Dominance of one partner Varied levels of support across partnership Well established views
Theoretical construct	*Standards and participation expected* *Uniformity as an ambition*	*Perceptions underpinned by past reputation* *Changes challenging long held views*
School B		
Summary Themes	Improving partnership is a challenge Lack of shared expectations Improved partnership with students Significant variation across partnership	Improving partnership Fragile relationships More support from parents Increased confidence from parents
Theoretical construct	*Varied but improving partnership*	*Greater confidence in partnership with parents*
School C		
Summary Themes	Baggage of past undermined partnership Past inconsistencies Direct action to improve partnership Improving consistency	Focus on student progress Varied support from parents Value of education varied Significant recent challenges
Theoretical construct	*Past actions hinder progress* *Clearer direction established*	*Improved strategy* *Parent partnership increasingly challenging*

Appendix 13.11 shows strong and positive relations between parents and teachers in School A, where support for the school and teachers' expectations of students are reflected in support from home. Teachers in School B and C, however, point to a lack of common expectations amongst parents and a more varied level of support. Over time, perceptions of Learning Partnership change in each of the case study schools. Teachers in School A, for example, indicated only small or incremental changes in a picture which remains overwhelmingly positive. For three of the four groups in School B, perceptions of Learning Partnership strengthen as parental support appears to improve. Teachers in School C, however, report more challenges and even a deterioration in the levels of support received from home. This explains the limited and marginal improvement seen in the quantitative outcome for School C.

To summarise, the quantitative and qualitative evidence indicates that teacher perceptions of Learning Partnership improve in all schools, although it remains the weakest of the Gruenert and Valentine factors.

Finally, this chapter has shown that starting from different points, school culture strengthened in all the case study schools. However, there were many differences in the pace school culture developed and in the interaction of individual components identified by Gruenert and Valentine. For each school, whether part of a MAT or product of an amalgamation, their context was distinctive. Therefore, in this last section, consideration is given to the reasons for cultural change; the factors, both internal and external, which shaped that development and actions of school leaders to further improve school standards.

9.3 Factors which initiate or influence change and the leadership strategies that develop school culture.

In this section, I consider each of Gruenert and Valentine's school culture components in order to answer the final two research questions numbers 4 and 5: what are the factors that initiate or influence the process of change in school culture and what are the leadership strategies that develop school culture?

I use the qualitative evidence from each of the case study chapters to examine the factors that initiate or influence the process of change and consider the leadership strategies adopted in each school which either directly or indirectly influence school culture. The analysis is assisted by a series of tables which summarise factors and leadership strategies identified by teachers in each of the case study schools. Analysis of this evidence demonstrates that school culture can be influenced and potentially manipulated by actions, both intentional and unintentional, by school leaders. I will also demonstrate that school culture and Gruenert and Valentine's cultural factors are vulnerable to external factors which can undermine school culture to the extent that it becomes toxic and interferes with the drive to improve school standards.

In this section, I analyse influencing factors and leadership strategies that affect school culture in three ways:

- internal school factors, often contextual or linked with the school's recent history
- external factors, school inspections or other issues out of the school's control
- leadership strategies usually designed to raise standards and student outcomes

Internal and external factors which affect school culture are not limited to, or governed by, Gruenert and Valentine's six cultural components and so it is important to understand the wider context of each school and how this affects teacher perceptions. It is reasonable to assume that the actions of school leaders are designed to improve school performance and student outcomes and therefore strategies which affect school culture need to be seen in this context.

It is possible to identify a link between improving perceptions of Gruenert and Valentine's cultural factors and the creation of a context for change. The hypothesis that links a strong school culture with improving student outcomes is considered in Chapter 10. In the meantime, the analysis may benefit if a connection is established between Gruenert and Valentine's cultural components and conditions which create a climate for change and development. As a headteacher, I am interested if the cumulative effect of improving teacher perceptions of Gruenert and Valentine's cultural factors has the additional benefit of creating a climate for change. If this hypothesis is supported, then school leaders may have additional strategies at their disposal to further raise standards. One route for exploring this hypothesis

is proposed where the potential impact of each cultural component is suggested.[60] Here, each of Gruenert and Valentine's cultural

components contribute to the creation of conditions for change which might occur smoothly or not so smoothly, effectively or not so effectively. Therefore, if the above is considered from the viewpoint of a school leader, Gruenert and Valentine's factors may be re ordered to take account of leadership priorities. These may vary between school leaders, but the following is presented as one way forward. In leading change, it would be reasonable to suggest that creating a vision (Unity of Purpose) followed by sharing that vision with other stakeholders, particularly middle leaders (Collaborative Leadership), may be one of the first strategies a school leader would employ to improve standards. Further strategies may need to be employed but, for the benefit of this research, I intend to analyse cultural components across the three case study schools in the following order: Unity of Purpose, Collaborative Leadership, Professional Development, Teacher Collaboration, Collegial Support, and Learning Partnership.

9.3.1 Developing school culture - Unity of Purpose

Earlier analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data has established that perceptions of Unity of Purpose improved across all three schools. Using the summative information in Table 9.10 and comments from teacher interviews, it is possible to identify common patterns which may explain the reasons for these improvements. Firstly, two of the three schools appointed new headteachers during the period of the study and this was viewed positively by teachers. In School C, the new executive headteacher completed a SWOT analysis involving all members of the school and implemented a ten-point plan to give a clear direction to improve standards. A new permanent headteacher was also appointed by School C's MAT at the end of year one and two and this produced even greater optimism amongst teachers. Similarly, Table 9.11 refers to new school leadership in School B and an even greater presence on site by the executive headteacher (and CEO of the MAT). Here also, teachers speak of a clearer vision despite the difficulties in creating a consistent strategy across the

[60] Collaborative Leadership – Ownership of change, making change more effective
Professional Development – Development of relevant skills e.g. quality of teaching
Collegial Support – Development of trust in strategy leading to change
Teacher Collaboration – Mutual benefit, sharing of ideas, skills, techniques
Unity of Purpose – Clear strategic vision, shared with all stakeholders
Learning Partnership – Encouraging support from parents, common expectations between home and school

MAT. According to Table 9.11 and the summative comments of staff, the headteacher of School A provides strong, driven and clear strategic leadership, where targets are set across both schools and where teachers are brought together in partnership.

Table: 9.11 Unity of Purpose – Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change

Position in School	School A	School B	School C
SLT	Bring people together Partnership Targets Public road map More frequent meetings Town wide targets Student targets	New strategies give direction to a 'battered ship' Headteacher has clear vision and it's communicated	New 10-point plan Clear direction Change in SLT
ML	Good overview Staff go extra mile Need a clear narrative	Executive headteacher has greater presence at school B Removal of sixth Form Suggestion that schools should be amalgamated	Repeated changes in leadership New leadership
ET	Recognition that staff are at different levels Real clarity Driven Well briefed	Greater presence by executive headteacher More joint activities More presentations	New headteacher Clear direction New Trust New leadership
NQT	Outstanding strategy Very clear strategy	No obvious vision for two schools Executive headteacher trying to create partnership vision New temporary headteacher has made a big impact	SWOT completed 10-point plan Opinions invited Students involved TEEP champions Teachers talking about teaching

The cumulative quantitative and qualitative evidence gathered about Unity of Purpose shows the key role of headteachers in setting a clear strategic vision and communicating this effectively with teachers and other stakeholders. In all three case study schools, executive headteachers and headteachers successfully improve teachers' perceptions of Unity of Purpose; it is they who are at the heart of this improvement and the effectiveness of their

communication skills are central to the improving views of their staff.

9.3.2 – Developing school culture – Collaborative Leadership

Teacher views of Collaborative Leadership improve in all three cases study schools. Similar to views of Unity of Purpose, more analysis of Table 9.12 and teacher comments suggest that perceptions of Collaborative Leadership are affected by internal and external factors, as well as by the actions of school leaders. In School B, during the first year of the research, the arrival of a warning notice from the Department of Education led to the resignation of the headteacher. This clearly affected teacher perceptions in School B, as evidence in Table 9.12 shows. The actions of the MAT's CEO were much appreciated by teachers, as one colleague explained "we're brought into the loop through opinions and surveys". Another teacher added "I think they've been in a difficult situation and they've handled it quite well". However, despite the level of consultation identified in School B, the loss of a headteacher, falling rolls and school redundancies undermined the perception of collaborative leadership. As one teacher explained "as everyone kept leaving" there was a real sense of instability. Table 9.12 reinforces the impact of significant change with different staff working in different roles. In School B, three of the four groups indicated that Collaborative Leadership is assisted by greater consultation, more staff movement between Schools' A and B and regular meetings. By contrast, experienced teachers in School B consider that changes to roles and redundancies undermined collaboration because of the uncertainty created.

The impact of external factors on perceptions of Collaborative Leadership are evident in School C. The new school leadership, which assumed control immediately prior to the study, inherited some toxic and well-established views; a teacher explains "there is no collaboration, there is no feeling of (school name) staff". Table 9.12 shows divided views of Collaborative Leadership. Whilst senior staff, experienced teachers and newly qualified teachers point to factors which improve collaboration, such as a new executive headteacher, more information shared and more opportunities to input ideas, middle leaders are more skeptical, citing excessive change, a lack of clarity and even a lack of location to meet. Despite the new leadership's attempts to improve collaboration and appointment of a permanent headteacher, the views of teachers remained polarised: "I would say with the new headteacher coming, there's been a lot more sharing of information" and "we haven't been part of any strategic decision at all".

Table 9.12 Collaborative Leadership – Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change

Position in School	School A	School B	School C
SLT	Daily Meetings Links with depts. Dept. Meetings Permanent structural change External factors	Regular meetings Greater consultation More transition work	New executive headteacher on site two days per week SLT in charge day to day Better collaboration
ML	Two-way process Time provided Working together Lots of meetings	Movement of staff More contact between schools	Excessive change Day to day limited collaboration Not a stable SLT No location to meet No clarity
ET	Structural change	Change of roles Redundancies Forced training	Opportunities to input Open atmosphere SLT variable More listening from SLT
NQT	Openness, Opportunities to feedback Questionnaires	Cross fertilisation of ideas Greater movement between schools	New headteacher More information from headteacher Teachers kept up to date More valued

9.3.3 Developing school culture – Professional Development

Teacher perceptions of Professional Development were some of the most positive recorded in the quantitative data. All schools reported improvement in teacher perceptions over time and the reasons for these views can be identified in the summary Table 9.13. Unlike Collaborative Leadership where internal and external factors were significant in determining teacher views, most of the perceptions for Professional Development can be attributed to the direct actions of school leaders. For example, in School A, teachers were appreciative of training that was regular, personalised and provided development opportunities. The personalisation of CPD was viewed positively in School B but middle leaders and experienced teachers were suspicious that their training was driven by the Ofsted's special measures judgement.

Teachers considered that training was not personalised and was therefore of less benefit. By contrast, there were more positive views of Professional Development from teachers in School C. Here the need for whole school training seemed to be recognised and although middle leaders mentioned that training was 'limited', there was appreciation that much of it was 'self-designed'. The suggestion is therefore that teachers appreciate the need for whole-school training based on whole-school needs, provided this is also accompanied by suitable personalised training.

Table: 9.13 Professional Development – Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change

Position in School	School A	School B	School C
SLT	Sharing Three slots per year Training in local cinema PiXL (external agency)	More creative thinking Training planned across schools Training conducted on both school sites Personalised training	Lots of CPD Clear direction
ML	Personal approach External factors,	Amalgamation of training across partnership Training driven by 'special measures'	Limited CPD Self-designed CPD
ET	Supportive of CPD Acting roles Personalised CPD	Centralised training across Federation Training not tailored	Focused CPD
NQT	Pick and Mix CPD Openness	More direction and structure to training SLT provided more energy and dynamism	New SLT TEEP focus NQT Meetings

9.3.4 Developing school culture – Teacher Collaboration

Teacher perceptions of Teacher Collaboration produced some of the least positive scores in the quantitative surveys but recorded some of the most sizeable increases from years one to two.

Table 9.14: Teacher Collaboration – Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change

Position in School	School A	School B	School C
SLT	Meetings Dual roles Permanent structural change External factors Resignation of school B headteacher	Encouragement to work together Use of training days Looking to break a town wide culture Development of specific initiatives	Sharing Limited meetings and opportunities Staff rarely come together
ML	Overcoming change Removing 'blockers'	Development of marking policy across partnership Resources developed collaboratively Sharing of best practice within school and between schools	Some collaborative planning Collaboration depends on leader
ET	Structural change	Sharing of resources Sharing of ideas within depts.	TEEP training effective
NQT	Openness	Feeling that teachers from school B always go to school A. Sixth form between two schools merged on site of school A	TEEP celebration Sharing lessons Use templates Useful training days Regular meetings have impact

Evidence in Table 9.14 shows that teacher perceptions were influenced by several issues including internal and external factors and direct action by senior leaders. Teacher views of Teacher Collaboration were most positive in School A where collaboration between and across departments was well established and where trust between teachers was the norm. Although teacher perceptions improved, external factors are cited by senior leaders in School A as reason to implement structural change across MAT which indirectly affected Teacher Collaboration. The resignation of School B's headteacher required MAT leaders to act swiftly and provide continuity of leadership. The effect was to increase the collaborative activities between staff in Schools A and B. Table 9.14 gives examples of joint training, particularly the development of a common marking policy, as evidence of increased teacher collaboration across the MAT. This MAT driven collaboration included the development of resources and the identification of best practice for sharing across schools. All School B

groups interviewed gave examples of increased teacher collaboration and this accounts for the strengthening of perceptions between years one and two.

Teachers in School C recorded the greatest improvement in perceptions of Teacher Collaboration across all three case studies and Table 9.14 highlights specific senior leader actions which might account for the improvement in perceptions. Experienced teachers and newly qualified teachers in School C refer to a specific training programme (TEEP), which was introduced by the new executive headteacher to encourage the development and sharing of resources, and the design of lessons. Teachers were able to benefit from each other's expertise and collaborate more effectively on topics designed to improve standards. In short, this demonstrates that judicious use of training days and other meeting time, focused on a specific issue for development, increases the level of Teacher Collaboration, can establish greater cross-departmental working and further develops trust between staff who may not normally work in the same area.

9.3.5 Developing school culture – Collegial Support

Teacher perceptions of Collegial Support further identify how actions of senior leaders can help improve trust between colleagues, but also show how other factors can disrupt attempts to improve school culture. In School A, senior leaders encouraged the development of social events in their school as a way of bringing teachers together. Table 9.15 describes the development of specific training packages which brought together large groups of staff. All the groups in School A, for example, referred to specific actions which helped develop Collegial Support. This helps explain the positive and improving perceptions recorded in the quantitative findings.

Teacher perceptions of Collegial Support were less positive in Schools B and C and reference to Table 9.15 provides evidence to explain this. In School B, internal and external factors further undermined trust between teachers and show how vulnerable school culture can be to sudden and unforeseen events. The need to make redundancies as school rolls fall and the impact of Ofsted's special measures judgement significantly undermines Collegial Support and erodes trust between teachers and between teachers and school leaders. The resignation of School B's headteacher created uncertainly for staff and damaged levels of Collegial Support.

Table 9.15 Collegial Support – Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change

Position in School	School A	School B	School C
SLT	Social events Bring people together Restoring relationships 'PILT' training	Reduce staff Increased workload for those left Redundancies Attempts to reduce effects of redundancies	Baggage
ML	Example strategies Use of 'growth mind set'	Special Measures causes blame culture Sense that teachers are useless	Regular meetings Feeling of being let down
ET	Cultural change Sharing of resources	Void created by headteacher leaving Chinese whispers increase	Can talk to others Big trusted group TEEP increases trust
NQT	Willingness to help Openness	Changes in staff and roles Better working together	High turnover affects trust

Events in School C show the impact of factors often outside the control of school leaders. Table 9.15 illustrates the negative impact that baggage from past events can have upon Collegial Support. A high turn-over of staff and a feeling of being let down by teachers in a specific department further diminished trust and collegial atmosphere. Despite these negative factors, leaders in School C use training opportunities and regular meetings to reinforce a positive perspective of Collegial Support and the quantitative findings indicate a good deal of success was achieved.

9.3.6 Developing school culture – Learning Partnership

Teacher perceptions of Learning Partnership were amongst the weakest scores in the overall measure of school culture. Only teachers in School A had a positive view in years one and two whilst perceptions improved in all schools over time, frequent reference was made in both School B and C to the lack of support received from some parents. Actions to improve parental engagement and therefore perceptions of Learning Partnership, were evident in all

schools. Table 9.16 summarises actions taken by school leaders. It shows that frequent meetings with parents usually helped the relationship between home and school. A frequent difficulty, however, was in reaching parents who did not engage with school or who did not value education. Teachers in School B, for instance, considered a more robust approach to reinforcing standards, particularly on uniform, was beneficial. The availability of senior leaders to support staff in difficult meetings with parents also had a positive effect. Teachers in School C had used new technologies to contact parents but found that it had little benefit. More effective were frequent letters sent home by the headteacher to reinforce school standards. This had the effect of establishing clear expectations for everyone and ensured that all parents were aware of what was required.

The relationship between teachers and parents is crucial in helping young people achieve their potential. Strategies to assist the relationship between school and home are important in securing a strong Learning Partnership. Frequent and regular communication with parents, where expectations are made clear, could be regarded as the single most effective means to improve home-school relations. Notwithstanding, teachers in Schools B and C found that an increasing number of parents did not engage with their child's school: improving Learning Partnership remained much more of a challenge.

Table 9.16: Learning Partnership – Factors or strategies which initiate or influence change

Position in School	School A	School B	School C
SLT	Persistent approach Joint sixth form centre	Similar strategies across both schools More robust approach to reinforcing standards	Efforts to raise aspirations
ML	Responsive parents Increased number of meetings	Routing parent meetings	Challenging students Increasing numbers
ET	Divide between schools is more apparent Improved systems	More support from senior leaders	Parent mail New technologies No breakthrough
NQT	Pulling together 'Pushy' parents	Common strategy across schools More support from new headteacher	Frequent letters home from headteacher Crackdown on uniform

9.4 Conclusions

This chapter has provided evidence in answer to the five research questions both in relation to a single school or all the schools combined. The purpose of this final section is to bring together findings in answer to the individual research questions and the accumulated knowledge generated by a longitudinal, mixed methods analysis. It will identify key findings about the creation and development of school culture from the perspective of teachers involved in the study.

First, despite the difficulties in defining school culture, none of the teachers interviewed questioned whether it existed. On the contrary, all had views, all seemed to accept that school culture was real and tangible, and all commented on the strength of school culture in their own school. No comments were added to any of the teacher questionnaires doubting the existence of school culture. Whatever reservations or concerns have been expressed about the difficulties of definition, views of participants in this study perceive that schools have a culture; they recognize that culture can become stronger or weaker and that external or internal actions can have a decisive effect on that strengthening or weakening process.

Second, in responding to research questions 1 and 2 (perceptions of culture and changes in perceptions), evidence from both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study show that teachers in School A had the most positive view of school culture whilst teachers in School C had the least positive view. By contrast, teachers in School B had the most improved perception of school culture between years one and two whilst teachers in School A had the least improved perception over the same time period. In all schools, teachers' perceptions of school culture improved over the period of the study.

Third, in responding to research question 3, about cultural components, teacher perceptions of all Gruenert and Valentine's cultural factors improved between years one and two. In addition, teachers in all schools ranked the strength of each cultural factor in the same order. For example, Collegial Support, Professional Development and Unity of Purpose were ranked one, two and three in each school. Similarly, Learning Partnership was consistently seen as the weakest cultural factor. The explanation for these outcomes and the coincidental responses in each school will be discussed shortly. In the meantime, it is worth noting that the

coincidence of teacher responses may say as much about the characteristics of schools as organisations and the priorities for action of school leaders, as it does about the changing strength of individual cultural factors. Inevitably, there were also differences between teacher perceptions of each cultural factor and the magnitude of strengthening between years one and two. Teachers in Schools B and C recorded some of the strongest improvements, with perceptions of Teacher Collaboration in School C strengthening by 0.65 and views of Unity of Purpose in School B improving by 0.62.

Fourth, in answer to research questions 4 and 5 about factors that influence culture and leadership strategies that develop culture, it is necessary to reflect again on the context of each case study school and the improvement journey at the time the research was undertaken. The partnership or MAT between School A and B was created to provide a whole-town answer to school improvement, where, working under one governing body, a traditionally successful school A had joined together with an historically less successful School B to raise standards for all students. Since Ofsted judgements were less good for School B, the urgency for MAT leaders was to quickly improve GCSE outcomes and therefore improve School B's Ofsted judgement, including the need to stem a falling roll, which put extra pressure on costs and viability. Thus, the investigation of school culture was undertaken in a challenging setting, where two schools were inextricably linked, but were still separate institutions and where teachers worked, for the most part, in only one school. During the period of the research, School B's headteacher resigned, following a critical Ofsted visit and this occurred between data collection points. Teacher perceptions in School A and B were, therefore, heavily influenced by the culture of their own school, their perception of their partner school and the potential development of a culture across the partnership.

The context of School C was wholly different to Schools' A and B. Here was a school amalgamation that was several years old and this investigation into school culture was conducted at a time where School C had just been taken into a new MAT because GCSE outcomes and Ofsted judgements needed to be improved quickly. A new full time permanent headteacher was appointed to School C to assist the work of the executive headteacher immediately prior to the second data collection point. Teachers in School C, therefore, responded to the research from the perspective of a brand-new school which had yet to reach its potential and which was under new leadership determined to make improvement quickly.

In the next chapter, the conclusions outlined here are discussed in relation to past and current research. I examine how the findings of this study contribute to the history of research into school culture and the ongoing debate about the link between school culture and school improvement.

Chapter 10

Discussion of findings and contribution to the field of research into school culture

10.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explore how the findings from this study contribute to the history of school culture research and current knowledge of school improvement and effectiveness. Consideration is given to the ideas originally discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 and I show how the findings from three case study schools add to and develop past and current research within the school improvement and school effectiveness movements, particularly about school culture. I consider how my research findings contribute to contemporary views of the components and characteristics of school culture; how it is observed in a school setting; how it can be seen or unseen and why it is important as a field of research. I explore major studies in school culture undertaken within the last 25 years, some which attempt to link cultural strength to student achievement and school success and others which stress the importance of specific cultural factors and the strategies suggested to strengthen them. Specifically, I compare my findings with the published literature on the role of sub-cultures; dysfunctional cultures; balkanization; cultures in school amalgamations; the effect of external influences such as Ofsted inspections and the emerging importance of trust, collegiality and collaboration. I consider the process of cultural change over time. Finally, I compare my conclusions with those in the public domain and identify where evidence is either complementary or contradictory.

This study has considered five research questions which contribute to the study of school culture in two separate and distinct ways. Firstly, research questions 1-3 consider the strength of perceptions of school culture across and within three case study schools. I include the views of teachers, middle and senior leaders and examine how these perceptions of school culture change over time. These findings add to overall knowledge of how school culture changes within specific institutions and uses Gruenert and Valentine's school cultural components as a means of dividing school culture into more meaningful and individual components. This work highlights the development of school culture in schools, which were either part of an amalgamation, federation or more recently, multi-academy trust. It contributes to a field of research not seen in any contemporary literature.

The second aspect of this research study considers, in research questions 4 and 5, the factors that create cultural change in schools and identifies the leadership strategies that influence that development. This area of research contributes to the school improvement field of study, which, in more recent years, has recognised the increasingly important role of school culture. The findings in response to research questions 4 and 5 contribute to the school effectiveness and school improvement debate in several ways. First, an amalgamated context is very unusual, because overwhelming majority of secondary schools are not products of mergers. Therefore, this study gives a specific insight into factors and leadership strategies which influence the development of culture in a non-typical, yet dynamic setting. Second, the use of mixed methods and a combination of interviews and longitudinal questionnaires combine tools associated with both the school effectiveness and school improvement fields of research. This offers an holistic, rather than mono-method, contribution to the study of school culture. Finally, whilst not attempting to correlate school cultural strength with actual school outcomes or student achievement, the findings of this research present strategies and actions in support of the hypothesis that school culture can be strengthened to produce an environment more accepting of change to support school improvement.

The mixed methods, multiple case, longitudinal design of this study contributes rich evidence to the field of school culture research. Correspondingly, the discussion of findings in this chapter is presented as answers to the following questions which have emerged from the literature and the case studies:

10.2 Why is school culture unique? Why does it exist and what does it look like?
10.3 Why do schools have different cultures and why is school culture important?
10.4 What are the different research perspectives of school culture?
10.5 How do collaboration, collegiality and trust create a culture ready to embrace change?
10.6 What is the impact of school amalgamations on school culture?
10.7 What is the relationship between school culture and 'balkanisation'?
10.8 What is the relationship between school culture and student achievement?
10.9 What leadership strategies and other factors help to create a healthy school culture?

10.2 Why is school culture unique, why does it exist and what does it look like?

Although difficult to define, none of the published literature questions the existence of school culture. It appears to be a phenomenon widely accepted. Rather than simply accept this

assumption, in this section I consider why school culture exists, what it looks like and how it was identified by the teachers. First, I examine what is unique about school culture by returning to the discussion of culture as a separate concept.

School culture is "situationally unique" (Beare et al., 1989 quoted in Prosser, (ed), 1999 p. 33) because it describes how things are and acts as a lens through which the world is viewed. A school's culture is unique because it is shaped by its history, its context and the people who work in it. In essence, school culture defines reality for those within an organisation and creates a framework for social interaction which reflects the values of the school. Culture describes a certain set of customs, ideas and social behaviour belonging to a group of similar people in a society. Since culture makes us who we are and defines our communities, it follows that culture exists in every organization and, therefore, in every school, regardless of size or phase. Culture and school culture are inextricably linked.

10.2.2 Why does school culture exist and what does it look like?

Each school has a different reality or mindset, often captured in the simple phrase "the way we do things around here" (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). Each school has its own mindset in relation to its external environment. My visits to the three case study schools, as well as visits to other schools over my career, confirm that school culture varies between schools. Often difficult to describe, it is nonetheless tangible. Therefore, what was the distinctive culture visible in each of the case study schools involved in this study: what did it look like and what were the characteristics? Stoll (1998) also asked searching questions such as what school culture looks like and whether schools have different cultures. She concluded that school culture can be seen

> In the ways people relate and work together, the management of the school's structures, systems and physical environment; and the extent to which there is a learning focus for both pupils and adults, including the nature of that focus (Stoll, 1998, p. 10).

Evidence from the three case studies analysed in this study revealed many examples of school culture, not only seen, but recognised and evidenced. The quantitative research summarised in Chapter 9 included an additional question to the Gruenert and Valentine questionnaire

where teachers were asked to respond to the following statement “this school has a strong, positive culture”. The mean responses to this question are shown in Table 9.3 in Chapter 9. There were no nil outcomes. I therefore assume that all the teachers understood what they were being asked and infer an understanding of the concept of ‘school culture’. During the qualitative interviews, pairs of teachers were asked about the strength of school culture. Evidence in Appendix 13 analyses responses in the form of a colour-coded, role ordered matrix. Appendix 13 provides a broad perspective of teacher views and examples of language associated with school culture. It provides a perspective by role in each school and highlights noticeable changes in perceptions. All middle leaders refer to an improving school culture over time and all NQTs are positive about the culture in their own school. All teachers interviewed in School A have a view of school culture in relation to the partnership with School B. There are also several examples where teachers attempt to associate school culture with other concepts such as “relationships”, a “boat on waves” or even the concept of having a “heart”. These references confirm that school culture can indeed be seen, and this was clearly evidenced by participants in the three case study schools.

If my research agrees with Stoll’s findings (Stoll,1998) and perceives an observable school culture, the next question is: how does school culture manifest itself? Stoll considers this question by examining ‘unseen’ and ‘unspoken’ norms or rules “for what is regarded as customary or acceptable behaviour and actions within the school”. Stoll and Fink assert that school leaders need to understand the unseen norms in their own school if attempts to improve standards or strengthen culture are to be successful (Stoll & Fink, 1996). Evidence from my three case studies supports the concept of unseen norms. There is good deal of alignment between the norms of Stoll and Fink and Gruenert and Valentine’s cultural components used as the basis for this study. Gruenert and Valentine’s shared goals, collegiality, support, mutual respect and openness are widely present in all three case studies. Table 10.1 contains the ten cultural norms identified by Stoll and Fink and their examples are accompanied by comparative comments from participants in each of the case study schools. This not only illustrates the link between Stoll and Fink and Gruenert and Valentine’s approach to the study of school culture, but also illustrates how the Stoll and Fink norms of school culture are present in my three case studies.

Table 10.1: Norms of Improving Schools with supporting evidence from three case studies

	Norms	**Stoll and Fink Examples**	**Examples from this study**	**Case study ref.**
1	Share goals	"we know where we're going"	"I think this school does have a really strong vision,"	School A
2	Responsibility for success	"we must succeed"	we can be so much more successful"	School B
3	Collegiality	"we're working on this together"	"We work very well together, we share resources and we're always there to discuss the teaching"	School C
4	Continuous improvement	"we can get better"	"I think it (collaboration) has improved recently"	School C
5	Lifelong learning	"learning is for everyone"	"Education is huge, but it isn't just about reading and learning, it is about the whole holistic well-being of the student"	School A
6	Risk taking	"we learn by trying something new"	"I think the whole plan, the new plan, has been shared"	School C
7	Support	"there's always someone there to help"	"there's a fantastic amount of support and trust "	School A
8	Mutual respect	"everyone has something to offer"	"We've got mutual respect for what we're doing, we kind of celebrate the things that are similar"	School B
9	Openness	"we can discuss our differences"	"I think this is a very open and positive place"	School A
10	Celebration and humour	"we feel good about ourselves"	"We've got mutual respect for what we're doing, we kind of celebrate the things that are similar"	School B

10.3 Why do schools have different cultures and why is school culture important?

If culture can be 'seen' and there are known 'norms' that are 'unseen' in each school, is it likely that schools must have different cultures? Stoll and Fink (1996) suggest that even schools with similar contextual characteristics have different 'mindsets' and evidence from this study suggests support for this view. For example, evidence from paired interviews showed that teachers had different 'mind sets' about interaction with parents. Teachers in School A considered parents overwhelmingly supportive in contrast to the view of teachers in Schools B and C. Hargreaves (1995) is one of many writers who provide opportunities to map school culture to allow comparison with other schools. He offers a typology of school

culture which seeks to identify an idealised culture and what it may look like. In a similar way, Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) offer six general types of school culture, from toxic to collaborative, and these are discussed later.

Table 10.2: Example theoretical constructs from each case study in year one and two

Example cultural component	Year one	Year two
Collegial Support	Trust and teamwork underpin values	Trust overcomes change trust central to school DNA
	Uncertainty undermines trust	Trust re-emerging
	Legacy of mistrust Emerging confidence	Scale of task Emerging optimism
Unity of Purpose	Inspiring drive to raise aspirations Daunting and ambitious vision	Clear common vision Unfinished map of future
	Turbulent vision	Determined vision challenges Uncertainty
	Baggage dominates vision Renewed clarity of direction	Renewed purpose instilling confidence
Professional Development	Training as a priority for improving standards	Standards driven by personalised training
	Creative approaches to CPD Unwelcome imposition of non-personalised training	Structured and effective CPD External control of training
	Training as improvement agenda	Training to improve teaching

Key: School A School B School C

Even if school culture is under-researched, there remains a consensus in the published literature that is has a crucial role in the function and operation of schools (Sarson, 1996; Jerald, 2006; Hammad, 2010; Vizer-Karni & Reiter, 2014; Van Gasse, Vanhoof & Van Petegem, 2016). Here, I explore the importance of school culture from the case study findings and compare the perceptions of teachers with evidence from other studies. In Tables 10.2, I have selected the three strongest cultural components from case study schools, as measured in the quantitative surveys, and presented the theoretical constructs from the qualitative analysis to provide a summative view. The three strongest cultural components were chosen because they may provide a perspective about what teachers' value and what affects their work ethic and commitment.

Strong themes emerge from my analysis of the theoretical constructs above: trust, clear vision and personalised training. These themes, I, and others, suggest are important to teachers and may affect their motivation and desire to remain in their current school (Aelterman, Engels, Van Petegem, & Verhaeghe, 2007; Harris, 2014; Fullan & Hargreaves, 2016; Wilson, 2012, 2017). Deal and Peterson (2009) agree with this hypothesis and provide persuasive evidence underlining the fundamental importance of school culture. They suggest that school culture "is a powerful web of rituals and traditions, norms and values that affect every corner of school life" (Deal & Peterson, 2009, p. 10). They go on to justify why school culture is important and suggest it "influences what people pay attention to, how they identify with the school, how hard they work and the degree to which they achieve their goals". They conclude that a school's culture "sharpens the focus of daily behaviour, builds commitment to and identification with core values and amplifies motivation" (Deal & Peterson, p. 11). This study extends Deal and Peterson's focus on rituals and traditions and highlights common practical factors in school life which are important to teachers daily and which cumulatively strengthen school culture. I suggest that the emergence of 'trust' in Table 10.2 not only strengthens Collegial Support as a cultural value but motivates teachers in their working environment. It predisposes them to accept notions of change for school improvement.

Elbot and Fulton suggest "a school's culture has a strong impact on both the students and the adults ….few educators seem to appreciate just how important school culture is" (Elbot & Fulton, 2008, p. 3). Stolp (1994) says the importance of school culture as a factor in teachers' attitudes towards their work. He refers to Cheng's (1993) study, which found that stronger school cultures led to better-motivated teachers. Barth goes further. "A school's culture has far more influence on life and learning in the school house than the state department of education, the superintendent, the school board or even the principal can ever have". (Barth, 2002 p. 7). I do not agree with Barth's view that school culture may have more influence on learning than a school headteacher because school leaders can be the architect of culture (Harris, 2000; Harris 2018), but I would agree with his overall assessment about the role school culture plays in providing the context for effective learning. The evidence in Table 10.2 confirms the importance of personalised development in motivating and training teachers and in strengthening their commitment to their own school. Fullan is unequivocal about the crucial role of school culture.

He says school culture is important because it "influences readiness for change" whilst "In Shaping School Culture" Deal and Peterson chart a succession of studies which support the contention that "culture affects all aspects of a school" (Deal & Peterson, 2009, p. 12). To summarise, a strong school culture is important for teacher recruitment and retentions as the following quote from a teacher in School A, illustrates:

> there is a good culture in this school and there always has been, which is partly why I've stayed so long, because having been round several schools in the area, there are not many that foster this kind of environment (Teacher, School A).

Deal and Peterson, among a growing number of researchers, contend that "contemporary research continues to point to the impact of school culture on a variety of important outcomes" including "school effectiveness and productivity" (Deal & Peterson, 2009, p. 11). This study does not attempt to correlate school cultural strength to school outcomes, performance and student achievement, but rather charts how culture emerges, and changes, and examines the strategies which encourage its development. In short, a strong school culture is important for several reasons. First, it helps to recruit, retain and motivate teachers. Second, good collaboration between teachers helps to share good practice and improving teaching. Third, collaborative leadership gives teachers a sense of ownership in a school's strategic direction and helps them become more effective (Engels et al., 2008; Harris, 2008; Whitaker, 2011; Lu et al., 2015). Later in this chapter, I will return to the link between school culture and school improvement to examine studies which have made these themes their focus. I consider evidence from this study which supports or contradicts their conclusions. First, however, I look at how my findings contribute to the different research perspective of school culture.

10.4 What are the different research perspectives of school culture?

School culture is not easily characterised and so researchers have identified key features to assist the research process. In this section, I examine these contributions and assess how my findings contribute to the published research.

Elias suggests two main theoretical perspectives "one of which is based on the structural-functionalist tradition and the other based on the interpretive perspective" (Elias, 2015). In the structural-functionalist model an organization can be functional or dysfunctional and is "understood as a reflection of the surrounding culture or as a response to that context" (Elias, 2015). In the interpretive tradition, culture represents the "identity of the organization", something Elias describes as a "foundational metaphor" and a "system of meanings that is the result of social interactions between members" (Elias, 2015). The methodological approaches to the study of school culture, Elias argues, tend to align with one of the models described above so that the functionalist tradition tends to use quantitative methods with large sample sizes and the interpretative tradition, often, takes an ethnographic approach. The approach taken in this study has combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches and is more typical of more recent studies, which Elias argues "are combining both types of method to generate a richer set of information and, at the same time, balance the limitations inherent in each type of approach" (Elias, 2015).

The quantitative and qualitative findings generated from my three case studies give substance to Elias' conclusion that a mixed methods approach to research into school culture will provide a more holistic understanding of how culture emerges and develops. My findings tend to support this assertion. Figure 9.6 in Chapter 9 attempts to identify differences in cultural strength. Whilst it is not possible to assert that a specific mean measure of cultural strength can be given a formal categorisation, e.g. functional or dysfunctional, it is possible to assert that the difference over time shows whether a culture is becoming more functional or more dysfunctional and examine why this may be the case. The qualitative data collected over the same time period further indicates whether the overall culture is more functional or dysfunctional by using two theoretical constructs from School C in Table 10.2. In year one, the theoretical construct 'legacy of mistrust' suggests a more dysfunctional culture but by year two the construct 'emerging optimism', suggests an increasingly functional culture.

Table 10.3: Types of school culture with evidence from case studies

	Culture Types	Gruenert & Whittaker examples	Examples from this study	Case study ref.
1	Collaborative School Culture	Teachers share strong educational values, work together to pursue professional development, and are committed to improve their work.	Faster pace of effective collaboration (CL) Stronger and improving collaboration (CL) "The collaborative leadership is actually very good here at this school"	School A
2	Comfortable Collaboration	A congenial culture exists, that values cooperation, courtesy, and compliance. Teachers may hesitate to voice disagreement with one another for fear of hurting someone's feelings. "In the comfortable school culture, it's more important to get along than to teach effectively"	Collaboration leadership dependent (TC) Individuals restrict collaboration (CL) Reluctant collaborators (TC) "In terms of perhaps more minor issues, we get opportunities to feedback on...But when it comes to bigger policies such as like uniform policies, I wasn't really asked for my opinion"	School A
3	Contrived - Collegial	Leadership may generate contrived collegiality when they enforce collaboration: expecting teachers to meet and discuss student progress and then file a report to prove they did. A contrived element may be a necessary starting point for change, but teacher ownership of collaboration needs to be fostered.	Widespread collaboration never established (TC) Pressure to improve creates blame culture (CS) "With the old Leadership, there was always the element of it appearing to be collaborative, but it never actually was.	School C
4	Balkanised	Collaboration occurs only among like-minded staff. Sometimes, cliques compete for position, resources, and territory. Stronger cliques may bully other teachers.	Ongoing issue of sub-cultures (TC) Variable collaboration (TC) "I think within some departments, there are still distinct cliques of previous schools"	School C
5	Fragmented	Teachers function as individuals with classroom doors staying closed and teachers having their own territory and for the most part liking it that way.	Impact of redundancies (CS) "It's no longer 'them and us', it's 'them and us' in a much smaller way"	School B
6	Toxic	Significant numbers of teachers focus on the negative aspects of the school's operations and personnel, using these flaws as justification for poor performance.	Baggage hinders trust in leadership (CS) "there have been a lot of anonymous complaints going on. There are people out there complaining about everybody else."	School C

Key: School A School B School C

The categorisation of school culture described by Elias (2015) conveniently leads to further work conducted by Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) who, building on the work of Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) and Deal and Kennedy (2009), identified six general types of school culture. These are listed and defined in Table 10.3 and compared with some of the findings in this study. The Gruenert and Whitaker model lists the types of cultures in a sequence from the most desirable to the least desirable and assumes that collegiality and collaboration are the features and characteristics that promote a strong school culture. Gruenert and Whitaker's focus on strong collaboration stems from the conviction that "collaborative cultures seem to be the best setting for student achievement" (Gruenert, 2005). Evidence from this study has produced quantitative measures which show the extent of collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration and collegial support contribute to the Gruenert and Whitaker findings. Quantitative measures are reproduced in Table 9.6 in Chapter 9 and show aspects of collaboration and collegiality that are evident in all three schools. The findings also show that outcomes from School A were always stronger in each of the three measures and outcomes from School C were weaker. The evidence is not precise enough to extrapolate school culture according to Gruenert and Whitaker's six types. However, evidence from the qualitative outcomes contains teacher observations and comments which illustrate how Gruenert's concepts can be verified. For example, each culture type in Table 10.3 is accompanied by a summary theme, colour coded to identify a school, and an interview extract to illustrate that my findings also contain elements of Gruenert's outcomes.

The analysis is not intended to be representative of all teachers' perceptions in each of the case study schools, nor to validate unequivocally Gruenert's conclusions. However, there is enough evidence to suggest a reasonable match between the two studies, and my experience as a headteacher also supports Gruenert's findings.

To conclude, the quantitative and qualitative evidence gathered in this project support Elias' (2015) categorization and analysis of school culture and provides evidence that confirms Gruenert and Whitaker's (2015) additional classification. In the next section, I consider the components of school culture which are given most attention in published research and which are important in strengthening culture as a whole.

10.5 How do collaboration, collegiality and trust create a culture ready to embrace change?

The six school culture components identified by Gruenert and Valentine (1998) have been identified by researchers as vehicles to improve whole school culture. Some of these factors, including collaboration and collegiality are common to a series of studies and deserve individual consideration to assess their importance. At the same time, work has also been undertaken on the importance of trust within an organisation (Bryk & Schneider, 2002: Harris, 2002, 2008, 2014), particularly trust between teachers and trust between teachers and school leaders. Trust has emerged as an important contemporary feature in recent studies inspired by the school improvement movement (Harris, 2018). Therefore, I shall also examine if evidence from the case studies in this project contribute to the wider debate surrounding the role of 'trust' as a factor in school improvement.

In the previous section, evidence from this study is presented to support the conclusions of Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) pointing to the importance of collaboration in strengthening school culture. The importance of collaboration in the wider published literature is extensive and an important feature of school improvement research. Harris (2002, 2008), sees collaboration between teachers as central to school improvement because it "improves the quality of student learning by improving the quality of teaching (Harris, 2002, p. 102). Collaboration can exist in various forms, as evidenced in this study. Both Collaborative Leadership and Teacher Collaboration have featured strongly in the quantitative and qualitative findings. Teachers considered collaborative leadership an important factor in strengthening school culture, because it gave a sense of togetherness. Findings from the case studies did not necessarily see collaborative leadership as a strength, but the quantitative findings showed that teacher perceptions had improved in all three schools.

Additional evidence from this study is supported in the work of other researchers. "In many schools", notes Harris," the norms of practice are not those of collaboration or mutual sharing but tend to be isolation or balkanisation" (Harris, 2002, p. 103). Fullan and Hargreaves (2016) consider Teacher Collaboration to be a "missed bag" and conclude "we have also acknowledged that collaboration is not an end in itself. It can be a waste of time and have negative effects such as teachers learning methods from teachers that are less than effective"

(Fullan & Hargreaves, 2016). An understanding of the opportunities provided by increased collaboration is key for school leaders who wish to strengthen school culture, but so is knowledge of the pitfalls. As a teacher in one of the case study schools explained "you might have been asked to do a PD (Professional Development) session, but that's not collaborative". The message therefore is a simple one: "collaboration without reflection and enquiry is little more than working collegiality" (Harris, 2002, p. 103).

If collaboration is not effective unless it is real, genuine and reflective, then the same can be said of collegiality, another central feature in this study and in much of the published literature on school culture. The likelihood that a school will have a stronger culture and school improvement is more likely to occur when teachers support each other is well established. "There is a body of evidence" Hargreaves suggests "that demonstrates teachers work most effectively when they are supported by other teachers and work collegially" (Hargreaves, 1994, in Harris, 2002, p. 55). Evidence from this study shows that collegial support was one of the strongest factors identified in the quantitative findings and particularly so within the departmental structures typical of large secondary schools. The qualitative outcomes also supported the sense of strong collegiality. Collegiality, however, can have its drawbacks and whilst Stoll and Fink (1992) consider it central to their 'norms of improving schools, Fidler suggests that accountability and power are both problems in a collegial organization (Fidler, 1996). He asserts that the proponents of increased collegiality in schools assume that "teachers will operate in the best interest of the school" (Fidler, 1996, p. 71). He continues "whilst conscientious teachers will have the interests of the children to guide their actions, what about those who lose sight of the children's interests or who are not competent?". There was little evidence in my study of the attitudes suggested by Fidler, but there were examples where collegial support was weaker than anticipated. As this teacher in School C indicates, "it's as if you have become the enemy".

Despite the more negative aspects of collegiality suggested by Fidler (1996), the evidence from my study supports the view that stronger collegial support is a key factor in strengthening school culture. This is corroborated by qualitative and quantitative findings. The importance of strong collegiality must not, however, be underestimated. It is directly linked to the concept of trust between teachers and the role that trust plays in strengthening culture. Academics working in the field of school improvement are quick to point out the importance of trust in the drive to improve school standards. Harris takes the view that

“within an improving school, trust is an important component” (Harris, 2002, p. 13). She adds, “it is the glue that links a learning community…Teachers need to trust their colleagues and senior management, otherwise cultural change is unlikely to occur” (Harris, 2002, p. 13). Evidence from this study supports these findings. Teachers are quick to comment on the level of trust they perceive, whether it is between other teachers or whether it is with senior colleagues.

In a longitudinal study involving 400 Chicago elementary schools, Bryk and Schneider (2002) examined the role of relational trust in building effective educational communities. Whilst not directly researching aspects of school culture, the Bryk and Schneider (2002) findings are interesting because they were able to “document the powerful influence that trust plays as a source for reform” (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). They concluded that “schools with high relational trust were much more likely to demonstrate marked improvement in student learning” because teachers were much more likely to work hard for their students and the school in general.” Most significant, they concluded, “was the finding that schools’ chronically weak reports throughout the period of the study had virtually no chance of improving in ether reading or mathematics” (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). The findings generated from the quantitative and qualitative data in this study confirmed that school culture strengthens when strong collegial support and trust is observed. The additional evidence from Bryk and Schneider suggests an even more significant link between collegiality, trust and student outcomes. This is a theme to which I shall return later.

10.6 What is the impact of school amalgamation on school culture?

Most of the school culture research conducted over the last 25 years has considered mono-method quantitative analysis to determine cultural health. Few studies have involved schools which were subject to amalgamation and can therefore provide an insightful comparison or point of reference. Wallace (1996) analysed the evolution of staff professional cultures in three primary schools that joined to create a single school. His work is one of the few published examples that show how cultures emerge in amalgamated settings and is a useful benchmark for the three secondary case studies considered in this research. Reddyk (2000) examined the process and management of school amalgamations in Canada and although

analysis of school culture was not the focus of the research, the conclusions parallel some of the findings in this study.

From my own experience as a headteacher who amalgamated two secondary schools, Wallace provides an accurate observation of the complex and reef-ridden process of bringing two organisations together: “The merging of two institutions represents one of the most radical externally imposed innovations that a school staff may have to manage” (Wallace, 1996, p. 459). He also points out some of the cultural challenges of school amalgamations: “Successful mergers imply that staff forsake identification with a pre-merger institution to allow identification with the new school” (Wallace, 1996, p. 467).

Evidence from this study supports the observations and challenges described by Wallace and is presented in Table 10.4. Here, summary themes and theoretical constructs from School C refer to events between the school’s amalgamation and the beginning of this study. Each of the themes and constructs from Gruenert and Valentine’s cultural components has been interrogated and show the legacy of amalgamation from the perspective of teachers who worked in the school from its conception. The repeated reference to ‘baggage’ and ‘division’ reflect lingering problems and issues following amalgamation. This supports Wallace’s contention that it is difficult for teachers to identify with a new school. Reddyk (2002) highlights cultural problems post-amalgamation and concludes: “more emphasis needs to be paid to the cultural aspects of amalgamation. Discovering and critically examining the cultural norms, beliefs and assumptions of the respective school divisions is vital to the implantation of a cultural integration strategy” (Reddyk, 2000, p. 234). In addition to the summative evidence in Table 10.6, individual teachers in School C commented on the problems some colleagues experienced post-merger: “We’ve been an amalgamated school for ** years but there are still people who hark back to the old schools which again is a massive frustration”.

Table 10.4: School C – Legacy of amalgamation in terms of themes and constructs

Cultural component	Summary theme	Theoretical construct
Collaborative Leadership	Baggage from past lingers Problem of identity after amalgamation	History of division and frustration legacy of past
Collegial Support	Baggage hinders trust in leadership Legacy of past	Legacy of mistrust
Teacher Collaboration	Ongoing issues of sub-cultures Widespread collaboration never established	Baggage not overcome Continuing history of division
Unity of Purpose	Lost early vision followed by years of conflict Years of frequent changes in leadership Baggage carried forward	Baggage dominates vision
Learning Partnership	Baggage of past undermines partnership Past inconsistencies	Past actions hinder progress

Wallace points to the problems caused when teachers hold old school loyalties: "Old practices" he remarks' "may endure amongst a group of staff, eventually becoming accepted or remaining as a point of tension between staff groups." Evidence from teachers in school C concurs with Wallace's observation as the frequent reference to 'baggage' affecting several cultural components in Table 10.6 shows. For one teacher in School C, the extent of looking back to a former, pre-merger school even went to the point of preserving physical items such a brick from their pre-amalgamated school.[61] The legacy problem inherited from a pre-merger school make the creation of a culture in a newly amalgamated school much more difficult. Wallace refers to this challenge as a "crisis of identity" (Wallace, 1996, p. 460) and suggests that difficulties can continue for some considerable time.

[61] "There were a huge number of people who resented that the old schools closed, and they brought that resentment with them and some of them still carry it. God knows how they manage it, keeping it going that long but they didn't buy into this fantastic new facility, they bought into 'I've got a brick from the old building' sort of thing" (Teacher, School C).

Evidence from this research study and my own experience agrees with Wallace's findings. Loyalty to a school that is about to close, even if it is emerging as a new, larger, amalgamated school is deep and enduring. My own strategy was to show, respect and regard for the history, legacy and contribution of the predecessor schools, whilst at the same time attempting to create excitement, optimism and a clear vision for the new school. Evidence from this research study indicates that problems associated with identity can endure for years after a merger has taken place. There are several references in Table 10.4 which emphasise the enduring legacy of a lack of identity. 'Baggage from past lingers' and 'baggage carried forward' illustrate the post-amalgamation effect on current teacher perceptions. Interviews with teachers in School C highlight the weight of a previous culture and the negative impact this can have. "I don't think (name of school) has ever managed to establish its own niche, its own culture, its own stamp". This observation is significant since it suggests that teachers recognise the importance of a strong culture and the potential problems caused if, as Wallace confirms, "old practices….. remain as a point of tension between staff groups" (Wallace, 1996, p. 461).

To summarise, evidence from interviews in School C agree with Wallace's observations about a newly merged primary school in 1996: school culture is significantly undermined by an amalgamation. The long-lasting allegiance to predecessor schools means that some staff are unable or even unwilling to absorb the developing culture of a new institution. Reddyk's (2000) conclusion was that past loyalties can undermine new schools: "during times of organisational change and transition, competing cultural traditions can threaten successful integration of the amalgamating divisions" (Reddyk, 2000, p. 234). In School C, the transition process undermines collegial support, unity of purpose and teacher collaboration; it creates a frustration from those 'loyal' to the new school and those who are not.[62] The problems caused by amalgamations also make the task of school leaders even more challenging and I concur with Wallace that "the process of cultural transition proved to be beyond control of any individual or group of actors involved" (Wallace, 1996, p. 470).

[62] "The really negative people who either still harp on about the 'old days' when it was 'better', or they've come in and they just want to moan and they're negative, those people are in the street shouting louder than anyone else. And what happens is even though there are more brilliant staff than there are those negative staff it feels like the balance has shifted because they're louder." (Teacher School C)

10.7 What is the relationship between school culture and 'balkanisation'?

The focus of this thesis has been to investigate school culture as a whole school phenomenon. It is important to recognise and acknowledge, however, that large, and even small schools, can be characterised by sub-cultures, where the culture is balkanised, a concept coined by Hargreaves (1992) in his study of Ontario secondary schools. In balkanised schools "staff may identify more closely with a sub-group than with the staff as a whole" (Wallace, 1996, p. 461) and potentially undermine a 'whole' culture as teachers gather in small subject group settings rather than aggregate loyalty to an entire school. Examples of Hargreaves' balkanisation are evident in all of my case studies and confirm his view, and that of other researchers, that secondary schools in particular, because of their size, are more prone to the balkanised phenomenon (Brady, 2008). Table 10.5 provides examples of the silo effect of balkanisation and shows how the summative themes are impacted. Examples 1 and 2 in Table 10.5 do not necessarily illustrate a negative aspect of balkanisation but illustrate the inevitable consequence of staff working in departmental areas with little time to mix with other teachers.

The sense of balkanisation is apparent when considering schools in multi-academy trusts. These types of organisation did not exist when Hargreaves developed the concept of balkanisation but, as the evidence from example 3 in Table 10.5 shows, the negative effects of working in a MAT can be significant and negative. Hargreaves' balkanisation, however, is not merely about teachers associating in small groups and the effect of this on school culture. He identifies four additional characteristics of balkanisation: low permeable; high permeable; personal identification and political complexion (Hargreaves, 1992). These characteristics can be observed in two of my three case study schools but are not necessarily confined to one category as the following from Table 10.5 illustrates. In example 4, the summary theme shows a 'sense of helplessness' and the comments made could be interpreted as balkanisation in two forms: personal identification and political complexion. Similarly, interviews in School C identified types of balkanisation which matched Hargreaves' descriptors. The theme 'ongoing issues of sub- cultures' in example 5 shows balkanisation with a political complexion and personal identification. This also extends to the theme 'collaboration in pockets' in example 6, where 'balkanisation' is characterised by an unwillingness to share resources.

Table 10.5: Examples of ‘balkanisation’ from case study school

Example	School	Role	Cultural component	Theme	Example quote
1	A	ET	Collaborative Leadership	Avoiding discussion of key issues	On the ground, we’re in our own little bubble, in our own little Departments, doing our own jobs
2	C	NQT	Teacher Collaboration	Ongoing issues of sub-cultures	We’ve all got our own departments with a staffroom in, in each sort of area of the school.
3	B	ET	Professional Development	Pace of change restricts time for effective training	That was my least favourite experience was going over there…But I won’t go again to be fair, ….I don’t feel comfortable when I’m there.
4	B	ET	Collaborative Leadership	Sense of helplessness	The evolution is now the robots are in place, there’s a sense of that, it’s oppressive isn’t it? Because although it’s a Federation, we have very little part to play, I don’t feel we have much of a part to play. They do pay lip service, they’ll invite us to a meeting to make us feel like we’re having a say.
5	C	SLT	Teacher Collaboration	Ongoing issues of sub-cultures	I think within some departments, there are still distinct cliques of previous schools and actually for new staff coming in, there’s ….. even when you’ve got bright young things coming in, they are effectively switched off by an undercurrent of negativity ‘you need to get out of this place, you don’t want to be here’ I very much got the vibe, I was told when I first arrived, well ‘I was from such and such’ and it seemed to be a divide…they were all really split
6	C	SLT	Teacher Collaboration	Collaboration in pockets	I think in departments it’s (collaboration) probably quite good. There are still some people who don’t want to share things – ‘it’s mine, I’ve created it and you’re not having it’ sort of thing

Whilst there are some examples from my three case studies to support Hargreaves and Brady, there are other examples, which confirm that identification with a whole school culture can be as strong, if not stronger, than allegiance to a sub-culture. This contradicts Hargreaves’ general perception of how secondary schools function, but he admits “these patterns of

balkanisation are not inevitable" (Hargreaves, 1996, p. 4). My own evidence suggests that a strong school culture can exist, thrive and develop whatever the size of the secondary school and, whilst the immediate working environment of many teachers, for practical purposes, may focus on their departments or year teams, a cohesive, binding and overarching culture can bring people together in an effective and purposeful way and provide a whole school focus and point of loyalty.

All three case studies show that loyalty to the school and identification with that school's culture overcome any form of balkanisation. This can be evidenced in multiple ways. Firstly, Table 10.2 shows the theoretical constructs based on teacher perceptions for the cultural components collegial support and unity of purpose. These two cultural factors strongly illustrate the level of trust in a school and the strength of a school's vision moving forward. Table 10.2 and 10.3 clearly show increasingly positive teacher perceptions in all three case study schools and therefore suggest weaker 'balkanisation'. Similarly, quantitative evidence in Chapter 9 also shows improving teacher perceptions of Unity of Purpose and Collegial Support over the period of the study. Thirdly, evidence from the role ordered matrix in Appendix 13 supports the evidence above and shows strengthening school culture in each case study school. Finally, support for the view that balkanisation can be overcome with a strengthening culture can be found in the evidence of individual teachers. In School A, for example, teachers were quick to praise the culture of their schools as these examples illustrate: "I think there's a strong school culture here" and "on the whole, I think it's a fantastic place to work and I think that there's a real kind of pulling together". These are not isolated comments. Teachers in School A were clearly very proud of their school and enthusiastic about their work. [63]

In contrast to Hargreaves' balkanisation, some teachers in the case studies reflected positively on the concept of a MAT culture as these examples show: "I think they're trying to make a strong culture across the Federation" and "I think we have a unique culture in this area and I think the schools have too". The concept of a MAT or even town-wide culture was not limited to teachers in School A. Teachers in School B also referred to a meta-wide culture

[63] "One of the things that most attracted me to the school was the culture, the fact there was a staffroom, the atmosphere there, how supportive and friendly people seemed. For me, how I define school culture as a teacher is how people are working in partnership together and what the school has to offer for the people who are keeping it going on a day-to-day basis really. I think here it is brilliant" (Teacher School A).

beyond the limits of a single school. “From the staff perspective, I think they can see there’s a Federation culture developing” reflected one School B teacher, whilst another suggested that the challenge was to change a whole town culture.[64] One newly qualified teacher summed up School A’s whole school culture as “something bright something smiling that’s the culture we have here”.

10.8 What is the relationship between school culture and student achievement?

As demands for further school improvement have increased, so have the number of books and other published material offering strategies and ideas to improve student outcomes (Brighouse & Woods, 1999; Byrne & Gallagher, 2004; Hopkins, 2001, 2007; Whitaker & Zoul, 2008; Wrigley, 2008; Coe, 2009; Hallinger & Heck, 2011; Evans & Cowell, 2013; Brett, 2014; Greany, 2015; Bellei et al. 2016 and Hajisoteriou, Karousiou, & Angelides, 2018) Alongside, academic studies have attempted to link a healthy school culture with improved student achievement and therefore school success (Dalin, Gunter-Rolff & Kleekamp, 1993; Gruenert, 2000; Lam, Yin & Lam, 2002; Eller & Eller, 2009; Van Dyk, 2010; Brighouse & Woods, 2013; De Witt & Slade, 2014;. Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015, 2017, Tlusciak-Deliowska, Dernowska & Gruenert, 2017). Research into school culture has not been excluded from these developments and whilst it has been the focus of this study to consider how school culture emerges and develops, it is important to examine how these findings contribute to the school culture /school achievement debate. Several studies have investigated the relationship between strong school cultures and successful schools and a summary of these important contributions to research is presented in Table 10.6. Here, I explore the relationship between school culture and student outcomes. I assess whether the accumulation of current research strengthens the case for a causal relationship between strong school cultures and successful schools.

The search for the key to improve student outcomes has become the holy grail of the school improvement field of research for the last thirty years. Structures, systems, teaching techniques and leadership strategies have all been scrutinised to improve school outcomes.

[64] “We are trying to break a massive culture within the town, where (name of school) has historically been the high achieving, high flying, whereas (name of school) has been a technical college with behaviour issues” (Teacher School B).

Entire school regions and districts have been reorganised and restructured to find a scalable approach. No single, proven strategy has been identified, although some governments claim their policies have had an effect. The following section explores how the methods and findings in this study compare to the research techniques and outcomes from the investigations in Table 10.6.

Table 10.6: School culture research studies

Study Author/s	Title of study	Date	Type of study	Number of schools involved	Location
Maslowski	School Culture and School Performance	2001	Quantitative	40	Netherlands
MacNeil, Prater and Busch	The effects of school culture and climate on student achievement	2009	Quantitative	29	Texas, USA
Deal and Peterson	Shaping School Culture	2009	-	-	USA
Hay	A Culture for Learning	2004	Quantitative	134	UK
Gruenert	Correlations of Collaborative School Cultures with Student Achievement	2005	Quantitative	81	Indiana, USA
This study	The creation and development of school culture in amalgamated or MAT schools	2018	Mixed Methods, quantitative / qualitative	3 case study schools	UK

Maslowski's (2001) study, which explored the link between school culture and student achievement in the Netherlands, was one of the main inspirations for my work. Maslowski argued that "research on effective schools, for instance, has identified several effectiveness enhancing factors, which can easily be interpreted in terms of a school's organizational culture". He believed that "a strong culture is essential for enhancing student achievement" (Maslowski, 2001) and tested his hypothesis using a school culture inventory in 40 Dutch schools. His inventory "consisted of four scales and 40 items and had some features of the

Gruenert and Valentine survey used in this study. Maslowski's human relations orientation and rational goal orientations are similar to Gruenert and Valentine's concept of collegial support and unity of purpose. Maslowski did not find a correlation between school culture and student outcomes and described his findings as "disappointing". He recommended further investigation of the "relationship between culture and performance in studies with larger samples" (Maslowski, 2001).[65]

Other studies have continued to explore the link between a strong school culture and improved student achievement. MacNeil, Prater and Busch (2009) concluded that "the reform efforts of the last 30 years have failed to improve student achievement in schools because they failed to adequately address the importance of the culture and climate of schools". They conducted a study in 29 schools in suburban district of southeast Texas using an Organizational Health Inventory which consists of 10 key internal dimensions. Whilst alternative school culture components are used, the MacNeil study provides further evidence of the link between school culture, school success and student outcomes. Confirmation of this relationship is made more difficult because researchers disagree over which factors should be considered essential elements in measuring school culture. These issues will be explored later but, in the meantime, it is important to consider other studies from Table 10.6.

It is difficult to consider the relationship between school culture and student achievement without returning to the pioneering work of Deal and Peterson. At the heart of their argument is a theory common in the field of school culture research and mentioned in the MacNeil research, that education policy-makers have spent years attempting to improve student outcomes and had limited success because they have concentrated on improvement levers and strategies which only have marginal or short term effects.[66] Deal and Peterson's characterisation of school culture leans heavily towards identifying rituals, customs, ceremonies and school traditions but also resonates with many of the factors in this study. Table 10.7 shows clear, albeit subjective alignment, between Gruenert and Valentine's

[65] "No effect on student achievement was found for the rational goal, the human relations, the open systems, or the internal process orientations. In other words, the commonly found effects in school effectiveness and school improvement research were not confirmed in this study" (Maslowski, 2001).

[66] "The favoured response (of educational policy-makers) has been to tighten up structures, standardise the curriculum, test student performance, and makes schools accountable. In the short term these solutions may pressure schools to change some practices and temporarily raise test scores. In the long term, such structural demands can never rival the power of cultural expectations, motivations and values" (Deal & Peterson, 2009, p. 7).

cultural factors and those listed by Deal and Peterson. Whilst the problem of a common definition and factors inherent in school culture remains, there is nonetheless much more common ground in Table 10.7 between Gruenert and Valentine's cultural components and those used by Deal and Peterson.

Table 10.7: Comparison of Deal and Peterson / Gruenert and Valentine's cultural factors

School culture factors – Deal and Peterson	**School culture factors – Gruenert and Valentine**
A mission focused on student and teacher learning	Unity of Purpose
A rich sense of history and purpose	
Core values of collegiality, performance, and improvement that engender quality, achievement, and learning for everyone	Collaborative leadership / Teacher Collaboration
Positive beliefs and assumptions about the potential of students and staff to learn and grow	Learning Partnership
A strong professional community that uses knowledge, experience, and research to improve practice	Professional Development
An informal network that fosters positive communication flows	Collegial Support
Leadership that balances continuity and improvement	Unity of purpose /Collaborative Leadership
Rituals and ceremonies that reinforce core cultural values	
Stories that celebrate successes and recognize heroines and heroes	
A physical environment that symbolizes joy and pride	
A widely shared sense of respect and caring for everyone	Collegial Support

The determined attempt to find an empirical correlation between school culture and student achievement has led researchers to produce a series of quantitative studies within the school improvement movement and it is in the next example that parallels with this study emerge. Most traditional studies examined quantitative data across a wide sample of schools but in 2004 researchers from the Hay Group took a different approach. They conducted a comprehensive quantitative study of school culture in 134 primary, secondary and special schools in Britain. Their method used a variation of a tool they had used to assess corporate

cultures, but specifically modified for the educational context and for collaborative, rather than individual use. In contrast to the longitudinal mixed methods used in this study, Hay offered participants 30 statements about possible values and beliefs in their school and asked them to work in groups of three or four teachers (six in secondary schools) to sort the statements in order of priority, using a diamond shape as a guide. The results show the top six cards identified by teachers in schools with the highest value-added outcomes.[67] The Hay research shows little common ground between its findings and the school culture factors associated with improved student achievement identified by other studies considered in this thesis. The strategy of 'making sacrifices' and 'measuring and monitoring' is further developed by additional factors identified by the Hay Group when they analysed what makes successful schools different.[68] The Hay data inevitably led to "the million-dollar question… Is there a particular culture associated with more successful schools?" (Hobby, 2004). However, with significant evidence to support their conclusions, the Hay researchers struck a note of caution: "there is no right answer for every school" (Hobby,, 2004).[69] So if the Hay data seem to indicate that a common set of cultures delivers more successful outcomes, why a reluctance to make more definitive conclusions? Further analysis of Hay evidence and observations of 'cultural dimensions of instrumentality and social cohesion' made by Hargreaves (Hargreaves, 1996, p. 17) throw doubt on a simple link between culture and success in schools.

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[67] Measuring and monitoring targets and test results
A hunger for improvement – High hopes and expectations
Raising Capability – Helping People Learn – Laying foundations for later success
Focusing on the value added – Holding hope for every child – Every gain a victory
Promoting excellence – Pushing the boundaries of achievement – World class
Making sacrifices to put pupils first (Hobby, 2004)

[68] Hunger for improvement
Desire to be World class
Ambitious for all students
Perceive (and expect) that staff are ready to make personal Sacrifices to put pupils first.
Do not make allowances for good effort without results
Significantly less Tolerant of mistakes than other schools
They are more likely to take Value added seriously (Hobby, 2004)

[69] Hay Group conclusions: "To the extent that each school deals with a unique local community, they will be right to draw different lessons from their experience. We must therefore take real caution in using these findings. Firstly, we cannot hope to set a benchmark for the whole of a school's culture – merely point to certain themes that ought to be taken into consideration. Secondly, there is no single right answer for every school. We present these findings as a guide and challenge to your own analysis of your needs and the appropriate response" (Hobby, 2004).

Firstly, Hobby (2004) acknowledges that the type of school culture pictured in high achieving schools may not be 'sustainable' because "people were far less comfortable at admitting to mistakes in the most successful school". "One can imagine them (high achieving schools) tending towards high stress 'hothouse' environments. The fear of admitting to mistakes is one indication of this" (Hobby, 2004). The hothouse environment described here, was very evident in two of the three schools in this study, but it was not because teachers were in highly successful schools. In my study, the hothouse climate was because of the pressure to improve poor outcomes, not to maintain a successful school. Hargreaves concurs with this view describing the hothouse school as "rather frenetic….. It is a culture that is not overtly coercive or tyrannical, but teachers and students easily become anxious that they are not pulling their weight or doing as well as they should….. the hothouse extreme may not be a desirable or sustainable school culture" (Hargreaves, 1996).

Secondly, both Hargreaves (1996) and Hobby (2004) suggest solutions to the 'hothouse' culture which many successful schools have adopted and which correlate strongly with observations from this study. They describe the need for a 'strong moral purpose and long-term goals' (Unity of Purpose) and a 'collaborative atmosphere' (Collaborative Leadership /Teacher Collaboration /Collegial Support) (Hobby, 2004). The initial lack of common ground between Hobby (2004) and my research can now be seen in a different context. The importance of collaboration and a clear vision was also evident in my case study schools and where it was managed effectively, a more positive culture emerged.

The correlation between school culture and student achievement was subject to an important quantitative investigation by Gruenert (2005). Using the six factor Gruenert and Valentine survey instrument I employed in my study, Gruenert collected school culture data from 81 schools in Indiana during the spring semester of the 2002-03 school year. "The six factors from the survey were used as correlates with math and language arts student achievement data. ….to determine whether features of collaborative cultures tend to exist where better test results were reported" (Gruenert, 2005). The results of the Gruenert research were statistically significant and have important implications for this study because of the similar quantitative measure used. Gruenert concluded: "the more collaborative schools tend to have higher student achievement. This is true at the elementary, middle, and high school levels….Overall, the elementary school level had the highest scores in all six factors. The

middle level schools were the next highest, and high schools had the lowest set" (Gruenert, 2005). Here, for the first time, we have extensive quantitative data, obtained using the same survey as in my study, which links increased collegiality and collaboration between school leaders and teachers and between teachers and teachers, with improved outcomes for schools and their students. "Collaborative cultures", continues Gruenert, "seem to be the best setting for student achievement, thus affirming the literature on collaborative school cultures. What was once considered an intangible aura found in some schools can now be identified and quantified" (Gruenert, 2005).

Whilst the MacNeil (2009) and Gruenert (2005) studies confirmed a statistical link between a strong school culture and improved student outcomes, it is important to note that the school achievement data used in all the models examined rely on a measurement of student attainment rather than student progress. The differences between these two measures is crucial. Attainment can be linked to the socio–economic context of a school, where more able and more prosperous students are likely to achieve more highly. High student achievement may result from economic rather than school culture factors. Measuring progress, on the other hand, ensures that the efforts of the school to help children advance academically are quantified. Schools in advantageous and less advantageous areas have a better, if not equal chance of being successful against this measure. Therefore, a more reliable measure of school outcomes would be the use of value-added or progress data because it removes the influence of economic factors in measuring student outcomes. Progress rather than attainment data is likely to provide a more reliable measure of the relationship between strong school culture and school success.

To suggest how educational policy-makers might be further influenced to concentrate more on school culture and less on structural reorganisations, Gruenert suggested that future "research that looks at the outliers, and possibly suggesting factors which have not been considered in this analysis of culture, may provide important insights toward a successful campaign" (Gruenert, 2005). This approach has been adopted widely and developed across the USA but not, as yet in UK schools.

10.9 What leadership strategies and other factors help to create a healthy school culture?

In this final section, I bring together some of the key findings from this research study with the conclusions drawn by other researchers. I focus on research questions 4 and 5, which examine the leadership strategies and other factors which influence the creation and development of a healthy school culture.

Evidence from Chapter 9.8 in particular, together with the tables in this chapter, confirm that school culture can be grown, developed and nurtured. The evidence also shows that school culture can be toxic and undermine the drive in schools to improve standards. This study provides evidence that specific events and factors have a toxifying effect on school culture. In School C, for example, the effect of amalgamation prior to the school's involvement in the research was still apparent. Still a toxic legacy, as the evidence in Table 10.4 illustrates, the baggage of past errors lingered long. Similarly, in School B, the feeling of being the junior partner in the MAT relationship with School A, the more successful school, was shared by all those interviewed. Additional external factors such as the close Ofsted monitoring of School B and C, albeit it for quite legitimate purposes, further undermined the development of a strong culture. Instead, suspicion, uncertainty and anxiety were the prevailing views as Table 10.5 illustrates. With unsatisfactory GCSE results, a falling school roll and more challenging budgets, the fear of job loss, particularly in Schools B and C, is consistent through the evidence I have presented. Balkanisation is perhaps an understandable human retreat.

School culture can be undermined by events and factors which are transformational and seismic (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1996; Wallace, 1996; Reddyk, 2002; Harris, 2002; Brady, 2008). A school amalgamation or a school joining a MAT as a junior partner are undoubtedly seismic events with a discernible negative impact on school culture in this study. Equally this study provides evidence that carefully crafted school leadership strategies can have a positive effect on school culture. For instance, strategies to promote Collaborative Leadership through frequent staff meetings, consultation processes and the sharing of strategic aims in all three case study schools were at least partially effective. Where Professional Development was personalised and a clear vision for the future, giving a Unity of Purpose, was considered, school culture strengthened. When teachers were given time to meet, shared resources and collaborated, school culture strengthened. Where opportunities were given for staff to meet on a social basis, collegiality and school culture deepened.

A central finding in my research is the centrality of the role of the headteacher in the creation of a strong school culture. This corroborates previous research (Fullan, 2002; English, 2007; Davies, 2008; Harris, 2008; Dunmany & Galand, 2012; Brown & Greany, 2018). Throughout this study, frequent reference was made to the headteacher's actions in securing a positve school culture. Table 9.9 provides a good example. A clear, determined vision inspires and motivates teachers and, in the case of School C, helps to overcome the baggage of the past. Similarly, in Tables 9.11 – 9.15 leadership actions are identified. A clear plan for improvement; a visible presence; more personalised and relevant training; teachers who are valued; more opportnities for collaboration and active attemtpts to enage parents are all strategies identified. This list is not exhaustive, but it illustrates some of the key actions from this study which actively improve school culture.

10.10 Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown how the findings from this study contribute to the field of school culture research. There is clear evidence that the quantitative and qualitative outcomes from my three case studies reflect findings in other work. Collaboration, collegiality and a clear vision help to strengthen school culture and create a positive working environment. In the final chapter, I summarise my key findings, explore the limitations of this study and suggest areas for future research.

Chapter 11

Conclusions, limitations of the study and recommendations for further research

11.1 Conclusions

School culture is distinctive in every school. It has a profound effect on all aspects of school life, likely including student achievement. The development of culture in individual schools within a MAT and in schools that are products of amalgamations is often more complex than that of an established, standalone school. In this study, the creation and development of a strong culture in School C, an amalgamated school, was clearly difficult and many of those challenges were a direct result of the school's amalgamation history. The development of culture in a school within a MAT is clearly overlaid with the strategic objectives of the CEO and the Trust's governance. In this study, whilst teachers' perceptions of school culture improved over the period of the research, there were inhibiting factors borne of complex new relationships following a school amalgamation or between schools working together with in a new MAT.

In answer to research questions 1, 2 and 3, the outcomes from each case study and the comparative analysis in Chapter 9, demonstrate that school culture was very strong, positive and healthy in School A and less strong, although improving, in Schools B and C. Teacher perceptions indicated that school culture strengthened in each school over the period of the study. Perceptions of each cultural component also strengthened in each school, but to varying degrees. Overall, Collegial Support, Professional Development, Unity of Purpose and Collaborative Leadership were the strongest cultural components identified by teachers across the study, although this also varied from school to school.

In answer to research questions 4 and 5, the outcomes from this study show that the strength and quality of school culture is influenced by a range of factors, both internal and external to an individual school, such as the threat of job losses, regular monitoring or inspection by Ofsted or inherited baggage which undermined current working relationships. Leadership strategies could strengthen or inadvertently weaken school culture. In all case study schools, the actions of school leaders were generally sensitive to the demands place on teachers and actions taken tended to improve school culture rather than weaken it, although frequent changes of headteacher prior to the research undermined school culture in School C. The

evidence in this study suggests that: improved communication with teachers through regular meetings strengthens Collaborative

Leadership; a more personalised approach to Professional Development improves the impact and appreciation of training; a clear, well communicated vision creates buy-in and greater Unity of Purpose and time given over for staff to share ideas enhances Teacher Collaboration. The combined effect of the above is greater trust between teachers and senior leaders and a greater willingness amongst teachers to contribute to and accept change. Other research studies,explored in Chapter 10, support the notion that improved collegiality and collaboration strengthen school culture and provide a more secure base from which to initiate change. The evidence that a strong school culture improves teacher retention and motivation is also supported by the collective findings in this study and others.

In short, the quantitative and qualitative findings from this study suggest that the creation and development of school culture is not only possible but desirable. It can be achieved by carefully crafted leadership strategies, thorough approaches which clearly define whole school objectives, which explicitly encourage collaboration and collegiality and ensure policies are equitable and consistently and fairly applied. Whilst it is almost certain that strategies designed to improve student outcomes and school improvement are the primary focus for senior leaders and governors, there is evidence here to suggest that school improvement is more likely if attention is paid to improving school culture. School improvement strategies have a greater chance of success where the conditions for improvement are established and embedded. School culture underpins everything, and it is capable of positive development and exploitation.

However, a key finding of this study is the identification of factors which can create toxic rather than positive school cultures. A negative school culture undermines school improvement and limits the capacity for change. This toxicity has been seen through the lens of a few participants in this study particularly in Schools B and C. Where the need to improve school outcomes or to remedy a budget deficit is urgent, school leaders are sometimes forced to take actions which implicitly undermine trust between teachers or create an atmosphere where the school appears to have lost control of its own destiny to be quasi-controlled by external agencies. The real or potential threat of job losses undermines relationships between colleagues and reduces the levels of trust between teachers and school leaders. Similarly,

trust can be difficult to re-establish where a school has had several school leaders within a short time period or where the actions of past leaders have corroded relationships. Sub-cultures in a school can undermine the whole school culture and it can take the school a long time to recover from such fractions. A strong school culture, which may take years to develop through carefully applied actions can, within a very short time, become negative and potentially toxic, with all the accompanying implications this has on school relationships.

Since the creation of a positive school culture, as suggested by the findings of this study, may take years to establish and embed, a further lesson from the schools involved in this research is that school culture is not resilient to change. The vulnerability of school culture is exposed under the weight of internal or external pressures. Strategies to cut budgets; frequent change in leadership; transformational change such as amalgamation or joining a MAT; redundancies and Ofsted inspections all threaten a positive school culture. The warm rays of a positive school culture where optimism, warmth and co-operation prevail can quickly disappear and be replaced by dark clouds of mistrust, isolation and the dimming of hope. If the latter is to be avoided, we need a clear understanding of the factors identified in this study, which affect the creation of a healthy school culture.

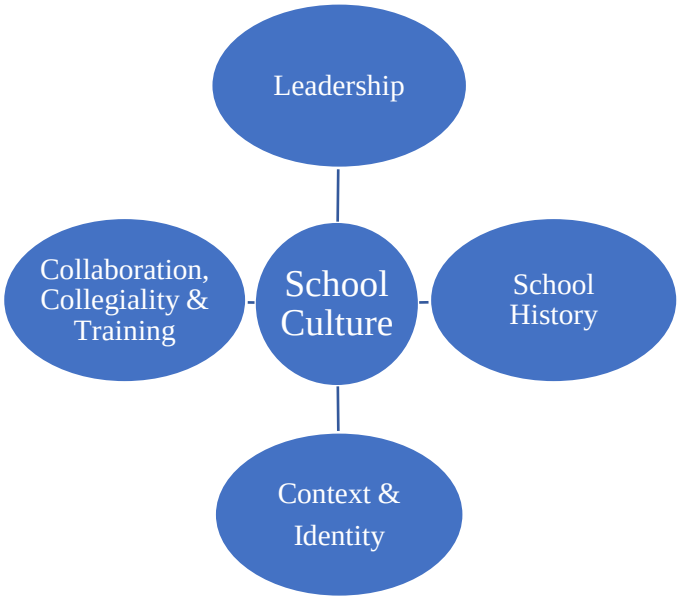

Figure 11.1: School Culture - Forces of influence

To understand school culture, it is necessary to identify the forces that help shape it. These are suggested in Figure 11.1. School culture is certainly shaped by leadership and by vision.

Without the drive, vision, interpersonal skills and inspiration of an effective headteacher, a positive school culture is difficult to achieve. School culture cannot develop in isolation from its context. A context will include sufficient teachers with a positive worldview to overcome challenges and make improvements. In schools where the prevailing culture is cynical, the only recourse might be for school leaders to replace cynics with optimists. School culture is often shaped by the school's history; the past can be a firm foundation upon which to build or an obstacle to be overcome. School culture is created and understood through collegiality, collaboration and training; the involvement of teachers in decision making and time given over to share good practice and personalised training. Finally, school culture is underpinned by an identity. This identity will determine whether this is likely to be a place to which teachers feel they belong, want to contribute and want to stay. Or not.

11.2 School Culture: cause and effect

Evidence that a strong school culture has a beneficial impact on schools, students, teachers and parents is woven throughout the quantitative and qualitative responses of participants in this study. In order to capture the strategies which, contribute to a positive school culture, I present overleaf in Figure 11.2, School Culture; cause and effect diagram, a road map of ideas based on Gruenert and Valentine's six cultural components. The School Culture; cause and effect diagram, summarises lessons from the research and identifies actions and strategies which teachers consider bear upon their perception of school culture.

Teacher evidence shows that perceptions of Unity of Purpose improve when school leaders regularly communicate a clear positive strategic plan. This is helped further if the same leaders maintain a strong personal presence in school and see through the plans they initiate. Similarly, perceptions of Collaborative Leadership, Collegial Support and Teacher Collaboration improve when teachers are involved in decision-making, given time to participate and have opportunities to meet. Most importantly this is strong where teachers are trusted by senior leaders to deliver an improvement agenda. Regular, personalised Professional Development develops expertise and
trust, and better communication and engagement with parents is more likely to enhance Learning Partnership.

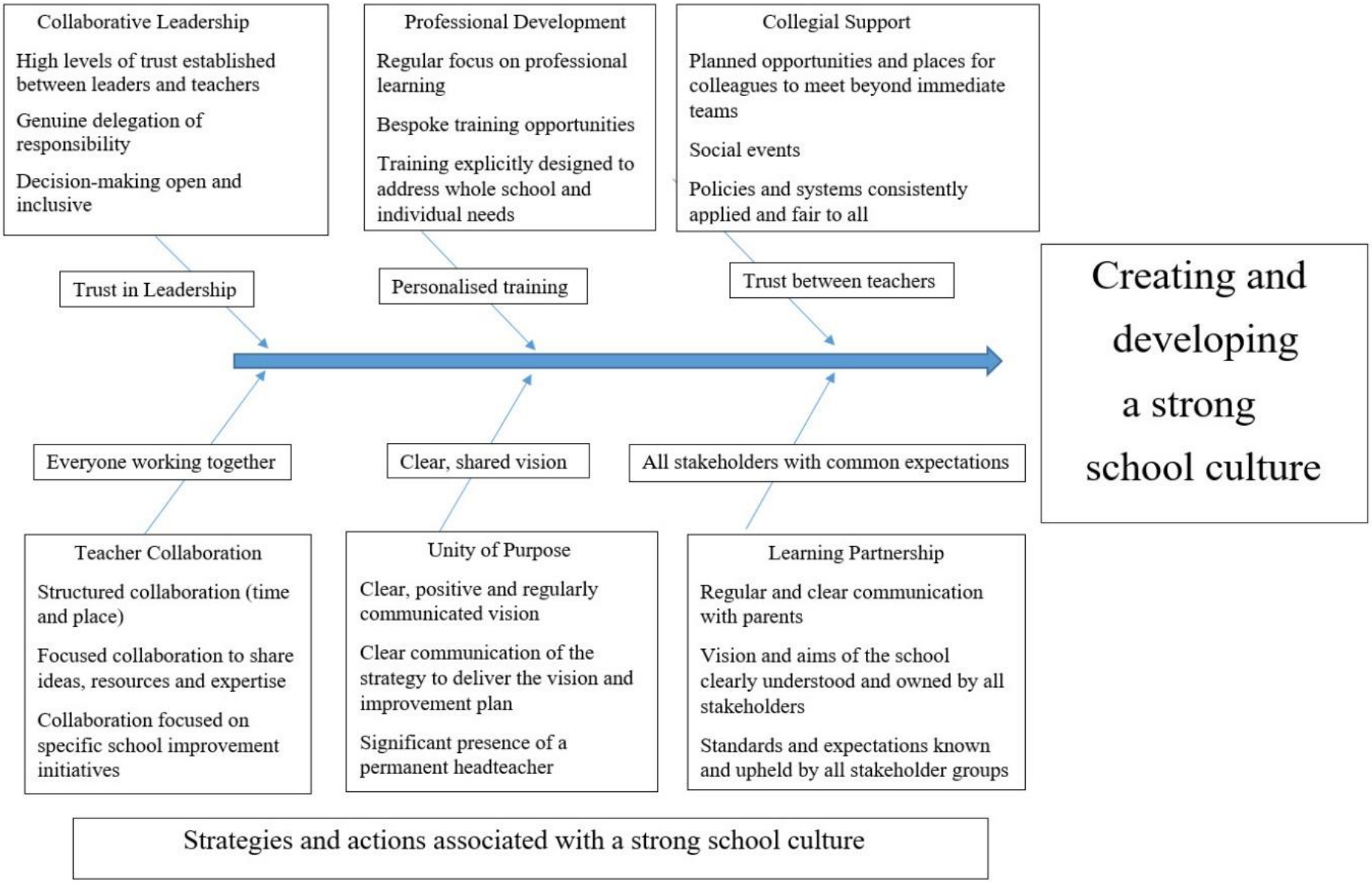

Figure 11.2: School Culture: cause and effect

The School Culture; cause and effect diagram is accompanied overleaf by Table 11.1 which confirms the enabling strategies suggested to create a strong school culture. This also highlights potential inhibitors: factors which undermine school culture and which school leaders may need to address. These inhibitors stem directly from the qualitative evidence in this study and are presented as potential risks for school leaders to avoid. The combination of the Forces of Influence, School Culture; cause and effect diagram and Enabling strategies / Inhibitors, provide a comprehensive critique of school culture and are offered as a modest contribution to the school effectiveness and school improvement traditions.

In the next section, I consider the wider implications of this research for the schools which took part and outline developments up to the present day.

11.3 Overall implications for case study schools

The three schools in this study bear witness to cultural change which arises out of leadership strategies designed to secure change and improvement but set within a specific context. First, it is a reminder that the research was undertaken in schools with complex contexts; each part of a non-typical improvement journey; a journey made more complex by the fusion of separate school communities either in one new building or as part of a MAT. Secondly, two of the three case study schools faced significant challenges around student performance and economic deprivation and this inevitably dominated the emerging school culture and determined the actions of school leaders in raising achievement. In Schools B and C, the MAT was the prime agent for change and the vehicle for delivering school improvement. MAT leadership, working through leaders based in the three schools, was instrumental in the design and implementation of school improvement strategies which largely fall within Gruenert and Valentine's six cultural components. However, it does not appear that cultural change was merely an unintended by-product of school improvement actions. It is clear from the qualitative and quantitative evidence in this study that teachers and leaders perceived a conscious effort to shift school culture as a means to raise standards in each school. The MAT drives school improvement and both consciously and unconsciously address cultural components, however, importantly, the MATs in this study, also change relationships, between schools and between individual teachers and leaders.

Table: 11.1 The creation and development of a strong school culture: a teachers and school leader perspective of enabling strategies and inhibitors

School Culture Factors	Enabling Strategies	Inhibitors
Collaborative Leadership	High levels of trust established between leaders and teachers Genuine delegation of responsibility Decision-making open and inclusive	Low levels of trust as a result of weak competency among leaders Individuals under-valued because of their school context rather than their personal ability External pressures which force imposition of rapid decisions and top down, without consultation
Professional Development	Regular focus on professional learning Bespoke training opportunities Training explicitly designed to address whole school and individual needs Value placed on self-reflection and feedback	One-size fits all training events which are a 'waste of time' for some Top-down or externally driven training
Collegial Support	Planned opportunities and places for colleagues to meet beyond immediate teams Social events Policies and systems consistently applied and fair to all	Threat of redundancy or constrained opportunity for advancement Absence of effective role models for this modus operandi
Teacher Collaboration	Structured collaboration (time and place) Focused collaboration to share ideas, resources and expertise Collaboration focused on specific school improvement initiatives	Competition or rivalry between individuals or departments Time squeezed by operational issues
Unity of Purpose	Clear, positive and regularly communicated vision Clear communication of the strategy to deliver the vision and improvement plan Significant presence of a permanent headteacher Consistent and robust application of policies and systems across all staff	Multiple conflicting leadership priorities
Learning Partnership	Regular and clear communication with parents Vision and aims of the school clearly understood and owned by all stakeholders Standards and expectations known and upheld by all stakeholder groups, including parents and students.	Stakeholders cling to old ways and negative perceptions Inconsistent approaches to student behaviour

The culture of all three schools is ultimately perceived by its teachers and leaders through the lens of personal experience and interpretation; macro school structures and school improvement strategies influence, but do not wholly determine, the development of school culture.

It is also important to consider the wider implication of the research for each individual case study school. It is clear that teachers and leaders in school C, for example, had a less personal relationship with their MAT whose schools were at a greater distance and were less well known to the staff and community of School C. Like School B, it is the drive to improve the quality of teaching and to raise standards which is the most powerful driver Gruenert and Valentine's six cultural components in School C. Whereas teachers in school B perceived their school culture and its development very much with reference to school A in their MAT, perceptions of culture in school C, notwithstanding the factors directly linked to school improvement, were shaped less by their MAT and more by their own troubled history.

School B, a school with significant challenges brought into a federation with a much more established school and, more recently into a multi-academy trust with its federation partner. The structural transition from federation to multi-academy trust does not itself appear to have impacted on school culture. Once in the MAT, what affects School B's culture most profoundly for teachers and leaders is the reality of much closer work with colleagues in School A, regardless of the legal construct within which this partnership work existed, and, above all, the pressure imposed by the MAT, by external powers and self-imposed, to raise standards quickly in the classroom despite the morale-crushing blows of budget cuts and redundancies. It cannot be said that the MAT imposed changes designed to place its stamp on school B or consciously to align its culture to a MAT culture. However, the MAT, and specifically School A, were perceived to drive strategies which strengthened Gruenert and Valentine's cultural components. Changing perceptions of cultural identity in school B, both positive and negative, were largely the consequence of practices intended to raise standards but, perhaps inevitably, never entirely separate from its junior MAT relationship.

For School A, the school with the strongest school culture which also improved over the period of the research, leadership of its MAT and the support provided for School B had significant consequences. Whilst a few School A teachers detected the beginning of a MAT

culture, the prevailing view was that despite the challenges, the support for School B was appropriate strategically and that progress, however slow, was being made town-wide. Unfortunately, for Schools A, B and C, the slow pace of progress in improving standards, particularly in Schools B and C meant that all three schools are no longer in the same MAT as at the start of the research. Educational politics has played its hand and new sponsors have taken over.

11.4 Limitations of the study

I began this thesis suggesting that school culture remains under-researched especially in the English context. Further work should be encouraged because, from this small-scale study, it seems there is sufficient evidence to suggest that school culture has a significant effect both on the effectiveness and motivation of teachers, and upon leadership approaches to school improvement.

My study is clearly limited because each school in the study has a specific context and it is difficult to assess the extent to which cultural strength is affected by that context. For example, each case study school is at a different point in its improvement journey, is set in a different socio-economic context and has different challenges. The impact of these factors has not been the focus of this study so it is not possible to determine if cultural strength is merely a consequence of context or one shaped by school leadership and strategy. I have deliberately limited this study to an investigation of teacher perceptions through the single lens of school culture in order to capture the views of key players involved in school improvement about a concept that remains under researched. I fully recognise that looking through a single lens may obscure or hide other crucial factors and views through alternative lenses may produce different outcomes. I would, therefore, encourage more research viewed through multiple lenses which might also include the impact of socio-economic and other factors on cultural strength.

This study was limited to a comparison of three schools. A much wider quantitative and qualitative base would be beneficial and might provide more secure conclusions about the importance of school culture. Case studies have their limitations, even where statistically significant quantitative evidence is produced. The richness of evidence provided through a mixed methods analysis may give greater depth to the story of school development, based, as

it is, on the personal interaction with key participants, but still outcomes might not be representative of the system as a whole.

Further consideration also needs to be given to MAT related aspects of school culture. Whilst all three case study schools were in MATs, the relationship with, and impact of, each MAT is different. School A and B are in the same small MAT in the same town whilst school C is part of a much larger MAT with the lead school some distance away. It was therefore not possible to investigate the full impact of MAT culture for each of the three cases equally. This has limited my conclusions about MAT cultures. Since the development of MATs is one of the most significant changes to the English educational landscape for many years, I would encourage further investigation of MAT culture as opposed to individual school cultures.

The choice of participants in this study was deliberately confined to teachers, middle leaders and senior leaders, on the basis that they were in a good position to assess the strength of school culture and how it had developed, from their perspective, in their own school. But teachers are only one group of school stakeholders. This study is limited because it does not explore the views of support staff such as teaching assistants who also have direct contact with students. Non-teaching colleagues often out-number teachers in schools and they both shape and reflect culture in different ways. I also deliberately did not interview headteachers, the potential architects of school culture in their own school; my focus designed to be through a different lens. Then there are the students and their views; a further rich source of valuable information.

Whilst this study was able to throw some light on the development of school culture in the setting of amalgamated schools or those belonging to a MAT, a larger number of participants would provide more robust evidence to policy-makers in the search of improved methods of school improvement.

11.5 Recommendations for future research

I began this research attempting to answer some key questions about school culture and whilst I have attempted to make a modest contribution to this field of study, there are unanswered questions which need exploring. Since there appears to be a view that school culture is important, I recommend that further research is undertaken, particularly in the UK,

to identify key cultural components as seen from the perspective of the English education system. This research used a survey originally designed for American schools, amended for domestic purpose. A validated UK designed survey, designed for English schools in their various organisational structures, might reveal other factors currently unknown. It would also be helpful to compare the usefulness of a single measure of school culture with one using multiple components as in the Gruenert and Valentine survey.

The more contentious issue, the link between school culture and student achievement, is more urgent. This study did not set out to consider this hypothesis but other studies, particularly Gruenert's analysis, give a strong indication that such a link exists and more research would be worthwhile for academics and educational policy-makers. Structures and systems have been the focus of the English educational landscape for many years; people, particularly teachers, their contributions to a school and their experience of teaching in a given context, have not been the central focus. Now is the time to put people at the heart of school improvement and explore how a healthy school culture promotes teacher effectiveness and delivers success for students and their communities.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: School culture studies with accompanying concepts

School Culture Survey (Edwards et al., 1996 based on Saphier and King, 1985)

Teacher professionalism
Professional treatment by administration
Teacher collaboration

School Work Culture Profile (Snyder 1988)

School wide Planning
Professional Development
Programme Development
School Assessment

School Values Inventory (Pang 1996)

Formality	Collegiality
Bureaucratic control	Goal orientation
Rationality	Communication and self-consensus
Achievement orientation	Professional orientation
Participation and collaboration	Teacher autonomy

School Culture Elements Questionnaire (Cavanagh and Dellar,1998)

Teacher efficacy	Collaboration
Emphasis on learning	Shared planning
Collegiality	Transformational leadership

Maslowski (2001)

Professionalization orientation	Commitment and support orientation
Adaptation and innovation orientation	External support and facilities orientation
Productivity and accomplishment orientation	Means-ends orientation
	Efficiency orientation
Stability and control orientation	

Gruenert &Valentine (1998)

Collaborative leadership	Professional development
Collegial support	Teacher Collaboration
Unity of Purpose	Learning Partnership

Appendix 2: School Culture concepts with accompanying definitions

School Culture Concept	Example meaning
Collegiality	The relationship between colleagues and how they work Together
Efficacy	The ability to influence decisions
Professionalism /behavior	High standards of work and behaviour
Vision and unity of purpose	Working to a common agreed vision or mission
Professional development	Developing as a professional and person
Collaboration	Engaging in constructive dialogue to further the vision of the school
Collaborative Leadership	Leaders encourage collaboration and development
Partnerships	Stakeholders work together for the common good
Traditions	Celebrations and rituals in the school community
Planning	School wide collaborative planning
Goals /Assessment	Systems to assist achievement of targets
Student Learning/achievement	Learning at the centre of school activities
Innovation / change	Risk taking is encouraged and staff adapt to change
Self Esteem/ recognition	Recognition of individual feelings and a sense of value
Participation	The extent of participation in activities
Programme Development	School leaders co ordinate initiatives and developments
Formality /stability / rules	Rules and processes are formalised and centralized
Autonomy	Teachers have discretionary power and autonomy
External support	The extent to which school members are orientated towards achieving public support for their school
Efficiency	The extent of school and individual efficiency and value for money

Appendix 3: Four Worldviews (Creswell, 2018,p.6)

Post positivism	**Constructivism**
• Determination • Reductionism • Empirical observation and measurement • Theory verification	• Understanding • Multiple participant meanings • Social and historical construction • Theory generation
Transformative	**Pragmatism**
• Political • Power and justice oriented • Collaborative • Change-oriented	• Consequences of actions • Problem-centred • Pluralistic • Real-world practice oriented

Appendix 4: Gruenert & Valentine (1998) original questionnaire

SCHOOL CULTURE SURVEY

To what degree do these statements describe the conditions at your school?

Rate each statement on the following scale:

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neutral 4=Agree

5=Strongly Agree

1. Teachers utilize professional networks to obtain information and resources for classroom instruction.

2. Leaders value teachers' ideas.

3. Teachers have opportunities for dialogue and planning across grades and subjects.

4. Teachers trust each other.

5. Teachers support the mission of the school.

6. Teachers and parents have common expectations for student performance.

7. Leaders in this school trust the professional judgments of teachers.

8. Teachers spend considerable time planning together.

9. Teachers regularly seek ideas from seminars, colleagues, and conferences.

10. Teachers are willing to help out whenever there is a problem.

11. Leaders take time to praise teachers that perform well.

12. The school mission provides a clear sense of direction for teachers.

13. Parents trust teachers' professional judgments.

14. Teachers are involved in the decision-making process.

15. Teachers take time to observe each other teaching.

16. Professional development is valued by the faculty.

17. Teachers' ideas are valued by other teachers.

18. Leaders in our school facilitate teachers working together.

19. Teachers understand the mission of the school.

20. Teachers are kept informed on current issues in the school.

21. Teachers and parents communicate frequently about student performance.

22. My involvement in policy or decision making is taken seriously.

23. Teachers are generally aware of what other teachers are teaching.

24. Teachers maintain a current knowledge base about the learning process.

25. Teachers work cooperatively in groups.

26. Teachers are rewarded for experimenting with new ideas and techniques.

27. The school mission statement reflects the values of the community.

28. Leaders support risk-taking and innovation in teaching.

29. Teachers work together to develop and evaluate programs and projects.

30. The faculty values school improvement.

31. Teaching performance reflects the mission of the school.

32. Administrators protect instruction and planning time.

33. Teaching practice disagreements are voiced openly and discussed.

34. Teachers are encouraged to share ideas.

35. Students generally accept responsibility for their schooling, for example they engage mentally in class and complete homework assignments.

Appendix 5: Questionnaire consent letter

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Faculty of Education

Professor J. Valentine,
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
Middle Level Leadership Center
211 Hill Hall
University of Missouri-Columbia
Columbia
Missouri
USA
65211

23 April 2014

Dear Prof. Valentine,

My name is Wayne Birks and I am a part time Doctoral student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Cambridge. I am also Headteacher at [redacted], a large 11 -18 senior high school in the East of England.

I am conducting a longitudinal mixed methods case study of school culture in amalgamated and/or federated schools and I am writing to ask your permission to use the School Culture Survey (very slightly modified for use in English Secondary Schools) as part of my thesis. The Ed.D programme I am following, is a recent development in Cambridge and specifically designed for working professionals. I am part of the first cohort of students on this programme and the research has already had a significant impact upon my work as a school leader.

The research will be carried out following the ethical guidelines suggested by BERA (British Educational Research Association) and will be supervised under the direction of the University of Cambridge. If there are any queries regarding this you may contact my doctoral supervisor Dr. [redacted]

I would be very grateful if you were able to support my research project by granting permission to use the SCS but if you wish to seek further clarification or have a more detailed discussion please do not hesitate to contact me at [redacted]

Kind regards,

Wayne Birks
[redacted]

Appendix 6: Email exchange between myself and Dr Valentine , April 2014 and I have summarised Dr Valentine's key responses below:

> The addition of a 36th item that asks for a "general overall perspective of school culture" is a good move. I have used that many times in other instruments as a means for correlating individual items with responses to the specific items. We probably used that originally in the development of the SCS. I have not concern about that addition.
>
> The use of the word vision for mission is not a concern and should not reduce any comparability with the findings from our US studies on school culture given current general interpretation of the two terms.
>
> I noticed that you used the term "school" in several items in place of the purposeful word "teachers." We chose teachers purposefully to gain perspective of the teachers about themselves as a collective group of teachers because this is a survey of teachers perspectives on school culture and we used the findings to work directly with teachers in our school improvement programs. In the US, the term school is more encompassing and would reflect the perspectives of school leaders, both formal and informal, as well as teacher and teacher leaders and staff and others who might work in the school…and it would be a very non-specific term in the us with respondents interpreting the term and responding with a lack of consistent interpretation of the term.
>
> Email from Dr Jerry Valentine to Wayne Birks 23/4/2014

I carefully reflected on the comments from Dr Valentine, reviewed my suggested amendments and returned them for his final comments which I have included below:

> To: Wayne Birks
>
> I reviewed with the minor changes you have made to the SCS. I think your refinements appropriate and they effectively address the minor concerns I had raised. Based upon the revised SCS draft you sent with this email, I am pleased to provide you with permission to use the School Culture Survey in your research project. Dr. Gruenert and I wish you the very best and we look forward to reading your findings.
>
> Sincerely
>
> Jerry Valentine

Appendix 7

Teacher Questionnaire (Pilot)

Introduction

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. It forms part of a Doctoral thesis designed to obtain your views on school culture in amalgamated or federated secondary schools. Your responses are strictly anonymous and you will not be asked to identify yourself at any time during the questionnaire. Please respond honestly and completely. At the end of the questionnaire, please feel free to add any additional comments that you find appropriate and were unable to address elsewhere.

Thank you, in advance, for taking the time to respond.

Kind regards

Wayne Birks
Headteacher, [redacted]

Instructions

- Expect the questionnaire to take about 5 minutes to complete
- Please return the questionnaire in the envelope provided to school reception or Sam Howard.
- Once complete, questionnaires will be analysed to assess the effectiveness of the survey as a quantitative measuring instrument. No staff member will be identifiable and all responses are confidential

Section 1: This section asks for some information about you, your school and your work

Please circle or mark the most appropriate response item. Select only one response per question.

1.How would you describe your position in your school ?

a. Teacher b. Middle Manager/Leader c. Senior Manager/Leader

2. How many years have you been a teacher ?

a. 1 to 2 years b. 3 to 5 years c. 6 to 10 years d. 11 to 20 years e. 21+ years

3. How many years (including this year) have you been at your present school?

a. 1 to 2 years b. 3 to 5 years c. 6 to 10 years d. 11 to 20 years e. 21+ years

4. What is your gender? a. Female b. Male

Section B School Culture Questionnaire

Please rate each statement on the following scale:
Scoring: 1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither Agree or Disagree 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

	Strongly Disagree				***Strongly Agree***
1. Teachers use professional networks to obtain information and resources for use in the classroom	1	2	3	4	5
2. School Leaders value teachers' ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Teachers have opportunities for dialogue and planning across year groups and subjects	1	2	3	4	5
4. Teachers trust each other.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Teachers support the vision of the school.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Teachers and parents have common expectations for student performance.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Leaders in this school trust the professional judgments of teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Teachers spend considerable time planning together.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Teachers regularly seek ideas from seminars, colleagues and conferences.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Teachers are willing to help out wherever there is a problem.	1	2	3	4	5
11. School leaders take time to praise teachers that perform well.	1	2	3	4	5
12. The school vision provides a clear sense of direction for teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Parents trust teachers' professional judgements.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Teachers are involved in the decision making process.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Teachers take time to observe each other teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Professional development is valued by the school.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Teachers' ideas are valued by other teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Leaders in our school facilitate teachers working together.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Teachers understand the vision of the school.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Teachers are kept informed on current issues in the school.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Teachers and parents communicate frequently about student performance.	1	2	3	4	5
22. My involvement in policy making is taken seriously.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Teachers are generally aware of what other teachers are teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Teachers maintain a current knowledge base about the learning process.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Teachers work co operatively in groups.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Teachers are rewarded for experimenting with new ideas and techniques.	1	2	3	4	5
27. The school vision reflects the values of the community.	1	2	3	4	5
28. School leaders support risk taking and innovation in teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Teachers work together to develop and evaluate projects.	1	2	3	4	5
30. The school values overall improvement	1	2	3	4	5
31. Teaching performance reflects the vision of the school.	1	2	3	4	5
32. School leaders protect teaching and planning time.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Teaching practice disagreements are voiced openly and discussed.	1	2	3	4	5
34. Teachers are encouraged to share ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
35. Students generally accept responsibility for their schooling	1	2	3	4	5
36. This school has a strong, positive culture	1	2	3	4	5

Please add below any other comments you may wish to make, thank you.

Appendix 8: Amendments to Gruenert and Valentine school culture questionnaire

1. Teachers utilize professional networks to obtain information and resources for classroom instruction.
Teachers utilise professional networks to obtain information and resources for classroom instruction

32. Administrators protect instruction and planning time.
School leaders protect teaching and planning time.

29. Teachers work together to develop and evaluate programs and projects.
Teachers work together to develop and evaluate projects.

16. Professional development is valued by the faculty.
Professional development is valued by the school.

30. The faculty values school improvement
The school values overall improvement

6.Teachers support the mission of the school.
Teachers support the vision of the school.

12. The school mission provides a clear sense of direction for teachers.
The school vision provides a clear sense of direction for teachers.

19. Teachers understand the mission of the school.
Teachers understand the vision of the school.

27. The school mission statement reflects the values of the community.
The school vision reflects the values of the community.

31. Teaching performance reflects the mission of the school.
Teaching performance reflects the vision of the school.

35. Students generally accept responsibility for their schooling, for example they engage mentally in class and complete homework assignments.
Students generally accept responsibility for their schooling eg they engage in learning

Additional 36th question:
This school has a strong, positive culture

Appendix 9: Chronbach alpha score for each Gruenert and Valentine question

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
PD1	88.63	240.307	.364	.928
CL2	88.29	232.381	.643	.925
TC3	88.10	233.817	.563	.926
CS4	88.83	240.902	.319	.928
UP5	88.66	242.573	.381	.928
LP6	88.34	244.124	.231	.929
CL7	87.92	232.148	.635	.925
TC8	87.37	234.445	.466	.927
PD9	87.14	245.326	.155	.930
CS10	88.86	242.568	.283	.929
CL11	88.00	226.000	.730	.924
UP12	88.39	233.070	.673	.925
LP13	88.24	240.701	.447	.927
CL14	87.81	230.292	.641	.925
TC15	87.58	238.041	.386	.928
PD16	88.17	227.281	.817	.923
CS17	89.00	241.862	.358	.928
CL18	88.05	232.497	.687	.925
UP19	88.47	244.805	.259	.929
CL20	88.05	234.739	.558	.926
LP21	88.27	239.305	.415	.927
CL22	87.68	232.050	.483	.927
TC23	87.32	239.636	.302	.929
PD24	88.31	243.388	.298	.928
CS25	88.51	241.634	.374	.928
CL26	87.71	232.002	.584	.926
UP27	88.15	241.200	.491	.927
CL28	87.83	228.626	.683	.924
TC29	87.81	238.499	.446	.927
PD30	88.90	236.541	.602	.926
UP31	88.22	239.485	.432	.927
CL32	87.85	233.925	.466	.927
TC33	87.42	229.904	.671	.924
CL34	88.24	233.081	.625	.925
LP35	87.97	234.413	.582	.926
SC36	88.46	231.908	.726	.924

Appendix 10: Final School Culture questionnaire

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Faculty of Education

Teacher Questionnaire

Introduction

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. It forms part of a Doctoral thesis designed to obtain your views on school culture in amalgamated or federated secondary schools. Your responses are strictly anonymous and you will not be asked to identify yourself at any time during the questionnaire. Please respond honestly and completely. At the end of the questionnaire, please feel free to add any additional comments that you find appropriate and were unable to address elsewhere.

Thank you, in advance, for taking the time to respond.

Kind regards,

Wayne Birks
Headteacher, [redacted]

Instructions

- Expect the questionnaire to take about 5 minutes to complete
- Please return the questionnaire in the envelope provided to…….
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Section 1: This section asks for some information about you, your school and your work
Please circle or mark the most appropriate response item. Select only one response per question.

1. How would you describe your position in your school?

b. Teacher b. Middle Manager/Leader c. Senior Manager/Leader

2. How many years have you been a teacher?

b. 1 to 2 years b. 3 to 5 years c. 6 to 10 years d. 11 to 20 years e. 21+ years

3. How many years (including this year) have you been at your present school?

b. 1 to 2 years b. 3 to 5 years c. 6 to 10 years d. 11 to 20 years e. 21+ years

4. What is your gender?
a. Female b. Male

Section 2: School Culture Questionnaire

Please rate each statement on the following scale:
Scoring: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree or Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

	Strongly Disagree				***Strongly Agree***
1. Teachers use professional networks to obtain information and resources for use in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
2. School Leaders value teachers' ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Teachers have opportunities for dialogue and planning across year groups and subjects.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Teachers trust each other.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Teachers support the vision of the school.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Teachers and parents have common expectations for student performance.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Leaders in this school trust the professional judgments of teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Teachers spend considerable time planning together.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Teachers regularly seek ideas from seminars, colleagues and conferences.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Teachers are willing to help out whenever there is a problem.	1	2	3	4	5
11. School leaders take time to praise teachers that perform well.	1	2	3	4	5
12. The school vision provides a clear sense of direction for teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Parents trust teachers' professional judgments.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Teachers are involved in the decision-making process.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Teachers take time to observe each other teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Professional development is valued by my faculty / department.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Teachers' ideas are valued by other teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Leaders in our school facilitate teachers working together.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Teachers understand the vision of the school.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Teachers are kept informed on current issues in the school.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Teachers and parents communicate frequently about student performance.	1	2	3	4	5
22. My involvement in policy making is taken seriously.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Teachers are generally aware of what other teachers are teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Teachers maintain a current knowledge base about the learning process.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Teachers work cooperatively in groups.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Teachers are rewarded for experimenting with new ideas and techniques.	1	2	3	4	5
27. The school vision reflects the values of the community.	1	2	3	4	5
28. School leaders support risk taking and innovation in teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Teachers work together to develop and evaluate projects and courses.	1	2	3	4	5
30. My faculty / department values overall improvement.	1	2	3	4	5
31. Teaching performance reflects the vision of the school.	1	2	3	4	5
32. School leaders protect teaching and planning time.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Teaching practice disagreements are voiced openly and discussed.	1	2	3	4	5
34. Teachers are encouraged to share ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
35. Students generally accept responsibility for their schooling.	1	2	3	4	5
36. This school has a strong, positive culture.	1	2	3	4	5

(The School Culture Survey was developed in 1998 by Steve Gruenert and Jerry Valentine at the University of Missouri, Columbia Missouri, USA. Approval for the modifications and use for this instrument was provided by written permission from the authors, April 23, 2014)

Please add below any other comments you may wish to make, thank you.

Appendix 11: Interview schedule

Year 1 questions:

To what extent is there a collaborative approach to leadership in this school and across the MAT and can you suggest examples of practice that illustrates this?

How effective is Professional Development in this school and across the MAT and can you suggest examples that illustrate this?

To what extent is there is a culture of collegial support or trust between teachers in this school and across the MAT can you suggest examples that illustrate this?

To what extent is there is a culture of teacher collaboration or teachers working together in this school and across the MAT and can you suggest examples that illustrate this?

To what extent is there a Unity of Purpose or strong vision in this school and across the MAT and can you suggest examples that illustrate this?

To what extent do students accept responsibility in this school and across the MAT and how much is there a learning partnership between teachers and parents?

To what extent is there a strong culture in this school and across the MAT and can you give examples of how this is manifest?

Year 2 questions:

To what extent is there a collaborative approach to leadership in this school and across the MAT and how has this changed in the last twelve months? Can you suggest examples of practice that illustrate this?

How effective is Professional Development in this school and across the MAT and how has this changed in the last twelve months? Can you suggest examples that illustrate this?

To what extent is there is a culture of collegial support or trust between teachers in this school and across the MAT how has this changed in the last twelve months? Can you suggest examples that illustrate this?

To what extent is there is a culture of teacher collaboration or teachers working together in this school and across the MAT and how has this changed in the last twelve months? Can you suggest examples that illustrate this?

To what extent is there a Unity of Purpose or strong vision in this school and across the MAT and how has this changed in the last twelve months? Can you suggest examples that illustrate this?

To what extent do students accept responsibility for their learning in this school and across the MAT and how much is there a learning partnership between teachers and parents? How has this changed in the last twelve months?

To what extent is there a strong culture in this school and across the MAT and how has this changed in the last twelve months? Can you give examples of how this is manifest?

Appendix 12: Permission letter to undertake research

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Faculty of Education

[redacted]
Headteacher
[redacted]

21st June 2013

Dear [redacted]

I am a part time postgraduate Doctoral student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Cambridge and I would like to extend an invitation to you, your colleagues to take part in a research project on the development of school culture in amalgamated and federated schools.

As a long serving head teacher of a large [redacted] School, I am convinced that school culture has an important role to play in securing school improvement and helping students to reach their full potential. Research into school culture in the English school system however is very limited and virtually no research has been completed in schools that are the products of amalgamations or federations. I am, therefore, contacting a handful of Secondary Schools in [redacted] and ideally I would like your school to become one of the four case study participants. The selection of four schools will enable all participants to gain from a shared experience and expertise and provide the research with valuable comparative and longitudinal data on the respective components of school culture and how it develops over time.

If you feel able to take part in the research, teachers will be asked to complete a short survey which attempts to measure the strength of your school's culture so that the leadership team are able to identify areas which may be of interest in planning further school improvement activities. The survey takes less than 10 minutes to complete and I would request that it is used on two separate occasions twelve months apart to provide the leadership team with a measure of change over the school year. All responses are completely anonymous and confidential and will be stored in a password protected computer with only myself and my supervisor granted access.

In order to provide some in depth information in the light of the outcomes of the questionnaires, I would also be grateful if I may be allowed to interview, with their permission, a small group of teachers at a mutually convenient time in the school year. This qualitative data, will also be helpful, as part of a mixed methods study in providing the leadership team with more detailed information of actions useful in the strengthening of school culture.

Neither individuals nor schools shall be identified in the research, however all participants and head teachers will receive detailed feedback on the results of the study. The study will also be carried out following the ethical guidelines suggested by BERA (British Educational Research Association) and will be supervised under the direction of the University of Cambridge. If there are any queries regarding this you may contact my doctoral supervisor Dr [redacted]

If you able to support this important research project or wish to seek further clarification or have a more detailed discussion please do not hesitate to contact me at [redacted]

Kind regards,

W Birks

Appendix 13: Teacher perceptions of cultural components and perceptions of change over time

Appendix 13.1: Teacher Perceptions of Collaborative Leadership across case study schools

Position in School	School A	School B	School C
SLT	Significant development, permanent basis	Grown massively Greater empowerment of middle leaders Real impact	Work as a team Growing stronger Limited collaboration Legacy of past Frustration
ML	Good involvement Good Collaboration Accelerated Dominance of one partner	Better Collaboration Accelerated by external events Feeling of inferiority	Limited collaboration Formative collaboration Divided SLT Excessive change restricts collaboration Pockets unsupportive No sense of identity Lack of continuity
ET	Limited Collaboration Top down Improving process, Integration, sensitivity	Sense of flux Kept in the dark Political interference	Improving situation More opportunities Dependent on SLT Relies on interpersonal skills of SLT An understanding Headteacher
NQT	Supportive Leadership Good approachability Collaborative	Sense of momentum Growing collaboration but not heard	Improving situation More sharing of information More clarity of direction

Appendix 13.2: Collaborative Leadership - Perception of change over time

Position in School	School A	School B	School C
SLT	Major, immediate, external interference, proactive	Influence of external factors means speed of improvement needs to increase DfE gives 8 weeks to show change	Divided SLT Silo working Ofsted undermines collaboration
ML	variable	Increased collaboration Events changed because of external factors	Little change Too few SLT at meetings Collaboration not embedded Lack of accountability
ET	Major change, togetherness	Sense of cynicism Disconnect Helplessness People as scape goats	Significant improvement More clarity Better SLT More open atmosphere
NQT	Unnoticed	Still two schools from ground up Not much sense of change	More collaboration Moving forward More ideas asked requested

Appendix 13.3: Teacher Perceptions of Professional Development across case study schools

Position in School	Perception of Professional Development in year 1 and 2	Perception of Professional Development	Perception of Professional Development
SLT	Tailored Individualised Proactive Effective	CPD planned across the Federation Sense of satisfaction in training	Investment in staff No differentiation in training Training directed
ML	Ambitious Personal touch Personalisation Flexible Good Collaborative Early days	More Opportunity Separateness Sense of 'them and us'	Limited development Variable development Frustration
ET	Superb Developing people Helpful Good Supportive Effective	Box ticking exercise Feeling of being left behind Imposed training disproportionately applied	Improving CPD Personalised
NQT	Specific Fantastic Collaborative	Over use of power point More development of people because of partnership Training seen as sound and successful	Improving CPD CPD taken more seriously Freedom to choose Training encouraged Good opportunities

Appendix 13.4: Professional Development - Perception of change over time

Position in School	Perception of change over time	Perception of change over time	Perception of change over time
SLT	High profile More sharing in school Grown over time Growing collaboration	Training changed to focus on Hargreaves' JPD model More personalised training Development of policies out of training CPD has become has become more thorough	TEEP has impact
ML	One school moving quicker than the other Increased Long way to go	Increased sense of cynicism over time Externally driven training Sense of being undervalued	Variable CPD Introduction of TEEP
ET	Taken time Accelerated	CPD imposed and not differentiated Training accelerated by external events No increase in trust Staff appear separate	Restricted CPD In school priority Reduced funding
NQT	Improved	Less time for training after NQT year Time pressure limits impact of training	Ofsted increases pressure More emphasis on training Introduction of TEEP coaches High staff turnover

Appendix 13.5: Teacher Perceptions of Collegial Support across case study schools

Position in School	Perception of Collegial Support in year 1 and 2	Perception of Collegial Support	Perception of Collegial Support
SLT	Sense of trust High levels of trust Removing barriers Better atmosphere	Trust in Partnership continues to grow Redundancies affect sense of trust Some staff bitterness	No trust in SLT Baggage Negativity
ML	Not the strongest area Initiated Developing Works well Some misunderstandings	Blame culture developed after 'special measures' judgement Trust in School B but division across Federation Lack of trust and sense of the inevitable	Limited vertical trust Trust needs to return Good horizontal trust Want improvements
ET	Collaborative Trusting Good sharing but not across the two schools Level of trust is still good	Scapegoating Chasm Increase of Chinese whispers Sense of being at the bottom	Good level of trust Good listeners Good in depts.
NQT	Reciprocation Friendly Nice environment People work together Disparity	Support is good within departments Support less good between departments and across schools	Trust is good Good trust in depts. Little support

Appendix 13.6: Collegial Support- Perception of change over time

Position in School	Perception of change over time	Perception of change over time	Perception of change over time
SLT	Good over time Improving, particularly perceptions of partner school	Support is varied Improved trust in some areas Trust across Federation improving particularly at senior level More partnership roles	Variable Anonymous complaints Little improvement Poisonous Culture undermined
ML	Developing over time Improved	External factors affect strategies Increase in sense of blame Greater sense of inferiority of teachers in School B Greater sense of camaraderie in difficult times	Trust missing for a long time Poisonous Demoralising
ET	Takes a lot of time to develop Improving	Deterioration in Collegial Support Events affect atmosphere Support seems to decrease	Trust is improving More sharing of resources
NQT	Unnoticed	Huge wall has disappeared More trust developing Some resentment remains	Much more structure Increasing support

Appendix 13.7: Teacher Perceptions of Teacher Collaboration across case study schools

Position in School	School A	School B	School C
SLT	Lots of sharing Bringing depts. together Significant development, permanent basis,	Variable across school Variable across partnership Variable by subject Trying to overcome barriers Trying to change a 'massive culture.' Moved a long way	Good in depts. Sharing not universal Depends on individual HOD
ML	Varied collaboration Getting past the 'baggage' Acceleration, dominance of one partner	Driven in some depts. Variable Hit and miss Inconsistent	More united teams
ET	Improving process, Integration, sensitivity	Good collaboration within dept. Sharing of resources within dept. Depends on relationships Examples of distrust and resentment	Good Collaboration Good teamwork Good across subjects
NQT	Good approachability, Collaborative	Little evidence of collaboration across sites A feeling of 'them and us' Different view if colleagues teach across both sites	Good in depts. Less good elsewhere

Appendix 13.8: Teacher Collaboration- Perception of change over time

Position in School	School A	School B	School C
SLT	Accelerated Major, immediate, external interference, proactive	Massive progress Initiatives shared across partnership Remaining suspicion between some middle leaders	Still largely in pockets
ML	Improved	Some improving collaboration Other collaboration is lip service Collaboration rules different between schools Increasing sense of resentment	Significant improvement
ET	Major change, togetherness	Less collaboration across partnership Collaboration tends to be one way Collaboration remains varied	Ofsted driven Much more collaboration Improved confidence
NQT	Unnoticed	Improving collaboration Sense of inevitability Collaboration takes place on School A site	Improving collaboration TEEP includes collaboration

Appendix 13.9: Teacher Perceptions of Unity of Purpose across case study schools

Position in School	School A	School B	School C
SLT	Strong bold vision Joint targets Sense of unity Well established	One vision is a reality	Previous plan highjacked Unconvincing vision 'Baggage' remains Remaining resentment Unhappy staff
ML	Headteacher has huge vision Extra mile Haven't cracked the narrative Varying perspectives	Unity based on values Improving but significant challenge Negative identity	Lost early vision Ivory tower leadership Divided leadership No unified vision
ET	Ofsted driven Common purpose Common purpose in town	Muddled vision Vision difficult in challenging times	Good new plans Much more sharing Supportive SLT Impact of new Head
NQT	Driven Strong vision Varied vision	Vision not 100% clear New vision in turbulent times Unequal vision across partnership	Improving clarity Increasing opportunities Clear direction More ownership

Appendix 13.10: Unity of Purpose- Perception of change over time

Position in School	School A	School B	School C
SLT	Acceleration Growing closer	Improving vision External factors have accelerated actions DfE intervention has impacted upon change	Lack of vision Inconclusive vision No common language Values on paper only
ML	Swift Pace Variable	Blurred vision because of several heads The vision for the school and partnership is now developing School B remains an easy target for criticism The community perception is still negative Situation has deteriorated	Clear leadership Exciting vision Increased optimism
ET	Vision prone to change Taken time to change and improve Established	Creation of Academy has changed vision Wider vision creates more threats and dangers	Attitude changed from top New impetus
NQT	Can't comment Continuity	Increasingly clear vision but future remains uncertain	Increasing change More people on board Individual charters Unsure of impact

Appendix 13.11: Teacher Perceptions of Learning Partnership across case study schools

Position in School	School A	School B	School C
SLT	Majority buy in Varied across town Partnership with other school is irrelevant for many parents	Pulling together across partnership	Limited home contact Not enough support from home More ownership Many parents have different mind-set Not sufficient focus on progress
ML	Good relationships with parents Supportive parents	Parents relatively supportive Lack of common approach	Initial pride Lost opportunity Increased tension Improving situation Improving consistency
ET	Schools in partnership viewed differently Strong support from parents	Strategy seems pointless	Variable parental interest Barriers with parents Large numbers not interested
NQT	Good place to be Supportive parents Faith in school	No common expectation Fewer disagreements	Evidence of impact Raising expectations Value of education varied

Appendix 13.12: Learning Partnership- Perception of change over time

Position in School	School A	School B	School C
SLT	Little change Embedded views Lot of work still to do. Only small changes	Improvement in support from parents	Improvement in relationships Not enough change
ML	Traditionally stable Variable	Parents remain fairly supportive	Limited change Deterioration No consistency
ET	Need to start again More engagement, Incremental change having a positive effect	Little change if any in parental perceptions	No change identified
NQT	Can't comment Little change	Noticeably positive change in parental perceptions	More challenges